IDEA OF NATURAL LAW IN MILTON'S COMUS AND PARADISE LOST

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

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This dissertation tries to locate Milton’s optimistic view of man and nature as expressed in *Comus, Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, and *Paradise Lost* in the long tradition of natural law that goes back to Aristotle, Cicero, and Aquinas. Opposing the Hobbesian and Lutheran attempt to undermine the theological assumption that man is innocent and rational, Milton reassesses human nature as closely related to divine nature by appropriating the scholastic theories of natural law. Whereas Hobbes and Reformed divines view human nature as self-centered and depraved, Milton, influenced by the natural-law traditional, advocates human dignity and autonomy. In *Comus*, while the Lady represents the ethical norm of nature, the hedonistic Comus is a figure that Hobbes describes as a representative of humanity. In *Paradise Lost*, rationally aware of his end of fulfilling his possibilities as a moral and religious being, Adam obeys God and proves himself to be an embodiment of goodness and innocence. Even after the Fall, Adam still retains a rational and moral power, as demonstrated by his genuine repentance of the sin and reconciliation with God.

Adam perceives that moral life consists in virtuous acts and in the love of God and enjoys God’s blessing. Natural law also encompasses sexuality as a constructive force for self-preservation and happiness. Contrary to the Protestant dogma that sees sexuality as corrupt, the Thomist theory of natural law provides Milton with a positive view of human sexuality. Man is a free agent because one is endowed by God with reason, the faculty that leads man to do moral acts.

Milton’s argument for divorce stems from his belief in natural law: because natural law (as a higher law) permits divorce, the lower law (canon law) should not abrogate the Mosaic permission of divorce. To force incompatible couples into the
The marriage yoke is both unnatural and against God's will. The subjects of natural law—conjugal love and happiness—are divinely intended, and no human law should interfere with natural law. Philosophers of natural law and Milton believe in the innocence, reason, and dignity of man.
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INTRODUCTION

Theological study of Milton’s writings has been one of the most polemical and prolific fields in Milton studies. Although nobody can deny that the primary source of Milton’s works such as Christian Doctrine and Paradise Lost is the Bible, his works demonstrate the width and depth of his knowledge of the diverse interpretations of the Scripture, ranging from the Patristic commentaries and medieval scholasticism to his contemporary Protestant theology. Among these exegetical traditions, Reformed theology has been considered to be the most influential source that sparked Milton’s literary and intellectual imaginations. Many Miltonists have read Milton’s works in the light of the Protestant doctrines. However, this critical trend has largely ignored the influence of St. Thomas Aquinas’s theology on Milton. In this dissertation I attempt a new reading; that is, a scholastic reading of Milton. Particularly, Milton’s Comus and Paradise Lost reflect Thomist optimism stemming from the belief that man is originally an innocent being endowed with reason that enables man to make ethical judgments and to achieve the goal of happiness. This dissertation will shed new light on Milton’s theological positions in the larger natural law context: both Milton’s Comus and Paradise Lost demonstrate that Milton’s optimism and moral philosophy is closer to Thomas than to Calvin. I argue in this dissertation that Milton tried to solve the philosophical problems concerning human nature and man’s relationship with God and, as a solution, he came up with an answer; that is, the concept of natural law, which Aquinas had also developed.

Although in many aspects Milton’s works reflect the Augustinian and Protestant doctrines, his theological positions and literary descriptions are not monologically Protestant. For example, if Paradise Lost is so fundamentally Calvinistic, how can we explain away the epic’s prominently optimistic tone? Are Milton’s representations of Adam and Eve as innocent and happy people compatible with the gloomy Protestant view of man as entirely corrupt? Can Reformed theology account for Milton’s description
of the first parents as being able to exercise reason even after the Fall in such a degree that Adam reconciles with God? One area which Milton's works do not fit into the Reformed dogmatics is natural law which Reformed theologians rejected as heretical. Those questions can be answered if Aquinas' doctrine of natural law is applied to Milton's Paradise Lost. Aquinas offers a valuable theological and intellectual framework to Milton; therefore, an understanding of Aquinas will help the reader better appreciate Milton's theological and literary positions.

Several scholars, though few, have paid attention to Milton's affiliation with the ideas of natural law. Ellen Goodman calls the reader's attention to the kinship between Aquinas' natural law and Milton's Paradise Lost. Although her studies demonstrate an accurate understanding of Aquinas, she seems to oversimplify the differences between Milton and Thomas. Her basic argument, that while Milton is democratic and egalitarian, Aquinas is thoroughly authoritative, is not very convincing because I find egalitarian impulses in Thomas's writings, too. James Obertino deals exclusively with Comus in "Milton's use of Aquinas in Comus" in which various aspects of Thomism are well researched. But the article excludes other texts, such as Paradise Lost, which I think of as a suitable text for a study of natural law. Glenn Loney in Milton and Natural Law, which is a thorough study of the Thomist influence on Milton, says that "Milton's reliance on the various elements coalescing into the idea of natural law is not so easily characterized" in Paradise Lost (12). I disagree with their argument that Paradise Lost is not a fit source in the study of natural law. This dissertation is intended to be a more comprehensive study of Milton's natural law by illuminating the kinship between Aquinas's writings and Milton's Comus and Paradise Lost.

This dissertation attempts to establish a couple of common grounds that Milton shares with Aquinas. First, Aquinas's natural law is concerned more with the human than with the divine or demonic. It addresses the innocent state and the dignity of man. Milton's works deal more with the human affairs that occur in this world than those in the
other world. Paradise Lost, for example, focuses more on Adam and Eve's lives, understandings, and actions than on angelic beings. More than two thirds of Paradise Lost is devoted to human affairs in this world. This dominant focus on the earth and the human couple reinforces Milton's indebtedness to Aquinas' natural law.

Second, one can justify this dissertation's emphasis on the pre-lapsarian state of Adam and Eve, given the critical trend in which so many studies are on the post-lapsarian state of the general parents. On the premise that Paradise Lost is about the Fall and its concomitant loss (as the title "Lost" suggests) of paradise, numerous Miltonists have devoted themselves to the study of the post-lapsarian stage of Adam and Eve, rather than the pre-lapsarian stage of them. Taking a new approach to Milton, I will focus on the innocent state of the first human pair. Unlike most previous studies, this dissertation undertakes the study of the first parents before the Fall and aims at a contribution to Milton scholarship. Because few scholars have paid attention to the pre-lapsarian state of Adam and Eve, this dissertation's emphasis on the first parents' pre-lapsarian stage will shed new light on Milton's optimistic view of nature and human nature.

The main texts for this dissertation are Comus, the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce, and Paradise Lost. These three works particularly fit into the category of natural law. Both Comus and Paradise Lost use the Thomist concepts of natural law in their description of the Lady and Adam in their original goodness and innocent state. The divorce tract is based on the premise that natural law is higher than canon law because the former is given by God. Moses received laws from God, and the Mosaic law permits divorce; therefore, divorce should be allowed.

Besides these three works, Milton left a copious body of theology. His life-long study in theology yielded fruit in the publication of Christian Doctrine, which is used by the reader as an authoritative theological treatise by Milton and a reliable source of Milton's doctrinal positions. In order to support my argument about Milton's theology, I will also refer to Christian Doctrine.
In addition to Milton's works, I will use Aquinas's theological treatise, the *Summa Theologica*, as an authoritative text for the traditional natural law. Also, I will also use the his shorter summa, the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, and other commentaries. As representatives of Reformed theology, Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* and Luther's *Works* will be quoted as examples of opposite doctrines of natural law. Thus I will take a theological approach to Milton in comparison with Thomist natural law and Protestant theology. These comparative studies in theology will contribute to a new understanding Milton's views on nature, human nature, and the laws that Aquinas' natural law addresses.

Most scholars agree that Aquinas was one of the most influential thinkers of natural law. According to Aquinas, things pertain to natural law in two ways: first, because of natural inclination; and second, because nature does not cause its contrary. According to Aquinas, human beings are naturally inclined toward self-preservation, toward the knowledge of God, and finally toward society with other people. Knowledge, companionship, and procreation are naturally good for the human species. Man is thus inclined to act according to nature, and acting against it is unnatural for man.

Since *nature* and *law* are crucial terms in understanding the concept of natural law, I will begin by examining how the word *nature*, one of the most widely-used and most controversial terms in the history of ideas, has been explained. These terms are particularly significant to an understanding of Milton's works because they were predominant ideas in the Renaissance that Milton appropriated. By using the concept of natural law in his poetic and prose works, Milton responded to diverse ideas of nature. Embedded in the thought of the Western world, the term *nature* is widely used to denote constitutive substance or that which is purposive and goal oriented. *Nature* comes from Latin *natura* denoting birth, constitution, and character. In the pre-Socratic era, nature designates the intrinsic and permanent quality or qualities of (physical) things, as Aristotle notices the identification of nature with "that immediate constituent of it"
Aristotle gives a definition: "nature means 1) the genesis of growing things. 2) that immanent part of a growing thing, from which its growth first proceeds. 3) The primary movement in each natural object is present in it in virtue of its own essence. 4) the primary material of which any natural object consists or out of which it is made, which is relatively unshaped and cannot be changed from its own potency. 5) the essence of natural objects, the primary mode of composition" (Metaphysics 1014b 17). It refers to the innate or congenital qualities of a man as opposed to the effects of training. Paul Sigmund calls the reader's attention to the multiple meanings of nature: "Theorists have equated the natural with the rational; the divine; the distinctively human; the normally operating; the frequently recurring; the primitive; the elements not subject to human artifice or control; the self-evident; and the nonhistorical" (ix).

People also make ethical or normative uses of the term nature in ethics, politics, and religion, as shown in the case of good "by nature." Medieval theologians like St. Aquinas impart a moral and religious meaning to nature, as they articulate that human beings are by nature inclined to do rational acts. Heinrich Rommen emphasizes the moral meaning of nature as "a valid measure of what is moral and just. This presupposes that the essential nature owes its idea to the essence of God Himself, of which they are reflections" (50).

Nature does not only concern the reality of things, but more significant it is epistemologically concerned with the process of acquiring knowledge. Cicero tries to construct a theoretical basis for natural law by establishing man's capacity to understand the basic canons of natural law. James Weisheipl draws a medieval connection: "in the Middle ages there was an axiom, of uncertain origin, accepted by everyone: opus naturae est opus intelligentiae. The work of nature is the work of intelligence" (157). Thus, nature has often been associated with reason and the intellect. Milton believes that the proper action of man as man is to understand and that the intellect is the principle by which man understands God's will. Rationally aware of the end of his life, that is to
fulfill one’s possibilities, one acts according to reason.

If nature is associated with origin, intelligence, and essence, then what is natural law? Natural law tries to address the inquiries of “what is human nature” and “what is man?” By “human nature,” Aquinas means that “which is proper to man”; and he extends the meaning as an “opposite to sin” (ST I-II q. 94, a. 3). Therefore he believes human nature to be good and innocent and sin or evil to be against human nature. Natural law is used as a rational appraisal of the suitable characteristics of some human actions. The intellect is one of the most crucial concepts of natural law because Aquinas asserts that the proper action for man as man is to understand. St. Augustine would say that the proper act of man as man is to believe, not to understand. As Mary Clark indicates, for Aquinas “the intellect is the principle by which we understand” (248).

One of the distinctive features of natural law is that Thomas connects reason with virtue. The integration of the moral and the rational in one doctrine of natural law is contrasted with Reformed theology that expresses that reason has nothing to do with morality. Luther sees reason at best as instrumental for knowledge and at worst as damaging to faith. In Summa Contra Gentiles, Thomas announces that “the object of will is the good, and the good has the rational character of an end, the true [is] the object of the intellect (III. Ch. 26). Later Aquinas also says that

There is in every man a natural inclination to act according to reason: and this is to act according to virtue. Consequently, considered thus, all acts of virtue are prescribed by the natural law: since each one’s reason naturally dictates to him to act virtuously. (ST I-II. q. 94, a. 3)

Thomas also argues that “good is the first thing that falls under the apprehension of the practical reason” (ST. I-II. q. 94, a. 2). The Lady in Comus and Adam and Eve in Paradise Lost embody the Thomist ideal of natural law in the sense that they are ethical and, at the same time, rational. The moral and the intellectual are complementary, not contradictory, elements in natural law.
Why did Aquinas want to postulate a body of natural law? First, it is used in a prescribed sense. Defining the first principle of natural law as “to pursue good and avoid evil,” Aquinas maintains that “From becoming accustomed to avoid evil and fulfill what is good, through fear of punishment, one is sometimes led on to do likewise, with delight and of own accord. Accordingly, law even by punishing, leads men on to being good” (ST. I-II. q. 92, a. 1). So, the purpose is to make people do good naturally and delightfully.

Aquinas’s doctrine of natural law is fundamentally moral and religious. But he further develops Aristotle’s theory of free will, reason, and happiness and posits a doctrine of natural law, a Christianized version of Cicero’s equation of nature and god, and of the Aristotelian notion of reason.

Milton’s notion of natural law parallels that of Aquinas. There are two kinds of law for Milton: the one is the natural law, which he almost identifies with the divine law, and the other man-made law (human law). The errors and inadequacies of man-made laws that go against the laws of nature must be rectified by the laws of nature. There is a hierarchy in the laws: the man-made laws are always to be subordinate to natural law because the latter is itself in harmony with eternal law. As Abdiel remarks to Satan: “God and Nature bid the same” (PL 6. 176). That nature is almost analogous with Law is represented in Paradise Lost by God’s declaration: “The Law I gave to Nature” (11. 48). The law of nature takes on significance for Milton because Milton believes in the connection between God and natural law: the natural law is a measure through which God’s instruction to man is revealed. The law of nature for Milton is an unwritten law, a set of moral absolutes identical with God’s will.

As many Thomists have recognized, Thomas’s natural law encompasses moral principles and rationality. Vernon Bourke, for example, underscores the moral quality of Aquinas’s natural law, by observing that “the theory of natural law is not prominent in the moral works before St. Thomas” (63). Thomist morality is theocentric. God is the source
of morality, and natural law is the measure for human activity—whether it is right or wrong is judged by natural law. There is a rationally known (intelligible) moral law called natural law.

On the one hand, inherent human goodness, reason, free will, and happiness are individual concepts that should and can be examined separately. On the other hand, they become so intricately entwined that it is not only difficult but also useless to separate them. Each component does have influences on the others.

In *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas declares that “the natural law is promulgated by the very fact that God instilled it into man’s mind so as to be known by him naturally” (I-II. q. 90, a. 3). Natural law always goes back to God. For Milton, God is the absolute source of goodness. In *Christian Doctrine* Milton establishes divine authority as the sole standard of human morality: “If there were no God, there would be no dividing line between right and wrong. What was to be called virtue, and what vice, would depend upon arbitrary opinion” (1. 2. 132). Like most other natural law philosophers, argues Glenn Loney, Milton equates law with nature, believing in “the authority of law, which derives from its justice or end, and the end of law is the good of man arising from his nature” (101).

Embracing the Thomist belief that natural law is the same for all men, Milton says that “The LAW OF GOD is either written or unwritten. The unwritten law is no other than that law of nature given originally to Adam. A kind of gleam or glimmering of it which still remains in the hearts of all mankind” (CD 1. 26. 516). He also declares that “Man was made in the image of God, and the whole law of nature was so implanted and innate in him that he was in need of no command. . . . the natural law is itself sufficient to teach whatever is in accord with right reason (that is, whatever is intrinsically good) (CD 1. 10. 35). Thus, the law of nature is for Milton an unwritten law, a set of moral absolutes identical with God’s will. In *The Readie and Easie Way*, Milton also defines the law of nature as “the only law of laws truly and properly to all mankind fundamental”
Milton's idea of natural law demonstrates a parallel with that of Richard Hooker, who says that “the general and perpetuall voyce of men is as the sentence of God him selfe. For that which all men have at all times learned, nature herselbe must needs have taught; and God being the author of Nature, her voice is but his instrument” (Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity I. 8. 3).

Milton's notion of natural law is similar to that of Aristotle, Aquinas, and Hooker: there is something essential and universal in both human nature and in the laws of nature. Marjorie Nicolson observes that the law of nature is “a law to Milton inherent in the universe, a law arising from the nature of essences of things” and says that “Milton's law of nature” is the law “upon which his justification of God is founded” (433).

Milton's Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce demonstrates his awareness of the status of natural law. I will use that divorce pamphlet as a representative of Milton's affinity to Thomas regarding the position of natural law. Because Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce was published after Milton had been deserted by his first wife, Mary Powell, many detractors of Milton have criticized the divorce tract as merely a defense pamphlet growing out of his own troubled marital life and disturbed mind. But there is in the tract something that transcends his private experiences because Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce exhibits Milton's long-held thought on human nature and the laws of nature, as he reveals his views of natural and canon law and prescribes remedies to the bad consequences of canon law. Before the Reformation, the law regulating divorce in England was the canon law, which refused to recognize incompatibility as a valid ground for divorce. And the tradition of canon law continued to influence at least matters regarding marriage and divorce.

In making a case for divorce, Milton also uses the Thomist notion of hierarchy in the law. Milton classifies laws into four categories: canon, civil, natural, and divine law; and this classification shows his acceptance of Thomist hierarchy in the laws. Divine law is regarded as almost identical with natural law by Aquinas and Milton. Because of its
divine character, natural law is absolutely binding (and higher than) other laws. Hence, 
divine law and natural law are considered by Aquinas and Milton to be higher than canon 
law or civil law. Milton thus places natural law above the canon law and covenants of 
men, which are always to be subordinate to natural law. While the Mosaic law that 
allows divorce is a divine law which, in several aspects, is identical to natural law, the 
canon law that “dissolves marriage [only] on the ground of impotence” occupies a lower 
place than natural law (DDD 148). Milton opens his argument by introducing both the 
Mosaic law that permits divorce and one passage from the Gospel which apparently 
disapproves it. In an attempt to lend Scriptural support to his case for easing divorce, 
Milton cites the Mosaic law from Deuteronomy 24:1, which allow a man “to write his 
wife a bill of divorcement.” By emphasizing that Moses received commands directly 
from God, Milton equates the Mosaic law with the divine law, which is eternal and 
immutable. Again, the Mosaic law allowing divorce is a divine law, which comes from 
God, and hence, as an expression of divine nature, is compatible with the absolute good, 
as Milton argues in Tetrachordon: “The law, not only the moral, but the judicial given by 
Moses is just and pure, for such is God, who gave it” (653).

Milton’s confidence in the higher status of the laws of nature is again expressed in 
the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce. The laws of nature are higher than human law 
(such as canon law) because nature reflects God’s will, one of which is to permit divorce, 
as Milton notices: “God himself commands in his Law more than once, and by his 
Prophet Malachy, that he who hates let him divorce” (265-7). Milton defends the Mosaic 
permission of divorce as something that cannot and should not be abrogated either by 
canon law or by the Gospel that prohibits divorce. Milton again equates the law of nature 
with the law of God: “What is against the law of nature is against the law of God, and that 
lawful liberty ought not to be restrained. Moses commands us to force nothing against 
sympathy or natural order” (272). He calls canon law “frivolos” and the “judgement” 
of Moses “infallible” (351) because natural law is higher than canon law. Milton’s view
shows a parallel with Cicero, who says that “to invalidate this (natural) law by human legislation is never right (Commonwealth 3. 22).

In Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce Milton interprets law in terms of God’s will; thus, he equates natural law with eternal law:

The law is [God’s] reveled will, his complete, his evident, and certain will, herein he appears to us as it were in human shape, enters into cov’nant with us, swears to keep it, bind himself like a just lawgiver to his own prescriptions, give himself to be understood by men, judges and is judg’d, measures and is commensurat to right reason. (292)

The Thomist concept of natural law provides Milton with a theoretical framework; that is, the practice of cannon law is unnatural, inadequate, immoral, and irrational. What thwarts the goal of marriage should be regarded as a reason for annulment of marriage. The canon law takes fornication to be the only ground for divorce. It may be true, at least in part, because it interferes with the carnal end of marriage. But more significant than this bodily problem is a spiritual and psychological one; that is, incompatibility, which, on the other hand, frustrates the primary end; that is, “a meet and happy conversation” (246).

Milton’s awareness of this natural need for fulfilling human desire as a part of human nature and as a component of natural law is revealed in Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce, where he argues that marriage is originally instituted for human happiness by God. Milton locates “the dignity & blessing of mariage” in “the mutual enjoyment of the wanting soul needfully seeks” (252) and defines marriage as “the fulfilling of conjugall love and helpfulnes” (250). Thus, matrimony is construed by Milton as a “meet and happy conversation” that fulfills the intention of God himself (246). On the premise that what is fulfilling and completion is good and that what is not good is not natural, Milton constructs his argument for divorce. First, the starting point of Milton is that to be alone is so unnatural for man as to be “forbidd’n” by God (247). Therefore, human needs for
union must be fulfilled in matrimony, and Milton recognizes it as the scheme of God in His creation of man. But in the case that human need for union and a spiritual understanding cannot be met, we should acknowledge that case as a legitimate cause for divorce. For Milton, divorce should be allowed to a loveless couple, merely forced to cohabit, because, as written in Roman 13:10, “Love onely is the fulfilling of every Commandment” (258).

The unnaturalness of banning divorce in Milton’s divorce tract is studied by Kester Svendsen, who calls the reader’s attention to the divorce tract’s disease imagery. Comparing canon law that prohibits divorce to disease, Svendsen argues that canon law has created “diseases” which “result in a distortion of nature” and pays attention to Milton’s demand for allowing divorce as “remedies drawn from nature and natural law” (437). This disease imagery is effective because Milton conveys his message of the prohibition of divorce as unnatural, and as producing cankerous effects.

Based on his belief that no man-made law should be imposed against human nature, Milton argues that his “divorsive Law” should not be “so rebellious against both nature and reason as to exalt it selfe above the end and person for whom it was instituted” (DDD 244-5). Raising divorce to the level of a divine mandate, Milton speaks favorably of God’s divorcing command, which is expressed in the Mosaic law. He further argues that “the radical and innocent affectations of nature” are dispositions rooted in the unchangeable character of individual personality (DDD 345). As articulated in canon law, English statute forbids divorce, and Christ’s pronouncement may deny it, but the Mosaic law deriving from God and natural law demands divorce when necessary. Consequently, the higher authority of the natural law must be underscored. Milton summarizes his argument for divorce in Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce:

‘tis rather to be confidently assum’d that [divorce] was granted to apparent necessities, as being of unquestionable right and reason in the Law of nature, in that it still passes without inhibition, ev’n when greatest cause is giv’n us to
Milton thus uses the concept of natural law and declares that "Moses had bid divorce absolutely" (264).

The study of natural law in Milton's writings will be rewarding because, despite many changes occurring after the Fall, man still retains some degree of rational and moral powers. Milton's Adam and Eve remain innocent in spite of the considerable post-lapsarian transformations that take place in nature and human nature. Thomistic optimism is demonstrated in Milton's description of human nature as not entirely deteriorated in the aftermath of the Fall. In representing Adam and Eve and defending their free will and free choice, Milton uses the Thomist philosophy of natural law.

This dissertation is comprised of five chapters, with each chapter devoted to a detailed explanation of individual components of natural law and its application to Milton's works, particularly Comus and Paradise Lost, including several other prose works like Christian Doctrine and Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce. Milton's optimistic and positive views of man and nature in Comus and Paradise Lost reflect Aquinas' natural law's optimism.

Chapter One will examine several details of traditions of natural law from the Roman Stoic Cicero and the medieval scholastic Aquinas to the Renaissance Humanist Richard Hooker. The first chapter also tries to explain why several ancient and medieval thinkers wanted to postulate such a body of natural law. One of the answers to the inquiry may be that they had egalitarian impulses rooted in the belief that all men are equally endowed with reason. I will discuss the definitions of natural law and the ways in which Milton appropriates the Thomist concepts of natural law. After giving brief examples of Milton's use of natural law—emphasizing man's inherent goodness, reason, and free will in Comus and Paradise Lost—I will locate Milton's optimism in the larger context of Thomist natural law.

The second chapter investigates Milton's views of nature, human nature, and
natural law in contrast with those of Hobbes and Protestants. For Hobbes, man is by
nature individualistic and hostile to others: "every man is Enemy to every man"
(Leviathan Ch. 13, 98). The reason for this enmity is that the individual is concerned
only with his own preservation and gaining control over other people. Protestant
reformers stressed the entirely fallen nature of man. This chapter will show that how
Milton’s concepts of natural law differ from his contemporary Protestants and
Hobbesians. Believing that man and human nature are not so totally corrupted by the Fall
as the Reformed divines would preach, Milton uses the ideas of natural law in order to
justify the ways of God to man; that is, God’s creative will in making the world is to
make man according to His innocence and goodness. Nature used as a thematic structure
links Comus to Paradise Lost, wherein nature functions as an ethical norm.

Chapter Three looks into the way natural law views human beings. Milton’s
portrayal of Adam and Eve as embodiments of virtue and innocence represents Aquinas’
concept of natural law as fundamentally moral and religious (because God’s goodness is
reflected upon man). The first parents obey and worship God, by praying, hymning,
working in the garden, and loving each other. Following Thomas, Milton postulates both
descriptive and prescriptive moral theology. Natural law’s first precept, that good should
be pursued and evil avoided, becomes Adam’s and Eve’s internalized moral norm. This
chapter will also discuss Aquinas’ and Milton’s views of sexuality as something positive
because God approves of sexual pleasure for the happiness and preservation of the race.
Unlike Reformed divines who focus on the Fall and original sin, Milton tries to glorify
God by emphasizing the inherent innocent state of man and dignifying man’s power to
make ethical choices.

Chapter Four addresses the theological issue of whether man is a rational being or
not. Does man have reason and free will? If the answer is in the affirmative, what is the
role of predestination? Are free will and divine foreknowledge incompatible as
Protestant reformers would argue? Like Aquinas’ doctrinal writings, Milton’s Paradise
Lost advocates the idea that the proper action of man as man is to understand and that the intellect is the principle by which man understands God's will. Rationally aware of the end of his life to fulfill his possibilities, man as the knowing subject naturally acts according to reason. Unlike most other Protestants skeptical of the role of reason and knowledge, Milton presents reason as a God-like faculty that ennobles man. He sees reason as compatible with faith. The other significance of reason as Thomas and Milton perceive it is that reason is the foundation of ethics. Without the power to exercise reason, man cannot be a moral agent. And, according to Milton, man is given by God the power to exercise reason. Departing from Puritan teachings which condemn free will as detrimental to faith, Milton advocates free will as a uniquely human faculty that serves as a rational guidance for his free choices and moral actions. In Paradise Lost, Adam and Eve's exercise of reason and free will is what makes them noble and dignified.

Chapter Five will explore how the Thomist concept of happiness as the final goal of man provides Milton with a theological framework. Thomas's natural law stipulates that every end is subordinated to the ultimate goal of happiness, and Milton also presents man's final end as happiness by describing man as formed by God to be happy. The intellect, human goodness, and will all together operate in such a way that they promote happiness of man. Luther denies the possibility of man's attaining happiness in this world because of the Fall; however, Milton believes in the potentiality of man to be happy because God Himself made mankind in order to make them live in happiness. Both the Doctrine and the Discipline of Divorce and Paradise Lost represent Milton's belief that marriage was originally instituted by God for human happiness. Adam actively seeks his happiness by asking God for a life-long companion, and God grants him what he desires. But the first human pair also learn that their passion should transform into a spiritual love and love for God.
Notes

1. In one aspect, this dissertation intends to address the problems of the current scholarship on Milton. Although many Miltonists discuss Thomas in their studies of Milton, most of them do only briefly and sporadically. There is a paucity of Milton scholarship on the Thomist influence: few scholars have written articles on Aquinas. See Ellen Goodman’s two articles: “Sway and Subjection: Natural Causation and the Portrayal of Paradise in the Summa Theologica and Paradise Lost,” in Milton and the Middle Ages and “Human Mastership of Nature: Aquinas and Milton’s Paradise Lost” in Milton Quarterly 26.1 (1992).

2. Svendsen, Kester. “Science and Structure in Milton’s Divorce Doctrine.” PMLA 67 (1952): 435-45. Svendsen here calls the reader’s attention to Milton’s use of disease imagery when Milton describes canon law. In this article, Svendsen compares canon law to disease: “Milton’s fundamental comparison, carried all through the tract, amount to this: canon law impediments to divorce have created diseases in human society which result in a distortion of nature. Milton’s proposals are remedies drawn from nature and natural law” (437). “Canon law as disease, illness,” writes Svendsen, is “a producer of still further disease by force exerted against the bent of nature” (438).
CHAPTER ONE

(CLASSICAL AND MEDIEVAL DOCTRINES OF NATURAL LAW)

Suppose a man killed another person. The offender will be punished according to law, not just by written laws (penal codes), but also by natural law, which is broader and higher than criminal law because most people consider killing to be against the nature of man. Natural law governs the ways man behaves: man must act in a certain way because natural law expresses what is assumed about man. Since man is aware of what he does and why, man is assumed to behave in a certain manner. Man knows that what governs human nature is the law, a special kind of law called "natural law," and also knows that one should act upon a firm and unchanging principle. Natural law explains what kind of actions are encouraged and others are prohibited. In that sense it is normative. People use "natural law" as a term for laws that we prescribe as rules for human conduct which is based on the assumption that human nature is rational and innocent. Neither physical laws nor written laws, these are laws in the sense that human nature is supposed to behave in such a way that is dictated by natural law. In what follows, I will discuss what philosophers of natural law say and why.

Most scholars of natural law look to St. Thomas Aquinas (1224?-1274) as a major proponent of natural law. Aquinas constructs a body of natural law based on its relation to eternal law. In the Summa Theologica (1266-73) he says that eternal law is the divine providence governing the whole cosmos, including man and matter. Natural law is that part of eternal law that applies only to man. His definition of natural law as "the rational creature's participation of eternal law" is widely used as an authoritative one by thinkers of natural law (ST I-II. q. 91, a. 2). This chapter tries to locate Aquinas' thought on natural law in the larger philosophical tradition that goes back to the Greco-Roman period.
and to demonstrate the comprehensive affinity between Milton's and traditional concepts of natural law. In addition, I will explain why the theorists of natural law wanted to postulate such a body of natural law. This chapter undertakes the study of how and why Milton appropriated the doctrine of natural law in his works, particularly Comus (1634), the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce (1643), and Paradise Lost (1667).

The idea of natural law evolved during a long period of time, ranging from classical sources to medieval scholasticism and the Christian humanism of the Renaissance. The idea of natural law is a body of thought that encompasses such components as morality, reason, free will, inherent goodness, happiness, and human dignity. Among these subjects, Aquinas's thought on reason, morality, and happiness will be examined in this dissertation as relevant sources of Milton's theological and aesthetic inspirations.

The doctrine of natural law was formulated and systematized by philosophers of natural law, such as Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, and Cicero, in an effort to describe what constitutes human nature and what the laws of nature are. One of the major ideas of natural law is that humans are primarily rational beings: they have an understanding of the correlation between nature and human nature, and the understanding of the correlation suggests the possibility that the human intellect can comprehend God and the divine scheme of creation of the world and man.

A concise summary of the history of the notion of natural law will help the reader better understand the historical and philosophical contexts from which the doctrines of natural law were formulated. Exactly when the idea of natural law first emerged is a matter of controversy. However, as Glenn Loney states, it is generally accepted among the scholars of the natural law that the origins of the philosophy of natural law are Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero (43). The natural-law tradition reached its highest point in the thirteenth century, mainly in Aquinas' scholastic writings.

Aquinas redefines the classical sources of natural law in Christian terms and
systematically develops natural law into theological, cognitive, psychological, and moral theories by articulating it in the “Treatise on Law,” an important part of the *Summa Theologica*. The *Summa Theologica* is a vast corpus of doctrinal writings on Catholic theology. There was a long, uninterrupted continuation of the natural-law tradition throughout history. The Greco-Roman tradition helped Aquinas shape the idea of natural law. The idea that there is law or justice that is not changing began to be expressed in the early stages of classical Greek philosophical thought, as illustrated in Sophocles’ *Antigone*. When Antigone refuses to abide by Creon’s ordinance, she appeals to eternal law, which she believes to be higher than the man-made law. Antigone defies the ban of the burial of her brother because she did not think that Creon’s Edict had such force

that you [Creon], a mere mortal, could override the gods,
the great unwritten, unshakable [laws].
They are alive, not just today or yesterday:
They live forever, from the first of time. (503-7)

Thus, Antigone’s defiance represents the Greek idea that there exists a higher law than any socially constructed law.

Even though Plato (c. 427-347 B.C.E.) never uses the term “natural law,” his idea of natural law is considered to be the “first presentation of natural law” because he focuses on the issue of order (kosmos) and justice which are closely connected to the notion of natural law (White 21). He wrote two books on law: the *Laws* and the *Republic*. He says in the *Laws* that law is “divine and marvelous” (957c) and that “following [god] is Justice” (716a). Here he refers to natural justice or an ideal law, which he differentiates from the existing laws in which he finds many defects. Also for him the function of laws is twofold: first, to further the common good of people by assisting them to lead a virtuous life; second, to make them happy. In the *Laws* Plato says that “the law will succeed in making our city blessed and happy” (718b). In the *Republic*...
Plato indicates that there is a reality which is rational and morally ordered and embodies eternal laws, existing beyond the temporal world but binding upon this world. This belief in the existence of objective moral principles applicable to all men for all time is to be shared by later philosophers of natural law. Plato’s contribution to the development of natural law lies, as Glenn Morrow notices, in the fact that his “philosophy was an important factor in the formulation of the Stoic doctrine of the Law of Nature” (17). But it is also safe to say, as R. F. Stalley indicates, that his influence on the tradition of natural law is “indirect through Aristotle rather than at first hand” (33).

As one of the founders of the theory of natural law, Aristotle (384-322 B.C.E.) systematically articulated the idea of natural law in the Rhetoric and the Nicomachean Ethics. As Sophocles perceives the sharp distinction between the enacted law (represented by Creon’s order) and universal law (represented by Antigone’s fulfillment of her sisterly duty), Aristotle divides law into two categories: particular law and universal law. Aristotle explains that “particular law is that which each community lays down and applies to its own members” and that “universal law is the law of nature. For there really is, as every one to some extent divines, a natural justice and injustice that is binding on all men, even on those who have no association or covenant with each other” (Rhetoric 1373b 3-8).

He also distinguishes in the Nicomachean Ethics natural justice from legal (conventional) justice:

Of political justice part is natural, part legal—natural [is] that which everywhere has the same force and does not exist by people’s thinking this or that; legal [is] that which is originally indifferent, but when it has been laid down is not indifferent. . . . Now some think that all justice is of this sort, because that which is by nature is unchangeable and has everywhere the same force (as fire burns both here and in Persia), while they see changes in the things recognized as just.

(1134b 18-26)
He also says:

Similarly, the things which are just not by nature, but by human enactment are not everywhere the same, since constitutions also are not the same. . . . Of things just and lawful each is related as the universal to its particulars; for things that are done are many, but of them each is one, since it is universal.  

Aristotle was one of the founders of the philosophy of natural law.

After the conquest of Greece by Rome, the idea of natural law further developed in Rome. Marcus Cicero (106-43 B.C.E.), who reaffirmed the Stoic equation of Law with Nature and Reason, played an important role in interpreting and disseminating the idea of natural law. Cicero is generally considered to be one of the most influential thinkers throughout the history of natural law and gains credit for “the earliest classical formulation” of the doctrine of natural law by Heinrich Rommen (23). Lloyd Weinreb also argues that “Cicero’s writings contain the first clear statements of natural law as a distinct philosophical doctrine” (39). Cicero’s De re publica (The Commonwealth) lays a solid ground for the concept of natural law. First, he equates reason and law with nature: “There is in fact a true law—namely, right reason in accordance with nature, applies to all men, and is unchangeable and eternal” (III. xxii. 33). Then he puts natural law in the higher category of human laws on the ground that natural law is derived from God:

To invalidate this [natural] law by human legislation is never morally right, nor is it permissible ever to restrict its operation, and to annul it wholly is impossible.

But there will be one law, eternal and unchangeable, binding at all times upon all peoples; and there will be, as it were, one common master and ruler, namely,

God, who is the author of this law, its interpreter, and its sponsor.  

In De re publica (54-51 B.C.) Cicero’s achievement lies in connecting Law, Nature, and Reason: “True law is right reason in agreement with nature; it is of universal application, unchanging and everlasting” (III. xxii. 33). Cicero’s equation of reason and nature with Law is recapitulated in De legibus (The Laws) (44 B.C.): “for those creatures who have
received the gift of reason from Nature have also received right reason, and therefore they have also received the gift of Law. . . . Now all men have received reason; therefore all men have received justice” (I. xii. 33).

One of the salient features of Cicero’s idea of natural law is that it focuses on moral and rational functions. In De legibus, Cicero argues that “Law is the highest reason, implanted in Nature, which commands what ought to be done and forbids the opposite. This reason, when firmly fixed and fully developed in the human mind, is Law. And so they believed that Law is intelligence, whose natural function is to command right conduct and forbid wrongdoing” (I. vi. 18). He also says that “what I shall call Nature is that which is implanted in us by Nature” (I. xii. 33) and declares that the dignity of man is based on man’s resemblance with God: “since [reason] exists both in man and God, the first common possession of man and God is reason” (I. vii. 23). For him reason is directly connected to justice: “since all men are originally endowed with reason, all men are members with gods of the commonwealth of the universe and hence all men share in justice, which is thus seen to derive from Nature” (I. x. 29).

Cicero further presents nature as an ethical norm in De officiis (44 B.C.): “If we follow Nature as our guide, we shall never go astray, we shall be pursuing that which is in its nature clear-sighted and penetrating (Wisdom), that which is adapted to promote and strengthen society (Justice), and that which is strong and courageous” (I. 28. 100).

Cicero’s idea of natural law implies intellectual equality on the ground that “reason which alone raises us above the level of beasts . . . is certainly common to us all . . . at least in the capacity to learn, it is invariable” (De legibus I. x. 10).

Why did Cicero postulate a body of natural law? Why did the Greek and Roman thinkers come up with such ideas as natural law? First, they might have needed to maintain social order in their communities. As a means to make their people comply with the laws designed to keep peace and order, they formulated a body of natural law. Natural law presents humans as rationally and naturally acting according to the laws of
nature. They inaugurated a theory of natural law which sees human nature corresponding to natural law. In doing so, the founders of the idea of natural law encouraged people to do good things and discouraged them from doing evil acts. Second, it seems that the philosophers of natural law felt a need for a higher law than man-made laws because there must be a law that is not subject to change caused by time and space. There should be an invariable law which is derived from what Cicero believes to be human nature—which is universal, immutable, non-arbitrary, as his De legibus lays out an argument for the natural law: “we are born for Justice, and that right is based, not upon opinions, but upon Nature” (I. x. 28). And because there is a hierarchy in the laws, he thinks, it is illegitimate to abrogate the higher law (natural law) by the lower law (human law) (De re publica III. 22). This notion of the hierarchy in law later affects Aquinas and helps shape Milton’s argument for divorce grounded on the premise that the man-made canon law has no authority to annul the natural law permitting divorce.

Another possible reason that Cicero postulates the body of natural law is his egalitarian impulse: he considers reason to be common to everybody. Rooted in Cicero’s natural law is his confidence that all men are endowed with the divine gift of reason that dignifies them, as he says that “there is no difference in kind between man and man” (I. x. 30). Through the egalitarian idea of natural law, Cicero lays a firm ground for human equality and justice. Human equality gains ground because of a primary tenet of natural law that articulates the universal existence of natural reason.

Classical philosophies of natural law represented by Aristotle and Cicero are later fully developed into a Christian doctrine of natural law by Aquinas, who has assimilated his own understanding of the classical ideas, terminology, and methodology into Christian theology, which he calls the “sacred doctrine.” Following this natural-law tradition, Aquinas identifies nature and law with reason. Aquinas also appropriates biblical materials into the natural-law tradition, as demonstrated by the fact that Christian doctrine shares some grounds with the philosophies of natural law, partly because the
Church Fathers adopted some of the Greco-Roman traditions. For example, Cicero’s doctrine of natural law— all men are endowed with reason—is found in St. Paul, and Aquinas uses St. Paul’s well-known paragraph in the First Epistle to the Romans in defense of natural law: “when the gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another” (Romans 2: 14-15 King James Version). For St. Paul, even the gentiles are able to comprehend the essence of the Bible because of innate natural law. Aquinas was well aware of both Classical and Pauline theories of natural law and developed them into his copious system of natural theology.

What was the relationship between Christianity and natural law? How did the early Christian authorities respond to natural law? These inquiries are important in examining Aquinas’ attitude toward pagan natural philosophers. The Church Fathers shared with the thinkers of natural law some principles: they all held that social order should be maintained and that some kinds of laws are necessary for that purpose. The Church Fathers found natural law’s emphasis on universality and essentialism useful for their purposes of establishing social order and edifying people. And scholars agree that Aquinas greatly contributed to the systematization of natural law.

A linchpin in the convergence of classical and Christian thought was the doctrine of Christ as the preexisting logos or humankind as the seed of the logos. Thanks to the natural faculty of reason, all people, Christian thinkers like St. Paul believed, know the laws of Christ; that is, what is universally just. Aquinas puts everyone in the category of the rational being. In that sense, Aquinas’ theology is said to be derived from his egalitarian idea. He may want to postulate a body of natural law because he believes in, or wants to disseminate the idea of, the equality of man in knowing God.

In the *Summa Theologica*, having divided law into four categories (the eternal
law, the natural law, the old law, and the new law). Aquinas gives a succinct definition of the natural law: "natural law is the rational creature's share in the eternal law" (I-II. q. 91, a. 2). Aquinas clarifies the relation between eternal law and human law:

since all things subject to Divine providence are ruled and measured by the eternal law . . . they derive their respective inclinations to their proper acts and ends.

Now among all others, the rational creature is subject to Divine providence in the most excellent way, in so far as it partakes a share of the Eternal reason, whereby it has a natural inclination to its proper act and end; and this participation of the eternal law is called the natural law. (ST I-II. q. 91, a. 2)

First, as a part of divine law, natural law is intrinsically related to eternal law: it is formulated to explain human nature. Yet it also has a close relationship with divine law. Aquinas' body of natural law grows out of his theological impulses of explaining human nature in the light of God's will; that is, there is in man something providential or God-like, as man is made in the image of God. Because God is good and benevolent, His creature, man, is also potentially good, innocent, and perfectible. Aquinas primarily differs from Classical philosophers in that they, of course, would never have thought in the specific terms of the Christian God.

In addition to this inherent goodness, according to the doctrine of natural law, man's knowledge is what relates man to eternal law: "Each rational creature has some knowledge of the eternal law, it also has a natural inclination to that which is in harmony with the eternal law" (ST I-II. q. 93, a. 6). Hence, natural law is the particularly human way of participating in the eternal way, as James Reilly explains:

because he is a rational creature, man participates, or shares, in the Eternal law in a special way. One sign of this special participation is that man is truly provident. . . . In this exercise of providential activity, man participates in the Eternal reason by means of which he has the natural aptitude for his due activity and proper end. This particular sharing in the Eternal law by man is a distinct manifestation of
natural law. (5-6)

According to natural law, man is capable of fulfilling and completing his nature. Aquinas' theory of natural law stems from optimism about human goodness and perfectibility. He begins in the *Summa Theologica* by defining the notion of good: "Good is that which all things seek after" (I-II. q. 94, a. 2). Ralph McInerny gives more detailed explanations: "whatever man seeks, he seeks under the aspect of good. Each of the things is "sought insofar as it is completive or perfective of the seeker" ("Principles" 141). As a logical corollary of this, McInerny concludes, for Aquinas "our good is what fulfills and completes us" ("Ethics" 200). Viewed from this Thomistic perspective, human nature can be completed and fulfilled, and that is man's goal. Natural law, says Aquinas,

> enables man to apprehend those ends that fulfills his nature as well as to propose means to ends. . . . All those things to which man has a natural inclination are naturally apprehended by reason as being good, and consequently as objects of pursuit, and evil as objects of avoidance. Because in man, there is first of all an inclination to good in accordance with the nature which he has in common with all substances. (*ST* I-II, q. 94, a. 2)

Since the doctrine of natural law aims to explain the state of man, understanding Aquinas' natural law benefits from understanding the Thomistic concept of nature. Kevin Staley recapitulates the point: for St. Thomas nature "serves as a primary structure of created being, as the principle of its development and operation (including all casual activity), as the foundation of intelligibility, and as the measure of what is appropriate or inappropriate for any given being" (223). Nature for Aquinas is the ground of intellect, will, and moral principles for human beings. Although admitting that as a consequence of Adam's lapse the state of nature and human beings is fallen, Aquinas is also convinced that nature is not wholly destroyed by that sin. This primary concept of nature as good never changes throughout Aquinas' writings.
The scholastic idea of natural law encompasses a moral theory that he derives from reflection on actions performed by human agents. Aquinas’ concept of natural law is fundamentally moral and religious. For him the laws of nature reflect man’s inner nature, which is inherently good and in harmony with divine nature. Human goodness emanates from divine nature. Every human act aims at a particular end, good, as Thomas indicates in Summa Theologica: “good is the first thing that falls under the apprehension of the practical reason, which is directed to action: since every agent acts for an end under the aspect of good” (I-II. q. 94, a. 2). Thus, he virtually identifies those human acts based on right reason with moral acts.

On the other side of this explanation lies Aquinas’ intention to make people be good and virtuous. Natural law is prescriptive: it encourages certain kinds of acts and discourages others. Aquinas states that “the function of the natural law” is to make us “discern what is good and what is evil” (ST I-II. q. 91, a. 2) and goes on to say that “the proper effect of law is to make those to whom it is given good” (I-II. q. 92, a. 1). Natural law for Aquinas is God’s moral edification of man. Reilly avers that “natural law provides the ground for the morally good life” and that “its being and good are self-identical”; thus, “the ontological good emerges in man as moral good, in as much as it is willed” (15). Aquinas thus presents human acts as potentially moral acts. He asserts that “the first precept of [natural law] is that “good is to be done and pursued, and evil is to be avoided” (ST I-II. q. 94, a. 2). Aquinas interprets virtue in light of natural law:

All acts of virtue are prescribed by the natural law; since each one’s reason naturally dictates to him to act virtuously. . . . all those things to which man has a natural inclination are naturally apprehended by reason as being good, and consequently as objects of pursuit, and their contraries as evil, and objects of avoidance. (ST I-II. q. 94, a. 1)

In Aquinas’ theorem, natural law expresses morality and virtues.

Moral philosophy includes sexual morality as an integral part of natural law.
Sexual morality thus occupies a major place in natural law. Aquinas understands that human nature implies needs, including sexual desire, and accordingly approves of human sexuality as good and blameless. When he expounds natural law, he includes sexual desire as an integral part of human nature: “that which nature has taught . . . such as sexual intercourse, education of offspring, and so forth, are good” (ST I-II. q. 94, a. 2). Aquinas affirms human sexuality because it is conducive to the preservation of the human species in the sense that sexual desires are directly aimed at procreation. He goes on to say that “in as much as every substance seeks the preservation of its own being according to its nature: and by reason of this inclination, whatever is a means of preserving human life . . . belongs to the natural law” (ST I-II. q. 94, a. 2). Aquinas thus presents sexual desires as positive forces for humanity.

The traditional theory of natural law also postulates that human beings are rational in making each judgment and doing moral acts. The concept of natural law may be said to grow out of the theological impulse of glorifying God, who bestows reason upon man. The significance of reason in Aquinas’s body of natural law cannot be overemphasized. Much of the “Treatise on Law” is devoted to an explanation of reason. Philosophers of the traditional natural law explain human reason in its relation to human acts. Not all acts performed by man are human acts. Only those actions over which a human being has dominion are to be called human acts, and, as Aquinas argues, “reason has the guidance of human acts” (ST I-II. q. 76, a. 1). And human acts have their source in reason and will, as Aquinas emphatically says that “reason is the first principle of all human acts: all other principles obey reason” (ST I-II. q. 58, a. 2). Aquinas announces that what governs human acts (law) is reason:

Law is a rule and measure of acts, whereby man is induced to act or is restrained from acting. . . . the rule and measure of human acts is the reason, which is the first principle of human acts. It belongs to reason to direct to the end, which is the first principle of all matters of action. (ST I-II. q. 90, a. 1)
He goes on to say that "every act of reason and will is based on that which is according to nature, for every act of reasoning is based on principles that are known naturally. . . . Accordingly, the first direction of our acts to their end must needs be in virtue of that natural law" (ST I-II, q. 91, a. 3). According to Aquinas, natural law is a dictate of reason: "Reason directs all things regarding man; so that whatever can be ruled by reason, is contained under the law of reason" (ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2). Aquinas again interprets reason in connection with human nature: "As, in man, reason rules and commands the other powers, so all the natural inclinations belonging to other powers must needs be directed according to reason. Wherefore it is universally right for all men, that all their inclinations should be directed according to reason" (ST I-II, q. 94, a. 4).

From the very beginning of the discussion of natural law, Aquinas argues that "There is in man an inclination to good, according to the nature of his reason, which nature is proper to him" (ST I-II, q. 94, a. 2). He says that to the natural law belongs everything to which a man is inclined according to his nature. Now each thing is inclined naturally to an operation that is suitable to it according to its form. Wherefore, since the rational soul is the proper form of man, there is in man a natural inclination to act according to reason: and this is to act according to virtue. (ST I-II, q. 94, a. 3)

Thus, Aquinas equates human acts with moral and rational acts. This is a significant concept because reason's status is reinforced by Aquinas, who draws a vital connection between moral and the good.

Natural law may be said to be postulated in order to encourage people to do ethical, virtuous, and good deeds. Natural law presents man as naturally capable of doing those good acts because of inherent rational and intellectual power to do so. In the course of approving the naturally endowed reason, thinkers of natural law also acknowledge the autonomy of reason and human dignity derived from the rational capacity of man. This belief in the correlation between the moral and the intellectual is a
long-held conviction, as Aquinas states in Opera Omnia: “the law of nature (lex naturae) is nothing but the light of understanding implanted by God (lumen intellectus insitum nobis a Deo), through which we come to know what to do and what to avoid. The light and this law God gives to man in creating him” (Vol. 16, P 97 a). In “Ethics” McInerny also draws a connection between moral and the intellectual:

The good for a human being thus consists of a plurality and moral and intellectual virtue. No single virtue could make the human agent good, because the human function is not something univocally one. Moral virtues are dependent on that virtue of practical intellect Aquinas calls “prudence” which refers to practical reason. (204-5)

Aquinas’ teaching that every man is naturally given cognitive notions and appetitive inclinations which give him a start in the rational direction of his moral actions further reinforces this view. Aquinas asserts that

Natural law is nothing other than a notion naturally implanted in man, whereby he is fittingly directed to perform proper actions, either in accord with his generic nature (such as procreating, eating, and so on), or in accord with his specific nature (reasoning, and the like). (Sententiarum IV 3, 1, 1, C)

This inseparable connection between the moral and the intellectual is the salient feature of the Thomist doctrine of natural law.

Natural law postulates that reason always goes hand-in-hand with free will because philosophers of natural law maintain the view that only rational man has free will and only free man is rational. Aquinas, for example, asserts that “there is free choice, where there is intellect” (ST I. q. 59, a. 3). He emphasizes the interrelationship between reason and free will: “man is master of his own acts by reason and will: hence free will is said to be a function of will and reason” (ST III. q. 1, a. 1). On another level, the meaning of freedom is extended to a religious and moral dimension, as Aquinas presents freedom as lack of sin: “freedom from sin is true freedom” (II-II. q. 183, a. 4). Thus free
will is thought to be interwoven with morality and intellect.

Theorists of natural law like Plato, Aristotle, and Aquinas also deal with the age-old issue of happiness of man. Like Aristotle, Aquinas presents happiness as an ultimate end of mankind. Aquinas understands happiness in the larger context of God’s intention. In the *Summa Theologica* the basic concepts of Aquinas’ happiness are as follows:

“Happiness is man’s supreme good; it is incompatible with any evil” (I-II. q. 24, a. 4) and “Happiness is the last end” (I-II. q. 3, a.1). Aquinas says that whatever a human being seeks, man seeks under the aspect of good. Legislators regulate all overt human actions in a community with an eye to the common good of the members of that community. Because that common good is the good of all citizens, it can be the ultimate end of each of them. That ultimate end is happiness. All human agents actually pursue the same ultimate end. Aquinas expounds happiness in the *Summa Theologica*:

Now as reason is a principle of human acts, so in reason itself there is something which is the principle in respect of all the rest: wherefore this principle, law must needs be referred. Now the first principle on practical matters... is the last end: and the last end of human life is bliss or happiness. Consequently the law must needs regard principally the relationship to happiness. (I-II. q. 90, a. 2)

He also defines happiness as the “fulfillment of a rational agent who is a master of his own actions and is capable of recognizing or giving intellectual consent to his own perfection” (ST I. q. 26, a. 1).

In summary, Thomist theories of natural law contribute to the enhancement of the status of human beings because, first of all, the doctrine of natural law is formulated on the premise that human nature is closely related to divine nature (eternal law) and secondly, it can be fulfilled and completed and, human beings can move toward the perfect state of God. Reason, freedom, morality, and happiness all together express human dignity. Taken from the view of natural law, the status of mankind is dignified. Optimism and rationalism of natural law continued to influence the Renaissance.
humanism. Milton reflects the basic concepts of natural law, such as human dignity, free will, and innocence of human being.

II

Milton scholars generally agree that the primary source of Milton's writings, such as the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* and *Paradise Lost* is the Bible. His representations of Christian thought testify to his broad and accurate understanding of biblical hermeneutical traditions. Among these traditions, the Puritan influence is considered by many Miltonists to be the most powerful one. The method of Puritan theology has been well assimilated to the scholarly mainstream, and Milton is well-known as a Puritan poet. Yet, in one important area, Milton's poetic and prose writings do not fit into Reformed doctrines: the theory of natural law, which is pervasive in *Comus*, the divorce tracts, and *Paradise Lost*. Milton wrestled with the philosophical and theological problems concerning human nature, man's relation with God, and man's place in the universe. In response to these problems, Milton came up with the idea of natural law as solutions. Interestingly, the solutions that Milton came up with were similarly offered by the philosophers of natural law. For example, through the doctrine of natural law, Aquinas gives explanations to such theological problems--whether and how man is capable of dealing with moral problems--by reference to a certain kind of patterns which are embodied in human thoughts. To the question of the moral capability of man, natural law answers that "an external order of morality is accessible to reason" (*ST* I-II. q. 94, a. 5). One of the best places for the reader to look into Milton's idea of natural law is Aquinas, particularly Aquinas' corpus of theology, the *Summa Theologica*.

Milton's understanding of the tradition of natural law was a way of responding to his religious and intellectual culture in which religion was deemed one of the paramount concerns. According to Douglas Bush,
More than two-thirds of the books printed in England from 1480 to 1640 were religious, and for the years 1600-40 the percentage is still higher. In Jaggard’s *Catalogue* of 1619 nearly three-fourths of the books are religious and moral; in William London’s *Catalogue of most Vendible books in England* (1657-8) the space given to works of divinity equals that occupied by all other kinds together. Grotius declared that there was little or no literary scholarship in England, that theology was the only interest of educated men. Religion was a main and often intense concern of greater multitude of people during our period than in any other before. (English Literature in the Early Seventeenth Century 310)

Milton was in that sense a product of his time in which a religious upbringing was taken seriously. Paul Sigmund indicates that Aquinas’ “writings were widely taught and in the middle of the sixteenth century, his *Summa Theologica* was placed on the altar among with the Bible” (228). William Cunningham also notices that “the scholastic theology has exerted a considerable influence upon the theology of . . . not only Popish but Protestant writers” (413). The significance of Milton’s idea of natural law becomes clear when it is compared with Puritan theology. The doctrinal divergence of Puritanism and Scholasticism reflects Milton’s own theological systems in *Comus*, the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, and *Paradise Lost*.

St. Augustine (354-430) as an authoritative theologian provides Aquinas with a framework, for Aquinas bases many of his major theological and ethical positions upon St. Augustine. Indeed, Aquinas’ *Summa Theologica* frequently uses St. Augustine. However, Aquinas also breaks away from St. Augustine in several aspects. For example, Aquinas brings the human intellect to the center of his theological argument, and in this respect Puritanism is much closer to Augustinianism than to Thomism. Aquinas presents reason as a unique human faculty that makes man a human being; in other words, man is created in the image of God, and the very image of God can be found in reason. Unlike lower (non-rational) animals, man is close to God because he is endowed with reason by
God. Puritans look to St. Augustine. They rely on Augustine when they say that man is totally depraved after the Fall. There are several crucial points on which Thomism and Reformed theology disagree, such as rationality, free choice, and intrinsic goodness of mankind. Although Milton has been well-known as a Protestant writer, unlike many other pessimistic Puritans, Milton was influenced by the Thomist theories of natural law. This claim is substantiated by the fact that Milton’s unequivocal emphasis on reason, happiness, inherent human goodness, and free will is more compatible with Thomism than with the Augustinian or Protestant doctrines.

In the City of God (413-426) St. Augustine says that “the greatness of Adam and Eve’s crime depraved their nature” (13. 2). His spiritual successors, the Reformed theologians, such as Martin Luther (1483-1546) and Jean Calvin (1509-1564), reiterate this gloomy view. Because one of the starting points of Protestant doctrine is original sin, it is natural that Protestant theologians think human nature to be totally depraved after the Fall. Luther, for example, considers “the scholastic statement that ‘the natural powers are unimpaired’” to be a “terrible blasphemy” and further says that “memory, will and mind are most depraved and seriously weakened, utterly leprous and unclean” (Works 12. 308). Calvin, likewise, declares that all nature changed into depravity and corruption after the Fall. Calvin’s firm belief in Adam’s change after the Fall leads him to say in the Institutes of the Christian Religion (1527-1551) that “even though God’s image was not totally annihilated and destroyed in him [Adam], yet it was so corrupted that whatever remains is frightful deformity” (Institutes 3. 142). He also argues that although “human nature in itself is good,” corruption has been brought into “human nature by sin. Natural gifts—the intellect and will—have been corrupted by the fall. Though fallen human intellect is not totally destroyed, it still conserves a natural desire for truth. Even this search for truth leads us into pride and vanity” (Institutes 3. 145). Calvin emphasizes the irrevocable and profound effects of original sin. Because of Adam’s sin transmitted to his progeny, no one is immune to sin.
This disparaging view of human nature as corrupt inevitably leads Calvinists to put grace (supernatural) much higher than nature. However, for Aquinas human nature is not so irrevocably corrupted because even after the Fall it still reflects divine attributes. William Grace observes the contrast in the notion of nature of man between St. Augustine and St. Aquinas:

St. Augustine maintained that human nature was essentially corrupted through original sin. In Thomistic thought it is assumed that the essence of something cannot be depraved without the nature of that thing being changed. If man's essence is affected through the Fall, man is no longer man, but something else.

While the Reformed theologians like Luther inherit St. Augustine's view of nature as totally corrupted, St. Thomas believes that original sin could not entirely change human nature. As I will explain later in detail, in the Summa Contra Gentiles (1259-64) for instance, Aquinas offers a theory that minimizes the effect of original sin (Book IV. Ch. 50). Much more optimistic than Reformed theology, the doctrine of natural law provides a positive theological framework for Milton. Optimism and rationalism persist in Milton's Comus, the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce, and Paradise Lost.

Like natural law philosophers, Milton sees nature, including human nature, as inherently good, innocent, free, and moral. The notion of natural law in Milton's Christian Doctrine (pub. 1825) is in accordance with that of Cicero and Aquinas: "The law of God is either written or unwritten. The unwritten law is no other than that law of nature given originally to Adam, and of which a certain remnant, or imperfect illumination, still dwells in the hearts of all mankind" (1. 26. 516). Milton also declares that "the law of nature" is implanted in man, innately good, and is "itself sufficient to teach whatever is in accord with right reason i.e, whatever is intrinsically good" (CD 1. 10. 353). Milton's thought on natural law parallels with that of his predecessors, particularly that of Aquinas, who holds that "the natural law is promulgates by the very
fact that God instilled it into man's mind so as to be known by him naturally" (ST I-II. q. 90, a. 4). Milton agrees with other philosophers of natural law that natural law comes from God, but it is the human intellect that enables man to comprehend.

Two distinctive features of Milton's idea of natural law are as follows. First, Milton makes a connection between eternal and natural law. The natural law is defined by Milton as God's instruction to mankind through nature. God is the unequivocal source of moral standard, as he says: "If there were no God, there would be no dividing line between right and wrong. What was to be called virtue, and what vice, would depend upon mere arbitrary opinion" (CD 1. 2. 132). And natural law addresses the moral ground that is reflective of the divine nature. The moral structure in Paradise Lost is best shown in the picture of Eden, the locus of innocence, freedom, and harmony between man and woman, and between man and nature. Milton's theory of natural law thus revolves around the crucial point; that is, the "correlation between the law and morals" (Loney 56).

Second, according to Aquinas, natural-law precepts point to that which is fulfilling and complective of man. There is in Thomas's opinion, as McInerney observes, a "variety of ways in which man can attain their completeness or perfection as men" ("Principle" 145). Milton's concept of the law of nature is that man is essentially capable of reaching toward the highest good; that is to say, the completion of oneself. Matrimony for Milton should be a fulfillment and completion of the scheme of universal and individual nature. Adam in Paradise Lost, for example, is portrayed as a perfect being only when he is in company with Eve. Both man and wife are complementary to each other. In the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce Milton acknowledges that married couples are not always harmonious, and accordingly, their matrimony cannot help them to fulfill and complete their nature. If man cannot complete or fulfill his nature through marriage, marriage loses its raison d'etre. In that case, divorce should be socially and legally permitted: "if therefore divorce may be so natural, and that law and nature are not
to go contrary, then to forbid divorce compulsory, is not only against nature, but against law” (346). Milton again argues for divorce: “the law forbidding divorce never attains to any good end of such prohibition, but rather multiplies evil” (346-7).

The significance of the doctrine of natural law lies in its emphasis on the human intellect, as Aquinas argues that “a natural thing is placed between two intellects: the Divine, which measures, and the human, which is measured” (De Veritate 1. 2). Aquinas maintains in the Summa Theologica: “Man has a natural inclination to know the truth about God, and to live in society: and in this respect, whatever pertains to this inclination belongs to the natural law; for instance, to shun ignorance” (I-I. q. 94, a. 2). He views reason as a precept of action, a power or a sovereign faculty through which truth is discovered. The idea that right reason is the candle of the Lord is the basis upon which Aquinas grounds his ethical principles.

In contrast to this Thomistic view of reason as the moral foundation, Calvin underscores the incapacity of reason in Institutes of the Christian Religion. He maintains in that book that even the “greatest geniuses are blinder than moles” in “(1) knowing God, (2) knowing his fatherly favor in our behalf, in which our salvation consists, and (3) knowing how to frame our life according to the rule of his law (II. ii. 18). Thus, the Reformed divine disregards reason as inconsequential to the attainment of salvation. Calvin even chastises the philosophical claim that reason of the human understanding is sufficient for its proper government. He insists that “reason, though not totally destroyed by the Fall, exhibits nothing but deformity and ruin, and the will is fettered by depraved and inordinate desire, so that it cannot aspire after anything that is good” (Institutes III. 143). Luther unexceptionally expresses a contemptuous view of reason by calling it “the devil’s... whore” (Works 51. 374).

Most of all, the scholastic belief in human reason not only as a remedy to sweeping passion, but also as a ground of morality for mankind is antithetical to the Protestant rejection of reason in favor of faith. Aquinas champions reason: “Every man,
in as much as he is reasonable, has some share in governing according to the free choice of reason” (ST II-II. q. 47, a. 12). For him faith and reason are complementary, not antithetical, as Jan Aertsen says: “Aquinas’s synthesis of faith and the natural desire to know indicates that faith must not be conceived of as an elimination of our intellectual nature, but as its perfection” (33). St. Augustine, on the contrary, thinks human beings’ intellectual desire to be incompatible with, or even dangerous to, faith. Following his teaching, Reformed divines think of reason as merely a mechanical and functional faculty that has nothing to do with morality. Both Aquinas and Milton foreground reason as the divinely given and God-like faculty that ennobles humanity.

In accordance with the traditional idea of natural law, Milton represents reason not only as the divinely endowed faculty, but also as the God-like quality, through which God makes Adam in His image and by which man is dignified. Milton’s concept of reason is right reason, and right reason articulates natural law. As Thomas explains natural law as “the rational creature’s participation of the eternal law,” (ST I-II. q. 91, a. 2), Milton portrays man as reflective of some kind of divine attributes, like reason and goodness. Whereas Calvin devotes the whole of Third Book of the Institutes of the Christian Religion to an explication of Grace and Salvation as an arbitrary scheme of the inscrutable will of God, Milton focuses on the “ethical, fixed firmly in a morally ordered universe with a rational God at its core” (Loney 45).

Throughout his writings, Milton illustrates reason as a paramount faculty of man. In Paradise Lost, for instance, Milton’s portrayal of Adam as the embodiment of reason draws upon the scholastic exegesis of man. Milton’s God declares that He made man right and good, by granting everything, including reason, to man. God proclaims:

[Adam] had of mee

All he could have; I made him just and right,

Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall. (3. 97-99)

Adam’s capacity to name all the animals, fowl, and fish epitomizes his power to exercise
reason. Milton’s Adam relates to his celestial guest Raphael how he comes to naturally name all the creatures:

I nam’d them [Bird and Beast], as they pass’d and understood
Thir Nature, with such knowledge God endu’d
My sudden apprehension. (8, 352-4)

As Adam names the animals, so does Milton’s Eve name the flowers. Eve makes a claim to have named flowers when she has to leave paradise: “O flow’rs ... I gave ye names” (11, 273, 277). Like philosophers of natural law, Milton believes in man’s ability to exercise some degree of reason and free will even after the Fall. For example, in Book Ten of Paradise Lost Eve’s reconciliation with Adam after the Fall paves the way for their genuine reconciliation with God and saves them from the possible further Fall. That the first parents do not make a second mistake of committing suicide also substantiates their still remaining ability to exercise reason rightly.

In the theory of natural law, reason always goes with free will. Reason and freedom are so complicatedly interwoven that they cannot be thought of as being separate from each other. Man is naturally a free agent because of his natural capability to exercise reason. Protestant theologians, on the other hand, view reason with suspicion. Contrary to the Reformed theologian, as Onno Oerlemans differentiates Milton’s doctrine from the Protestant doctrine, “Milton becomes almost obsessively concerned with demonstrating the fundamental freedom of man’s will” (1). For Milton “reason is but choosing” (Arcopagitica) and, therefore, freedom of choice is a fundamental right of the human. Aquinas even admits that man is free to reject grace, as William Grace indicates: “man could accept or reject grace at his discretion—that man of himself did a good work in accepting grace” (5). Likewise, Milton declares the importance of freedom of faith in Christian Doctrine:

It is much better to allow to man some portion of free will in respect of good works, or at least of good endeavors. ... for if our personal religion were not in
some degree dependent on ourselves, and in our own power, God could not properly enter into a covenant with us; neither could we perform ... the conditions of the covenant. (1. 12. 213-4)

While Christian liberty, one of the core doctrines of Protestantism, is confined to the individual's right to reject Papal and governmental interferences, Aquinas' concept of free will should be understood in the larger context of the natural law. Protestantism originated in the rejection of the Pope as an intermediary authority between man and God and emphasized the individual's piety as the crucial factor in attaining salvation. However, except for the freedom to resist church hierarchy, man is not endowed with much freedom concerning salvation because, according to the Protestant dogmas, the assertion of freedom does not dignify God but strengthens human vanity and arrogance.

On the other hand, St. Thomas teaches that a human being is by nature a free agent who can even reject God's gift of salvation. Calvin, for example, disapproves of the scholastic "doctrine of free will" as being "always in danger of robbing God of his honor" and urges us to "abandon all self-approbation" (Institutes II. ii. 10).

In Institutes of the Christian Religion, Calvin also teaches us "to yield all confidence in ourselves and humbly plead for pardon," to "abandon all thought of [our] own glory," and to "cast off all notion of own worth and to put away all self-assurance" lest we should "puff up" or "perish at his presence" (III. xx. 8). Calvin even denies human dignity: "No man is worthy to present himself to God and come into his sight" (III. xx. 17). While the Protestant doctrines focus on the arbitrariness of God's sovereignty, Milton imagines a harmonious and independent relationship between man and God. For example, in Paradise Lost the relation that Adam has with God is independent and self-motivated: Adam freely worships and obeys his Creator and voluntarily asks Him for a mate. This act of free asking entitles Milton to be called a thinker of natural law.

Philosophers of natural law like Plato, Aristotle, and Aquinas discussed not only
reason and free will, but also happiness as one of the important subjects of natural law. For Aquinas happiness is something that can be sought and attained by man, as he says “Happiness is called man’s supreme good, because it is the attainment or enjoyment of the supreme good” (ST I-II. q. 3, a. 1). Unlike the thinker of natural law, Luther says that happiness is something that can never be sought: “the best happiness and gaiety is that which is not sought but is offered unexpectedly by God without your caring or planning” (Works 15. 32). Most Reformed thinkers believe that happiness can only be given by God’s arbitrary will; thus, happiness is not something that man can seek.

Milton’s notion of happiness parallels Thomist theories of natural law. Like Aristotle, Aquinas and Milton emphasize happiness as the ultimate end of human beings. The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce specifically deals with the issue of happiness in matrimony. Asserting that “in God’s intention a meet and happy conversation is the chiefest and noblest end of marriage,” Milton declares that the purpose of God’s creation is to make His creatures live in happiness (DDD 246). The divorce pamphlet’s crucial argument revolves around the incompatibility of the married people who are forced to stay wedded despite the lack of love or happiness. To coerce the married couple to live in unhappiness by man-made law is both unnatural and against God’s will because marriage was originally instituted for happiness of husband and wife. In his effort to provide valid—both legal and moral—grounds for divorce, Milton appeals to the scholastic concept of happiness as a final goal for every man. For Milton the Mosaic permission of divorce is directly from God and thus more natural than the canon law that forces cohabitation of two married people whose natures disagree with each other.

Paradise Lost also describes the marital happiness of Adam and Eve, who have been living happily while Adam and Eve worship and obey God, but “fondly lost” that happiness in the aftermath of the Fall. God has endow’d [Adam] with “two fair gifts: Happiness and Immortality” (11. 59, 57-8). Milton’s portrayal of the first parents’ connubial happiness is thus influenced by the long tradition of natural law, particularly by
the doctrine of happiness as the ultimate end of mankind.

While St. Augustine and his intellectual descendants (Puritan theologians) categorically condemn post-lapsarian sexuality, Aquinas approves of it not only as conducive to the preservation of human beings, but also as an ingredient of happiness. Aquinas never condemns sexual pleasure per se; it becomes for him despicable only when it is too excessive to be brought under the sway of reason. Developing St. Paul’s concept of marriage that “it is better to take a wife than to pollute oneself by associating with a harlot,” Calvin thinks “continence” to be “a special gift of God bestowed . . . upon a few of the members” of the church (Institutes II. viii. 42). The underlying thought of this remark is that sexuality is neither desirable nor spiritual, as Calvin highly praises celibacy: “through the condition of human nature, and by the lust aroused after the Fall, we . . . are doubly subject to women’s society” (II. viii. 42). Calvin believes sexual desire to be the negative consequence of the Fall. The best gift from God is the power to overcome the temptation of this carnal desire, but unfortunately not everyone has the will power to resist it. As a sole remedy for the desire, marriage is instituted. Calvin thus believes that man is better off without sexual desires.

In addition to the necessity for the preservation of the human species, asserts Aquinas, man naturally has a sexual inclination. Milton’s Adam and Eve enjoy sexual love without feeling any kind of shame and call it “the Crown of all our bliss” (4. 728). Thus, for Milton sexual pleasure, a natural instinct of human beings, is indispensable for human happiness. These attitudes towards love and happiness are particularly Thomistic because Aquinas maintains that sexual pleasure is divinely intended for the purpose of the preservation of the species. Nothing seems to be wrong which is conducive to procreation. These examples and incidents rightly entitle Milton to be aligned with natural-law thinkers.

Milton, familiar with classical and biblical hermeneutic traditions, demonstrates the influence of the long tradition of natural law in his Comus, the Doctrine and
Discipline of Divorce, and Paradise Lost. Milton wrote poetry and prose works in a way of responding to the philosophical problems, such as the basis of human morality and rationality. As a solution to these questions, he came up with the idea of natural law, as the reader can notice the emphasis on the intrinsic goodness, reason and free will, and happiness. The Greco-Roman and medieval philosophers also offered some explanations to these questions of human nature and man's relationship with God through the ideas of natural law. The philosophers of natural law postulate the theory of natural law in order to establish the law higher than human law, which is a human construct always subject to change according to time and place. Natural law also advocates egalitarianism because it is founded on the premise that all men are endowed with reason through which men can discern good from evil. Milton's idea of natural law represented in Comus, Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce, and Paradise Lost demonstrate his egalitarian impulses. Milton tries to glorify God by dignifying man's ethical choice and rational power as rooted in man's resemblance to God.
Notes


Ralph McInerny in "Ethics" Cambridge Companion to Aquinas (pp.196-216) also presents rationality as the core concept of Aquinas' idea of natural law.


2. Scholars agree that St. Thomas greatly contributed to the systematization of natural law. James Reilly evaluates Aquinas's contribution: Thomas "brought" its theory "to fruition" (3). Joseph Duncan, for example, assesses the accomplishment of St, Aquinas: "Thomas formed a comprehensive, rational, Christian view of man's origin, nature, and destiny that was still . . . highly authoritative in the seventeenth century, even by many English Protestants" (70). Aquinas's appropriation of the first-century Church Fathers' theology into more systematic Christian doctrines is a notable achievement.

The philosopher of natural law, d'Entreves, presents St Aquinas's theory of natural law as "the best illustration of the part which that notion was called upon to play in one of the great constructive periods of Western civilization" (39). Also, Stein and Shand rank Thomas as "the most significant figure" in the natural law tradition (8).

Paul Sigmund, notices Thomas's influence: "Aquinas's writings were widely taught, especially by the Dominican order . . . and his Summa theologiae was placed on the altar . . . as a source from which to draw answers to the arguments of the Protestant
reformers” (228). That is why this dissertation presents Aquinas as one of the most distinguished proponents of natural law.


4. Right reason is one of the major subjects of natural law. For a detailed explanation of right reason, see Chapter Four of this dissertation.
CHAPTER TWO

(RENAISSANCE NATURAL LAW AND MITON)

With the shift in the intellectual and religious atmosphere from medieval
scholasticism to Renaissance humanism, the doctrine of natural law underwent a
substantial change. The change in the concept of natural law was brought about mainly
by the change in opinions concerning nature (including human nature). While the
scholastic concept of man as innocent and rational remained in some traditional thinkers
like Richard Hooker (1554-1600), Protestant and Hobbesian views of man as depraved or
self-oriented emerged radically and provoked controversy, as I will explain later in this
chapter. Philosophers of the traditional school of natural law like Aquinas and Hooker
optimistically present human nature as innocent and capable of acting according to reason
and of making free choices. Protestant Reformers, such as Luther and Calvin, and
Hobbes proved themselves, for different reasons, to have no great illusion about human
nature by arguing that men are fallen and selfish. Milton’s knowledge of the theories of
natural law, which appeared to be influential in the characterization of the original parents
as innocent in Paradise Lost can be understood as a cultural response to contemporary
thought on man—whether man is inherently good or evil. Against the contemptuous view
of man as irrevocably fallen or self-serving, Milton tries to restore human dignity by
resorting to the idea of natural law systematically developed by the thirteenth-century
scholastic, Aquinas.

This chapter will undertake the study of how Milton’s contemporaries view nature
and man and, then, how Milton’s response to the new school of natural law reflects the
scholastic theory of natural law. Milton’s theory of natural law demonstrates a familiarity
with the long tradition of natural law in which nature, including human nature, is thought
of not only as innocent and moral, but also as rational. In the Renaissance period the
scholastics’ influence diminished, as James Daly notices: “the Reformation greatly
weakened the idea of natural law” (33). The modern theory of natural law emerged in the
Renaissance and flourished in Europe and England. Milton lived and produced
voluminous works in a period which was marked by transition from the metaphysical to a
modern theory of natural law.

Despite the emergence of new ideas on human nature, the Thomist concept of
natural law did not die out during the Renaissance. The divergence among opinions of
the natural law is made clear by comparing the views of Hooker and Hobbes. Richard
Hooker belongs to the traditional group of natural law, represented by Cicero and
Aquinas. As “one of the ablest and certainly most unbiased defenders of Thomist legal
philosophy,” Hooker believes natural law to be an expression of divine wisdom and a
rational foundation of ethical principles (d’Entreves 44). Like Aquinas, his notion of law
is larger than positive law: “under the name of Lawe, we must do not only that which God
hath written in tables and leaves, but that which nature also hath engraven in the hearts of
men” (A Learned Sermon of the Nature of Pride 5).

In Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity Hooker catalogues laws: the law of God,
the law of nature, and the law of societies. He also defines law as “a directive rule unto
goodness of operation. The rule of divine operations outward, is the definitive
appointment of God’s owne wisedome set down within himself. The rule of naturall
agents that worke by simple necessity, is the determination of the wisedome of God,
known to God himselfe . . .” (I. 8. 4). Hooker inherits the natural-law tradition that
equates “Law rationall” with “the law of nature” which “humaine nature knoweth it selfe
in reason universally bound unto” (I. 8. 9). His thought is egalitarian because it has its
basis in reason, which is equally bestowed upon everybody: “This law comprehendeth all
those things which men by the light of their naturall understanding evidently know . . . to
be vertuous or vitious, good or evil for them to doe" (I. 8. 9). Hooker also advocates the possibility that natural law can be understood without any aid of revelation or divinity. His optimism reaches its peak in the belief in the moral function of reason: the natural light associated with reason which is inherent in man is sufficient to discern what is good from what is wrong.

In 1654 Nathaniel Culverwell also reaffirms in Discourse of the Light of Nature the Thomist definition of natural law as the derivation from eternal law:

The eternal Law, the fountain of Law, out of which you may see the Law of Nature bubbling and flowing forth to sons of men. For, as Aquinas does very well tell us, the Law of Nature is nothing but participatio Legis aeternea in Rationonali creatura, the copying out of the eternal Law, and the imprinting of it upon the breast of a Rationall being; that eternal Law was in a manner incarnated in the Law of nature. (20, 25)

Departing from Hobbesian pessimism, John Locke’s (1632-1704) Essays on the Law of Nature (1660) represents the optimistic Renaissance belief in natural law. He almost reiterates the traditional ideas of natural law elaborated by Aquinas and Hooker:

This law of nature can be described as being the decree of the divine will discernible by the light of nature and indicating what is and what is not in conformity with rational nature, and for this very reason commanding and prohibiting ... all people are by nature endowed with reason and natural law can be known by reason. (111)

He also says that “the law of nature becomes known to men by the light of nature alone” (115). Locke’s notion of natural law can be understood in the long tradition of natural law.

And, then, why was the traditional theory of natural law so significant in Milton’s hermeneutics and poetic representations? Milton lived in the period of transition when established medieval ecclesiastical authorities were increasingly under suspicion not only
by the emerging sciences, but also by Protestantism. Philosophers of the traditional
school of natural law like Aquinas postulated a body of higher laws—eternal law and
human law (e.g. positive law)—that express the universal truth of God and tried to
establish corresponding qualities between divine and human nature. The modern school
of natural law represented by Hobbes ridiculed the traditional Thomist notion of man as
having some divine attributes that make him “act rationally and virtuously” (ST I-II. q. 94,
a. 3) as too naive a fantasy about human nature, and the Reformed divines such as Luther
attacked the view as blasphemous. In that religious and intellectual atmosphere, Milton
might have felt the need to redefine and reassess man’s nature against the contemporary
theories which tried to free human nature from its close association with Catholic
theology and the Church. Against the new school of natural law that saw man, or, at
least, human actions, as independent of God, Milton arduously adhered to the traditional
explanation of man as created in God’s image and as sharing some divine attributes.

The basic assumption of Milton’s theology is that human nature reflects nature,
more specifically, the nature of harmonious order that God established. What was the
Renaissance view of nature? How did the Renaissance philosophers view human nature?
Several Renaissance thinkers tried to define the term. Richard Hooker, for example, in
Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity (1594-1600) interprets human nature in terms of the
intellectual power:

   Capable we are of God both by understanding and will: by understanding, as he is that
   soveraigne Truth which comprehendeth the rich treasures of all wisdom; by
   will, as he is that sea of goodnes, whereof who so tasteth shall thirst no more. . .
   nature even in this life doth plainly claim and call for a more divine perfection
   than either of these two that have been mentioned. (I. xi. 3-4)

   How did other Renaissance thinkers view “nature”? An understanding of their
notions of nature will help the reader better appreciate Milton’s thought on natural law.
Some writers see nature as the traditional philosophers of natural law did. The
Renaissance French Jesuit Pere Garasse, in his *Doctrine curieux des beaux-esprits de ce temps ou pretendus tels* (1621), gives the following definition of the term nature: 1) "l'ordre et reglement des causes secondes" [the order of second causes], 2) "les principes interieurs des choses" [the nature or essence of a thing], and 3) the peculiar inclination, good or bad, which leads a man to do this or that (translated by Boas’ *The Happy Beast*). In 1628, William Bloys writes in *Adam in his Innocencie* about nature:

The great volume of nature, the book of the creatures is laid open before us; and in every leaf, and page, and line of it, God hath imprinted such evident characters of his divine properties, such lively representations of his glory that we may run and read his excellency therein. (8-9)

In *The Best Religion* (1636) Griffith Williams says that “the whole world is nothing else but an explication of God” (305). As shown by several Renaissance thinkers, nature is always associated with God. All these writers belong to the Thomist school of natural law, which differs from the new school of natural law.

However, theological assumptions upon which Aquinas bases his doctrine of natural law give their authority to the new school of natural law which underscores the value of the rights of individual human beings, separation of eternal law from natural law, and rationalism. For example, Hobbes and Reformed theologians like Luther and Calvin, opposing the traditional theories of natural law, deny the notion of human innocence. What is Milton’s position? Between these two schools of natural law, Milton adheres to the traditional school of natural law by objecting to the new theories of natural law.

Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) was generally considered to be the founder of new school of natural law because he endeavored to separate “natural law from the theologians. He used it for a secular purpose, the creation of an international legal system, rather than as an adjunct of theological speculation” (Sigmund 62). Unlike the scholastics, Grotius maintained that the natural law could exist even without a personal and divine Law-Giver, because it had a sufficient basis in reason alone. However, his
thought was not yet successfully developed into a systematic body of modern natural law independent of theological assumptions. For example, his *The Law of War and Peace* (1625) reiterated Aquinas’ *Summa Theologica* in its argument for the existence of objective right reason resulting from God: “the natural right [natural law] is a dictate of natural reason, shewing the moral turpitude, or moral necessity, of any act from its agreement or disagreement with a rational nature, and consequently that such an act is either commanded or forbidden by God, the author of nature” (21). He then glossed moral necessity as “nothing more than the Laws of Nature [that] must always bind us” (21). There is an indelible Thomistic echo in Grotius’ natural law, when Grotius still associates God with moral authority. That is why scholars of natural law think Grotius in the line with the traditional school of natural law.

Based on the rational foundation, the natural law elaborated by Samuel von Pufendorf (1632-1694) is solidly secular, as demonstrated in his theory of positive and international law. Pufendorf objects to Aquinas’s definition of natural law as the rational creature’s participation of eternal law. However, his belief that men are rational and moral in the state of nature in *On the Law of Nature* (1680) indicates the traditional idea of natural law: “the natural state of man . . . is not one of war but of peace” (II. 2. 9).

Sir Robert Filmer (1588-1653) uses the theory of natural law in order to make his argument for absolute monarchy effective, an argument that it is natural that there be a hierarchical order in society and family. He appropriates natural law as a universal system of law that every man should obey. For example, his *Patriarcha* (pub. 1680) dealing with political obligation and the historical origin of political power comments on the law of nature. Like several Renaissance and modern theorists of natural law, Filmer distinguishes man in a state of nature from his life in civil society. People have formed the family and a state in order to survive. In order to maintain the order of society, each member has a natural obligation to the state. Filmer understands family in the political context and makes an analogy between the state and the family: he gives an absolute
power to the king and the father: “every father is bound by his law of nature to do best for the preservation of his family. . . . a king is tied by the same law of nature to keep this general ground, that the safety of his kingdom be his chief law” (96). Believing that the first state was a family and that the first king was a father, he asserts that submission to patriarchal authority is a crucial obligation. His arguments are thus made with a view to maintaining the established order (the king’s rule). As Filmer’s case illustrates, the theory of natural law can be used for the purpose of preserving the status quo.

During the Renaissance, the concept of natural law underwent a thorough transformation from medieval scholasticism to Renaissance humanism. Paul Sigmund summarizes the rudimentary differences in concepts between the traditional and new natural law: “natural law is transformed from a basic order in the universe which depended on God’s sovereign will . . . into a guarantee of individual rights and a ground for political equality” (88-9). The rise of secularism contributed to the emergence of individualism because both tried to be independent from the ecclesiastical authority and seek material prosperity. And the main contributor to that shift was Thomas Hobbes (1558-1679), for whom the meaning of the laws of nature differs from that of the traditional philosophers of natural law. He secularizes natural law by undermining the validity of its traditional theological framework. In the Leviathan (1651) he singles out self-preservation as the sole natural basis of the inevitability of conflict in desires and actions of men. Hobbes derives universal moral principles from attributes of human nature, which he thinks is governed not by reason, but by passion for self-interest; and he describes the condition of man as “a condition of Warre of every one against every one; in which case every one is governed by his won Reason” and he further sees “the natural Right of every man to every thing” as very dangerous because “there can be no security to any man . . . which Nature ordinarily alloweth men to live” (Ch. 14. 91). His notion of the natural state of mankind is war or quarrel. In the natural state, man fights against each other mainly because his actions are actuated by selfish, not altruistic, motives. And
where selfishness governs human actions, there seems to be no room for ethical considerations. He points out three causes of quarrel: “competition, diffidence, and glory. The first maketh men invade for Gain; the second, for Safety; and the third, for Reputation. The first uses Violence to make themselves Masters of other men” (Leviathan Ch. 13. 88). The Hobbesian assumptions that human acts are motivated by the will to control others and that man will do anything to gain power significantly undermine the ground of man as a moral agent. Hobbes thus envisages man as a being who lacks reason in the Thomist sense, which is one of the crucial components of traditional theory of natural law. There is a difference in the view of reason between Aquinas and Hobbes. Hobbes attacked the institution of universities because of their scholastic origins that emphasized human reason. Scholastics believed that human beings are naturally social beings who live together harmoniously and believed that what binds humans is the God-given faculty, reason. Hobbes thinks that man is essentially an individual being. The only reason that men get together is to relieve men’s fear of insecurity. Humans are rational in the sense that they live together to avoid destruction, but mingling has nothing to do with morality. While the scholastic theory of reason is always closely related with morality, the Hobbesian view of reason is absent of moral concepts.

The Hobbesian idea of natural law represents a form of relativism or subjectivism which repudiates a possibility of any universal or objectively grounded natural law. According to Hobbes, human beings are by nature individualistic, mean, and petty, but they get together because of social needs: they have to form a society in order to survive. Aquinas’s identification of natural right with law, one of the core concepts of natural law, is thus transformed by Hobbes into a distinction of right from law: “Right consisteth in liberty to do, or to forbear; whereas Law Determineth, and bindeth to one of them; so that Law, and Right, differ as much, as Obligation, and Liberty” (Leviathan Ch. 14. 91). Denying the Thomistic understanding of natural law as an ethical precept, Hobbes says that “these dictates of Reason, men used to call by the name of laws, but improperly: for
they are but... Theorems concerning what conduceth to the conservation and defense of
themselves; whereas Law, properly is the word for him, that by right hath command over
others” (Leviathan Ch. 15. 111). Here, Hobbes rejects the traditional idea that there
exists universal truth or natural reason. What matters is a survival of each man or the
hegemony over others in a society. The moral meaning of natural law is entirely absent in
Hobbes’s natural law. For Hobbes, relativism and subjectivism are of importance.
Because ethical relativists like Hobbes and Machiavelli do not believe in the universality
of law, they hold that the existence of differing value systems and ethical codes prove that
there is no one governing principle that is universally applicable to all human acts. All
propositions that evaluate moral standards and codes are meaningless. And any judgment
that one man or one act is morally better than another becomes worthless. Hobbes thinks
that the boundary between the morally good and wrong is not clear.

Subjectivism designates one philosophical position which stresses the role played
by the self or mind. In other words, Hobbes places an emphasis on the observer or the
consciousness, rather than the thing known from the person who observes it. In ethics,
subjectivism holds that to say an action is good or right is to say something about one’s
own or others’ subjective feelings (or reactions to something), but not about the objective
characteristics of that action. “Moral judgments” to Hobbes refer only to subjective
feelings of approval and disapproval. The function of ethical announcement is to give
commands, express feelings, or make exclamations, rather than making an objective
ethical statement. Both subjectivism and relativism thus repudiate the existence of a
universal truth. Hobbes’ subjectivism and relativism are well illustrated by the following
passage:

Whatsoever is the object of any means Appetite or Desire; that is it, which he for
his part calleth Good: And the object of his Hate, and Aversion, Evill; and of his
Contempt, Vile, and Inconsiderable. For these words if Good, Evill, and
Contemptible, are ever used with relation to the person that useth them: There
being nothing simply and absolutely so; nor any Common rule of Good and Evill, to be taken from the nature if the objects themselves. (Leviathan Ch. 6. 38)

Hobbes’ notions of human nature and the state of man provoked controversy. Many preachers, theologians, and philosophers like Filmer, William Lucy, and Bishop John Bramhall attacked Hobbes by publishing writings that condemn his view.¹

In the Renaissance period there was another theological tradition that exhibited totally different characteristics from that of scholasticism: namely, the Protestant philosophy of natural law. While Augustinian hermeneutic traditions were well received by the Protestant theologians, some of Thomas’s doctrines, such as man’s inherent goodness and rationality, were fundamentally incompatible with Puritanism and strongly objected to by them. Sigmund says that in general, “Protestant Christians are critical of the excessive rationalism and optimism of Thomistic ethics” (“Law and Politics” 229). The rationalism criticized by the Protestants refers to the accessibility to man’s rational powers. One of the compelling reasons why Luther assails Aquinas is the scholastic’s kinship to Aristotle, whom Luther thinks to be a pagan philosopher dangerous to the Christian religion. In “An Opinion About Thomas Aquinas Between June 8 and 28, 1532” (1532), Luther censures Aquinas for his Aristotelian leaning: “first Thomas takes statements from Paul, Peter. . . . Afterwards he concludes that Aristotle says so and so and he interprets Scripture according to Aristotle” (Table Talk 39). Despite Aquinas’ initial adoption of the Pauline dogmas, Aquinas’ final appeal to Aristotle (as his exegetical authority) angers Luther. Luther “condemns [Aquinas] in the name of Christian freedom, because [Aquinas] falsely misinterpreted the Scripture and deviated from Paul. Christ can be understood only without Thomas” (Brecht 244). In Luther’s theological view, Aquinas is “the source and the foundation of all heresy, error and obliteration of the Gospel” (Works 15: 184). Luther condemns Thomist teaching that “without grace a good work can be performed” and attacks the scholastic statement that “man has the natural dictate of right reason to which the will can naturally conform” (Works 2: 394).
According to the Reformed theologian Luther, Aquinas misconstrued the Scripture by foregrounding reason, free will, and the possibility of scrutinizing God's will. Grace is one of the cardinal doctrines in Protestant theology. Calvin, for example, insists that everything is subject to grace and that man cannot do something of his own without God's grace. In the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, he argues that "whatever is praiseworthy in works is God's grace: there is not a drop that we ought by rights to ascribe to ourselves" (III. xv. 3). He goes on to say that the doers of "the best in human works . . . receive by way of reward the most ample benefits of God, not because they so deserve but because God's kindness has of itself set this value on them" (III. xv. 3). He means in the passage that every good work is done by God's grace alone. Human efforts are insignificant compared to God's power and grace. Grace alone is essential, and good works are merely coincidental expressions of grace. In that sense human beings are left helpless and hopeless unless God's favor is shown to them.

In summary, the outbreak of the Reformation effected the decline of scholasticism. That decline can be understood from the historical context in which Reformed theology mainly aimed to oppose such doctrines of scholasticism as reason, human innocence, and free will. James Daly argues that "the Reformation greatly weakened the idea of natural law . . . and strengthened the notion of Divine Will as the sole foundation of ethics and the only means by which sense could be made of human existence. The laws of God were inscrutable and incapable of any merely human existence" (33).

Although both Reformed divines and Hobbes attacked the traditional school of natural law, they are different in philosophical positions. The fundamental doctrine of Protestantism is man's awareness of original sin and the depravity of the human condition. Ridden by the sense of guilt, Protestant teachers urged their congregation to repent and to abandon their pride. The distinction between good and evil is clear because Protestant morality is based on the theological assumptions of good and bad. Neither a
Reformed theologian nor a believer, Hobbes focused little on the issues of original sin or man's inherent goodness. What interested him was human affairs in the secular world, not the issue of salvation or grace which we may or may not receive. He was straightforward in presenting human nature as self-serving and power-hungry because he did not view man as a religious, but as a secular, being. Regarding this world as a place full of conflict of interests, Hobbes seemed to believe survival to be the most important matter. For Hobbes it is natural that men struggle to survive, and thus there is no clear demarcation between good and evil when it comes to the matter of survival.

Milton rejects both the Hobbesian and Protestant ideas of man. Milton's concept of natural law conflicts with the Hobbesian view of man as devoid of moral principles. Milton's theological position on nature is closer to scholasticism than to the Puritan Reformers. Milton showed a similarity to Aquinas and Hooker in this respect, and his doctrine of natural law grew out of religious and intellectual impulses of explaining the place of man in the cosmos and the ways of God to men. Milton was never a Hobbesian in the sense that he never separated morality and rationality from God. For him God is the absolute source of goodness. He wanted to justify and reassert divine Providence by using the traditional theories of natural law that provided a rational foundation of ethics. Milton's systematic theological treatise, Christian Doctrine, defines law: "The unwritten law is no other than that law of nature given originally to Adam" (1. 26. 516). Here his emphasis on the terms "nature" and "original" is noticeable. Milton's declaration that "law of nature was so implanted and innate in him" shows his intellectual debt to Aquinas (CD 1. 10. 356). Aquinas says that "all things partake somewhat of the eternal law, in so far as from its being implanted on them, they derive their respective inclinations to their proper acts and ends" (ST I-II. q. 91, a. 2). Milton's concept of the unwritten law is, thus, virtually identical with Thomas's natural law. The parallel between Thomist natural law and Milton's unwritten law demonstrates the common tradition of natural law. They share the very similar views of nature and the laws of nature.
I. Nature

How does Milton view nature? It seems that he construes nature as an integral part of his systematic theology of natural law. Familiar with the long tradition of natural law, ranging from the Greco-Roman antiquity to the Renaissance, Milton appropriates Thomas’s theory of natural law in *Comus* (1634) and *Paradise Lost* (1667).

*Comus* provides the reader with an opportunity to examine Milton’s philosophical and theological views of nature because the masque is about nature and morality. In *Comus* the idea of nature includes human nature, and the moral issue involves passion reason, and chastity. The intellectual debate between the Lady and Comus is central to an understanding of several issues that the masque raises, such as nature, morality, and virtue. Thus, *Comus* brings up the question of what the relationships between nature and human nature and between natural passion and chastity are. In *Comus* Milton uses light image which Thomas associates with natural reason. The masque also can be read as Milton’s intellectual inquiry of the source of human virtue: where does the goodness of human beings (represented by the Lady) come from? The origin of the Lady’s natural virtue proves to be natural law.

In the very early stage of the masque, Milton introduces a hermaphrodite, Comus, foil to the Lady. First, the etymology of Comus calls for the reader’s attention. The name Comus is derived from the Greek noun *komos*, which designates a revel or carousal, and he is known as the god of feasts. Famous for his energy and passion, Comus is traditionally regarded as a sybarite whose parents are Venus and Mercury and becomes a typical sensualist, but not necessarily a symbol of immorality. Milton’s change of Comus’s origin by making Circe his mother signifies the change in Comus’s characters because Circe embodies lust (libido). This lineage associates the sensualist Comus with the hedonist and lascivious enchanter of Homer and a representative of libertine nature. The shift in the lineage prefigures Comus’s character. Thus, Milton reinforces his theme
by dramatizing Comus's morally wrong behavior. Circe, a sinister Homeric enchantress, is the origin of Comus. Since Comus responds to the beauty of nature only to pervert it, he should be characterized as unnatural. For him the reason that nature exists is only to gratify his sensual and sexual desires and, accordingly, he always tries to make most of nature.

Comus is a kind of figure that Hobbes will describe later as a representative of man because Comus has little sense of morality, as the typical Hobbesian. The governing force of Comus is not reason or natural light, but sensual and sexual pleasures. Physical nature is the source of pleasure for Comus: everything in the earth is created for his enjoyment. He ridicules the Stoics and Cynics like Cicero, who was influential for Aquinas, for their rejection of and contempt for comfort:

O foolishness of men! That lend their ears
To those budge doctors of the Stoic Fur,
And fetch their precepts from the Cynic Tub,
Praising the lean and sallow abstinence. (706-9)

As the Lady observes, he does not “know / More happiness than this [his] present lot” (788-9). There is no universal standards of human acts in Comus’ ethical system: everything is relativistic and subjective. Whatever satisfies his desires is thought to be good by him because, as the Lady perceives it, he is unable to “apprehend / The sublime notion” and “serious doctrine of Virginity” (784-5, 787).

Against Comus’s libertine view of nature, the Lady defends nature as a “good cateress” (764) and “the laws of nature” as “sober” (766):

do not charge most innocent Nature
As if she would her children should be riotous
With her abundance; she, good cateress
Means her provisions only to the good
That live according to her sober laws
And holy dictate of spare temperance: (762-7)

The Lady’s statement that nature “means her provision only to good” can be read as an expression of one idea of natural law: nature’s intention of her bounty is only for “the good” (765). The last two lines (766-7) may suggest Thomas’s influence on Milton through the Lady’s understanding of nature. When he has the Lady say that nature abides by “her sober laws” (766), Milton also appropriates the Thomist idea of natural law in that nature, reason, and law are almost identical. The argument that Milton’s poetic description of nature in Comus may vitiate the Puritan theory of nature as totally depraved and corrupt is bolstered by Madsen, who claims that “Milton’s doctrine of pure nature, in practice, his humanistic definition of pure nature aligns him with the Catholic tradition of Aquinas and Hooker” (278).

The Lady naturally embodies virtue that Aquinas describes as one of the principles of natural law. Thomas says that

There is in every man a natural inclination to act according to reason: and this is to act according to virtue. Consequently, considered thus, all acts of virtue are prescribed by the natural law: since each one’s reason naturally dictates to him to act virtuously. (ST I-II. q. 94, a. 3)

The Lady acts according to the dictate of natural law because she is virtuous. The Lady’s virtue becomes clear when it is compared to Comus’s unnaturalness. The Lady embodies the idea of nature, as Madsen asserts that she “has the power of nature and poetry of nature on her side” (196). Comus, on the other hand, is the Lord of misrule who pretends to imitate the order and harmony of the sphere, but only to fail. His evil intention is eventually disclosed by the Lady. In the Lady’s view, nature is not only highly ordered, but also rational, moderate, and ethical; thus, she affirms Hooker’s statement in Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity: “The workes of Nature are all behooveful, beautiful, without superfluity or defect” (I. 8. 9). The basic assumption from which the Lady proceeds is that moral principles are operative in nature. Comus, on the contrary, argues
that nature is so fertile that any regulation placed upon nature is not nature’s own law. He thus tries to use the fecundity of nature merely to gratify his physical and sensual desires.

While the Lady can be called a Thomist, Comus is the kind of figure that Hobbes will describe as representative of all humans. Milton presents the Lady as a person embodying the virtue and power of nature, thus, power of reason and law. The Lady’s audacious challenge to Comus’s distorted view of nature demonstrates Milton’s intellectual debt to Thomas’s idea of natural law: nature is innocent, reflective of God, and rationally ordered. Comus tempts the Lady into using her beauty in what he thinks to be a natural way (earthly and secular), when he charges the Lady as incapable of appreciating the fecundity of nature:

But you invert the cov’nants of her [nature’s] trust
And harshly deal, like an ill borrower,
With that which you receiv’d on other terms,
Scorning the unexempt condition
By which all mortal frailty must subsist,
Refreshment after toil, ease after pain,
That have been tri’d all day without repast
And timely rest have wanted;
This will restore all soon. (682-7)

Where the Lady views nature as orderly, Comus’s zeal makes nature chaotic.

While nature requires that man sleep at night, Comus’s refusal to sleep at night when he seeks pleasure is unnatural:

What hath night to do with sleep?
Night hath better sweet to prove,
Venus now awakes, and wak’ns Love.
Come let us our rite begin,
’Tis only day-light that makes Sin. (122-6)
The carouse at night signifies his reversed life style, given the Thomistic idea of natural law. Man naturally sleeps at night and acts during day time. This inversion of the natural relation between sleep and night testifies to his unnatural character and practice.

Misconstruing nature as merely extravagant, fecund, exuberant, and pleasure-arousing, Comus is unable to see the other sides—rational and moral—of nature. Madsen argues that “Comus represents the chaotic Nature of waste fertility, and the only principle of control he knows is the ‘curious taste’ of the pleasure-seeker” (197). While nature for Comus is an area of darkness peopled with “ugly-headed Monsters” (695), it is for the Lady a beautiful place where

a sable cloud

Turn[s] forth her silver lining on the night,

And casts a gleam over this tufted Grove. (223-5)

For the Lady nature signifies brightness and beauty as the terms “silver” and “gleam” indicate; however, for Comus it means darkness. Thus his view of nature suggests one aspect of his gloomy character.

That Milton uses the concept of nature as an ethical norm is demonstrated in the Lady’s insistence that nature is a good cateress and intends her bounty only for the good: “Only the good men can give good things /And that which is not good is not delicious” (702-3). For Milton innocence is directly related to inherent goodness, as shown by the Lady. The Elder Brother’s confidence that “evil” will “mix no more with goodness” (593-4) reveals Milton’s notion of ethics.

That the Lady cherishes chastity illustrates her moral rectitude. Chastity is also one of the crucial doctrines in natural law. Aquinas identifies chastity with “a special way adapted to obtain perfection” and presents “the intensity of the passions” as what “prevents freely giving oneself to God.” He says that “of all the passions the most absorbing is the concupiscence of the flesh and sexual indulgence” (On the Perfection of the Spiritual Life, Ch. 8). Milton portrays the Lady as a person who values chastity:
O welcome pure-eye’d Faith, white-handed Hope,
Thou hov’ring Angel girt with golden wings,
And thou unblemisht form of Chastity. (213-5)

Unlike Calvin, Milton does not regard nature as irrevocably depraved or totally corrupt. His optimism is substantiated by the positive natural imagery in *Comus*. The light emanating from the star is positive because it is for the Lady and her brothers a beacon to her father’s house. Literally, she must go back to the residence of the Earl of Bridgewater, her earthly father. But the house that she is heading for can also be construed as the mansion of her heavenly Father, if we consider the ponderously religious tone of the masque’s ending. One of the possible readings of the ending is that it makes the masque a religious drama with a theological meaning because in the epilogue, the Attendant spirit exhorts “mortals” to

Love virtue, she alone is free,
She can teach ye how to climb
Higher than the sphery chimes;
Or if virtue feeble were,
Heav’n itself would stoop for her. (1018-23)

The Lady is now prepared for the entrance into heaven, having successfully resisted Comus’s sustained temptations. The guiding light emitting from the stars can be thus interpreted as the natural light in Thomist terms. In his theological system, Aquinas associates natural light with natural reason, which is also the source of virtue, and Milton uses that Thomist analogue in *Comus*. The stars without which the Lady has a difficulty in finding the right way to her house are used as an intellectual and ethical guide for her and her siblings.

The light imagery is itself a very common image both in Aquinas and in *Comus*. However, the Thomist tradition gives a religious meaning to it. Aquinas maintains that “the Psalmist” in Psalm iv. 6 says that “The light of thy countenance, O Lord, is signed
upon us: thus implying that the light of natural reason, whereby we discern what is good and what is evil” is “nothing else than an imprint on us of the Divine light” (ST I-II, q. 91, a. 2). Milton uses the concept of natural law as a rational foundation of ethics. And nature as associated with light and reason is a source of man’s moral and intellectual inspirations: “Virtue could see to do what virtue would / By her own radiant light” (373-4). Nature functions as an intellectual and spiritual guide:

He that has light within his own clear breast
May sit i’th’ center, and enjoy bright day (382-3)

In the terms “light of nature” and “natural reason” the word “nature” refers to the faculty by which man is acquainted with self-evident and ethical truths. The light imagery as related to the light of nature is used as an intellectual, moral, and spiritual beacon which will guide the deceived and friendless:

the Stars,

That nature hung in Heav’n, and fill’d their Lamps
With everlasting oil, to give due light
To the misled and lonely Traveller? (197-200)

Light as natural reason is a concept commonly held by philosophers of natural law in the Thomist tradition. They think of nature as revelatory of God’s will, and God is associated with light as the source of the human intellect. During the Renaissance, light is also symbolic of reason and wisdom. In such works as Comus and Paradise Lost, nature, because of its association with light, is used as an intellectual and moral structure. The predominant light and darkness imagery thus suggests Milton’s theological impulses of identifying light with reason and goodness. Darkness, on the other hand, implies moral and intellectual benightedness.

The Lady in Comus is also presented as an ethical center and ethical symbol. Her rational power enables her to reject Comus’s advances. While the Lady’s virtue is derived from natural reason, Comus, inordinate in his passion for both natural beauty and
sensual pleasure, displays unnatural characteristics, such as the nocturnal revel instead of sleep. Harinder Majara argues that "Milton's deterministic attitude towards nature is that it affirms an unalterable order of nature and future events" (256). Evil exists in nature but, unable to overcome goodness, it only glorifies God's goodness and Grace.

While nature means to the Lady an ethical norm and rationality, it means to the Spirit order and harmony. The Spirit thus represents the ordered and harmonious Nature of the heavenly bodies. It seems that he has in mind the order which is a part of the divine scheme when he talks about nature. The Elder brother naively believes in the natural power of chastity to overcome any evil forces; thus he describes it as "clad in complete steel" that "no savage fierce, bandit, or mountaineer / Will dare to" assail (421, 426-7). He apparently thinks that nature operates favorably to the chaste no matter how severe the circumstances are. Except for Comus, most characters view nature as ordered, harmonious, and innocent.

Natural images in Comus become more sensuous, enriched, and complicated in Paradise Lost. Nature used as a thematic structure links Comus to Paradise Lost, wherein nature functions as an ethical norm. The epic poem continued the natural law tradition in which nature is identified with, not opposed to, the work of God. Milton's view of nature as a book written by God reflects his theological impulses: God alone as uncreated Being created the whole world of creatures. By using the Thomist system of natural law in the portrayal of good and innocent nature, Milton tries to assert divine Providence. The concept of natural law is also a traditional and cultural belief to which Milton positively responds. The loyal Abdiel castigates Satan, who has previously derided the faithful angels of God:

Unjustly thou deprav'st it with the name
Of Servitude to serve whom God ordains,
Or Nature; God and Nature bid the same. (6. 174-6)

Abdiel here articulates what the natural law presupposes; that is, the divine attributes of
natural law. This passage attests to Milton's adherence to the Thomist tradition of natural law: the idea of natural law as revealing God's purposes originates in the Judeo-Christian view of nature, and culminates in Aquinas' natural theory.

Milton's philosophy of natural law is well reflected in the portrait of the Garden of Eden, a locus of beauty, freedom, innocence, and happiness. This view is supported by Loney, who observes: "certainly *Paradise Lost* articulates both the general and specific features of original or primary natural law in its picture of Adam and Eve living in harmony both instructive and rational between the order of their nature and the corresponding order in creation" (11). The correlation between the microcosm and macrocosm is significant because the inherent goodness of Adam and Eve is the very reflection of God's goodness, which is also revealed in most innocent nature.

Philosophers of natural law postulate that human beings are good because they are capable of perfecting and completing themselves, as Raphael says when he undertakes his edification of Adam by narrating the origin of man:

\[
\begin{align*}
O \text{ Adam one Almighty is, from whom} \\
\text{All things proceed, and up to him return.} \\
\text{If not depraved from good, created all} \\
\text{Such to perfection, one first matter all} \\
\text{Indu'd with various forms, various degrees} \\
\text{of Substance, and in things that live, of life. (5. 469-74)}
\end{align*}
\]

As in *Comus*, nature is presented as the system of law and order, and thus an opposition to chaos and confusion:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{But now at last the sacred in influence} \\
\text{Of light appears, and from the walls of Heav'n} \\
\text{Shoots far into the bosom of dim Night} \\
\text{A glimmering dawn, here Nature first begins} \\
\text{Her fardest verge, and Chaos to retire}
\end{align*}
\]
As from her outmost works a brok'n foe (2. 1034-9)

Here the natural law doctrine that order and harmony are natural and chaos and confusion are unnatural is represented.

Book Seven of "Paradise Lost" is Milton's reworking of the Creation account.

During the time of creation, whenever God finishes creating something, "God [sees]" it "good" (7. 248). Having completed the grand task of creation, God views "all that he had made" and "behold[s] all [is] entirely good" (7. 548, 549). Since God is himself good and bountiful, what he has made is incomparably good and fair, as Raphael remembers:

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to behold his new created world
... How it showed
In prospect from his throne, how good, how fair. (7. 554-6)
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The scale of nature, as Milton represents it, explains man's place assigned by God in the cosmos. Milton here implies that the universe is pervaded by an order, a natural order which is highly pleasing to God, as God himself proclaims, because it reflects God's benevolence.

Adam and Eve are first introduced in an incomparably beautiful pastoral setting, the Garden of Eden. Everything in Eden is innocent, beautiful, and good. In this paradise,

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Thus talking hand in hand alone they pass'd
On to thir blissful Bower: it was a place
Chos'n by the sovran Planter, when he fram'd
All things to man's delightful use (4. 689-692).
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When first awakened from a deep sleep, Adam acknowledges that the earth is "a goodly frame" (8.15) and nature is "wise and frugal" (8.26). Adam also expresses the delight he takes in the sight of nature: "Full to the utmost measure of what bliss/Human desire can seek or apprehend" (5. 517).

For Adam and Eve nature is also a site of delight and felicity:

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the earth
Gave the sign of gratulation, and each Hill;
Joyous the birds; fresh gales and gentle airs
Whisper'd it to the woods. (8. 513-6)

Eden is structurally important because it is a place where God placed Adam and Eve
"Full to the utmost measure of what bliss / Human desires can seek or apprehend" (5. 517-8). Eden is a part of cosmos created by God for the sake of the human beings. First of all, it functions as a moral structure: in Eden, Adam and Eve lead a moral life by worshiping their creator and tending the garden. Their inherent goodness is reflective of the harmoniously ordered nature of the garden.

Milton also subscribes to the idea that nature is purposive in the sense that it is intended to be and that it contributes to the good and happiness of Adam and Eve. On another level, Paradise Lost dramatizes how nature essentially participates in the happiness of Adam and Eve in their blessed matrimony:

all Heav’n
And happie Constellations on that hour
Shed thir selectest influence; the Earth
Gave sign of gratulation, and each Hill;
Joyous the Birds; fresh Gales and gentle Aires
Whisp’rd it to the Woods, and from thir wings
Flung Rose, flung Odors from the spicie Shrub,
Disporting, till the amorous Bird of Night
Sung Spousal, and bid haste the Ev’ning Starr
On his Hill top, to light the bridal Lamp. (8. 511-20)

This description of nature reflects Milton’s view of nature. Conjugal love is good and natural, and nature also participates in their happiness.

According to the traditional concept of natural law, the purposes or ends are constitutive of the nature of things. Thus, “the essential nature of a thing—a person or an
association—is its inherent purposes, which, in turn, is its good. Persons and association are to do what they can toward its fulfilment” (Encyclopedia of Religion 319). This view is upheld by Marjorie Nicolson, who asserts that “Nature is purposive. . . . [it] is in some ways equivalent to God. . . . and in the great hymn of Adam and Eve, it seems, indeed, as if nature were God” (422). Nature in Paradise Lost is “glorious work” of God and “wonderous fair,” and God’s “loves works yet these declare / Thy goodness beyond thought, and power Divine” (5. 153-9). Thus, nature is described in association with God. Nature is both God’s creation and reflection of God’s characters like goodness and innocence.

Not only is nature innocent and pure, but it also is equated with reason, as Cicero, Aquinas, and Hooker argue. In Paradise Lost Milton describes nature as rational, as Adam calls nature “wise and frugal” (7. 26) and Michael says that men who serve “ungovern’d appetite pervert “nature’s healthful rules/to loathsome sickness” (11. 517-24). First of all, nature is described as rational because it does not go extremes, but it is moderate. For example, the weather in paradise is neither sultry nor freezing, but mild. Adam and Eve have no hard time under that weather until the Fall. Second, it produces adequately—without any shortage or surplus—whatever is necessary for the first human pair. Milton presents the universe, of which Eden is a part, as rational because, as William Madsen argues, it is an “embodiment of an exemplar in the Mind of Omnipotent Deity: in this world nothing happens at random or by accident, because God’s Providence is all-pervasive” (223). Nature itself also teaches the virtue of temperance and enforces its laws of temperance by rewarding those who observe them. As long as Adam and Eve act according to natural reason, they remain innocent and happy. In that sense nature can be said “to behave in a morally acceptable manner” (Banks 96). Milton’s intentions here are to dignify man who responds to nature and to glorify God.
II. Human Nature

Milton understands human nature in its relation with nature: man is an integral part of nature; therefore, humans reflect some attributes of nature. *Comus* and *Paradise Lost* may be said to be products of Milton's attempts to explore what human nature is and what constitutes human nature. Milton comes to believe in man's goodness, innocence, and capacity to exercise reason and free will because he has confidence that human goodness stems from God's goodness. This religious affirmation of human nature spurs the writing of an epic poem, *Paradise Lost*.

As proclaimed in the invocation to the heavenly Muse, the purposes of *Paradise Lost* are to “assert Eternal Providence” and to “justify the ways of God to men” (1. 25, 26). Milton wants to postulate a body of thought, a special kind, which fits the intention of explaining the ways of God as revealed in His goodness in creating the world and mankind. Here Milton takes an attitude different from Protestant theologians. Milton's way of glorifying the ways of God is to exalt human dignity by focusing on a considerable degree of similitude between divine nature and human nature.

Contrary to the scholastics, Reformed divines insist that we humans must be repentant, realize how fallen and sinful all men are, and then humble ourselves. In *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin declares that ever since Adam fell, “the whole of man is of himself nothing but concupiscence” (II. 1. 8) and that there is no moderating principle of reason in human nature to offset the fierceness of desire. Luther thinks of human nature as totally depraved; hence, he does not acknowledge the value of nature: “the scholastic statement that the natural powers are unimpaired is a horrible blasphemy. Memory, will, and mind we have indeed, but they are mostly depraved and most seriously weakened. . . . they are utterly leprous and unclean” (*Works* 12. 308).

Luther's view of man as wicked is in contrast with the scholastic view of man as innocent. One of Aquinas' achievements lies in his advocacy of human goodness,
potentiality, and dignity throughout his theological system. Fundamental to an understanding of natural law is the teleological concept of human beings as agents acting according to their goal and their awareness of the means by which they can achieve their goal. As Aquinas says, the human being is "meant to perfect himself" (ST I-II. q. 51, a. 2) and is capable of fulfilling his nature. Milton uses the Thomist theory of natural law in his Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce, where he bases the arguments upon several assumptions about human nature, one of which is that marriage should be a means through which humans fulfill and complete their nature.

For Aquinas man is a unique part of nature. Man is a unique creature composed of a rational intellect and free will which are concertized in the body, and his natural law theory is "laid down as an interpretation of man's nature and of its relation to God and to the universe" (d'Entreves 39). Reason and free will rise from that inseparable relation between the divine and natural. In addition to that correspondence, "the essence of things, which are examples of the ideas conceived by the divine intellect, constitutes at the same time the end or goal of the things themselves. The perfection or the fulfilment of the things is their essence" (Rommen 45).

In Milton's poetic description, each act done by Adam is a way of partaking in an intellectual and rational manner in the eternal law. It is a way of having a relation with God, and realizing God's will in paradise is the fulfilling of human nature. Adam governs this world, as God does the whole universe. This divine role assumed by Adam is the ground upon which Milton defends God as a benevolent creator of man.

The divine Adam is endowed with natural reason. Each act of Adam partakes of the eternal law in an intellectual and rational manner (thus ethical), and is also a way of having essential relationships with God. To realize God's will in Eden is a way of fulfilling Adam's nature and glorifying God. In Paradise Lost one of the most recurrent phrases, "in the image of God created he him," indicates Milton's great concerns with several theological issues. He says in Tetrachordon:
It is anough determined that this image of God wherein man was created, is meant Wisdom, Purity, Justice, and rule over creatures. All which being lost in Adam, was recovered with gain by the merit of Christ. Man’s chief good becomes the content of natural law, remains permanently valid as the keystone of man’s proper internal relation to God in his response to God’s purity, justice, and goodness.

(587)

Throughout his works, Milton presents human nature as innocent. In *Paradise Lost* Adam, first created in an absolutely innocent and joyful state, is made representative of all humanity, such qualities as innocence, innate goodness, rationality, and freedom.

Adam may be said to be an apex of all that is human, as his name *Adam* denotes “man.” In *Paradise Lost* Milton appropriates the concept of natural law in order to generalize Adam’s nature and experiences as universal in understanding human nature. The first human pair is described in terms of innocence: their “innocence / deserv[es] Paradise” (5. 445-6). In his efforts to edify man, Raphael says to Adam: “good he [God] made thee” (5. 528) and “pure thou wert created” (8. 623). By telling Adam what he is and what his situation is, the archangel tries to encourage the first man to remain innocent. Indeed, marked by “Simplistic and spotless innocence,” Adam’s innocence is surpassed by none (4. 318). Milton presents man’s innocence as a reflection of God’s goodness. In other words, human beings resemble God in their original goodness. Natural law’s first and general precept, do good and avoid evil, becomes an internalized ethical norm in *Paradise Lost*. Aquinas says that all human actions done according to reason are good and insofar as they are good they are natural. Milton reflects the Thomist idea in *Christian Doctrine*: “man was by nature good and holy, and was naturally disposed to do right” (1. 10. 352) and “divine grace is . . . by which man lived with God” (1. 12. 394). While living in paradise whatever Adam and Eve do is good because they act in accordance with natural order.

Milton uses the idea of natural law in order to explain such aspects of divine
Providence as God's creative will in making man according to His innocent, free, and good state. Natural law thus attempts to offer a set of rational explanations of the human being. Adam's intrinsic goodness, in Milton's description, derives from God. Adam is described as "Godlike erect" and totally different from the beasts (4. 289). Aquinas draws upon God's declaration that "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (Genesis 1:26) and gives that passage a theological meaning: human dignity is derived from closeness to God. And man is like God because he has reason. **Paradise Lost** clearly expresses the Thomistic view of reason, as Adam is portrayed as endowed

With Sanctity of Reason, might erect

His Stature, and upright with Front serene

Govern the rest, self-knowing, and from thence

Magnanimous to correspond with Heav'n... (7. 508-11)

God Himself says that "Let us make now Man in our image, Man / In our similitude," and after that declaration, man "becam' st a living soul" (7. 519-20, 528).

For Milton what constitutes human nature is reason. Here Milton refers specifically to right reason, *orthos logos* in Greek. When Milton says that man is endowed with reason, especially right reason,\(^1\) that means a rational being is capable not only of knowing how to, but also of doing good deeds. "Right reason," explains Douglas Bush, "is a kind of rational and philosophical conscience which distinguishes man from the beasts and which links man with God" (37).

Innocence is not only Adam's attribute, but also Eve's. When Adam allows Eve to leave him to work separately, he says to her: "go in thy native innocence" (9. 373). Eve is also ennobled and dignified in Milton's description until she is deceived and then falls. Adam's first impression of Eve is that she is innocent and pure. She is graceful and "pure of sinful thought" (8. 506). Her "heav'nly form," (9. 457) and "virgin majesty" (9.

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\(^1\)For a more detailed explanation of right reason, see Chapter Four.
270) are so amazingly appealing to Satan that he forgets, though temporarily, an undeceived will to conquer the newly created world and the species.

In “The Environmental Ethics of Paradise Lost,” Jeffrey Theis also notices an environmental ethic as a compelling morality practiced by the first parents by connecting the ethic to the divine. Nature is a part of the environment, and in that sense an innocent man as a part of nature is responsible for taking care of environment. Asserting that “Adam and Eve successfully understood or practiced a divinely inspired environmental ethic,” Theis makes a connection between the ethical and the intellectual: “How an environmental ethic can be a method for gaining knowledge or losing sight of God” (67, 68). Adam and Eve’s care of the garden affects both nature and themselves. Tending a garden is one of the ways not only of worshiping God, but also of imitating God’s goodness. This view is supported by Joseph Duncan, who argues that Adam and Eve in PL “approach the general pattern of St. Thomas’s thought” (72) and “St. Aquinas’s discussion of paradise in his Summa Theologica provides one of the most lucid descriptions of original righteousness and a highly complete account of what the life in paradise would have been if Adam and Eve had not sinned” (70-1). And Milton poetically represents the innocent state of the first parents through Raphael’s instruction of Adam: “God made thee perfect, . . . / And good he made thee” (5. 524-5).

Aquinas’s natural law provides Adam and Eve with the foundation of morality, which is a rational basis of ethics. Adam and Eve in paradise suggest that human beings are morally good, because of the divinely given reason that “good is the first thing that falls under the apprehension of the practical reason, which is directed to action: since every agent acts for an aspect of good” (ST I-II q. 94, a. 2). That Thomas’s emphasis on “man’s inclination to good” is based on “reason” is artistically represented in Paradise Lost. Adam is a good person because he has the power to exercise reason. Adam is repeatedly presented as a reasonable man and an embodiment of reason.

Natural law postulates reason as one of the essential elements of human beings
because theorists of natural law consider reason to be the light of nature. Aquinas declares that all human beings are naturally endowed with reason by God. One of the areas in which Milton reflects the Thomist concept of natural law is irrefutably reason. According to Aquinas' doctrine in the *Summa Theologica*, the human soul has functions, such as understanding and free choice, that transcend the limitations of animal nature (I-II, q. 94, a. 3). He declares that “Man is master of his own acts by reason and will: hence free will is said to be a function of will and reason” (*ST III* q. 1, a. 1). The principal assumption from which Aquinas develops his system of natural law is that man is naturally endowed with reason, and he defines natural law as “the participation of eternal law in rational creatures” (*ST I-II* q. 91, a. 2). Reason is a measure for human action and a foundation of moral principle, as Aquinas says that “there is in every man a natural inclination to act according to reason: and this is to act according to virtue. Consequently, considered thus, all acts of virtue are prescribed by the natural law: since each one’s reason naturally dictates to him to act virtuously” (*ST I-II* q. 94, a. 3). Natural law involves natural inclinations. Aquinas also asserts that “It is right and true for all to act according to reason” (I-II q. 94, a. 4).

One cannot think of reason as being separated from free will because, according to the doctrine of natural law, reason and free will always go hand-in-hand. With reason given by God, man is made “perfect,” but “to preserve” good, it is “left in [man’s] power” (*PL* 5. 524, 525, 526). God thus proclaims that man is a free being. Milton’s views of man and human nature demonstrate a parallel with those of Aquinas. Milton he argues in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (1649) that “all men were born free, being the image and resemblance of God himself, and were privileged above all the creatures, born to command” (198-9).

Milton’s Adam is an inquisitive man, always eager to know something, as he once acknowledges “the thirst [II] had of knowledge” (8. 7). The best thing that man can know is the truth about God, and thus reason is directly connected to Christian ethics both in
Aquinas and in Milton.

In asserting divine Providence, Milton again appeals to the concepts of natural law which has articulated an elevated state of human dignity. As God intends to make Adam in his image and similitude, Adam shares with God reason and free will that make him dignified. Milton's description of Adam in his ennobled state has its root in Aquinas's proclamation: "Free choice expresses human dignity; it is a God-like faculty, because God has free choice" (ST I. q. 19, a. 10). God proclaims that He made Adam in a free state, and before the Fall, Adam is faced with the choice of obeying God or following Eve.

In Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, Hooker shows a significant agreement with Aquinas: "To choose is to will one thing before another. And to will is to bend our souls to the having or doing of that which they see to be good. Goodness is seen with the eye of the understanding. And the light of that eye, is reason. So that two principal fountains there are of human action, Knowledge and Will; which Will, in things tending towards any ends, is termed Choice" (I. 7. 2). Hooker's confidence in human reason apparently influenced Milton, as the reader can see the fact that Milton's Christian Doctrine contains passages similar to those of Hooker. As God declares that He made man "just and right, / Sufficient to have stood," (PL 3. 98-9), man is the "youngest Son" of God, exalted and elevated because man is made in the image of God. Man is thus also "endu'd / With Sanctitie of Reason" (7. 507-8).

Man is also thought by medieval and Renaissance philosophers to hold a unique position of being in the middle, between two hemispheres of God and His created world. Man participates in these two worlds; hence the law of his nature includes the qualities which he has in common with all created beings as well as those which are distinctive of his own rational nature. One of the former natures is self-preservation, as Aquinas says "that which nature has taught all animals" (ST I-II q. 94, a. 2). Although human nature reflects divine nature, such as reason and dignity, like animals man also possesses an
inclination for preservation. In obeying the primary instinct for preservation of the species, sexual inclination is not sinful. As Loney observes, for thinkers of natural law "no law can call on man to override his natural urge for survival" and the preservation of the species (75). Embracing the central precept of natural law to do good and to avoid evil, Thomas locates human "inclinations toward self-preservation, the propagation and education of the species, and especially the knowledge of the truth and engagement in social and political life" (ST I-II. q. 94. a. 2). Milton seems to come up with an answer which Aquinas responded as a solution to the philosophical problem of repressing sexuality. Sexual love is not only present, but also described in positive terms. Milton's ethic emphasizes the chastity of the married state and he casts a suspicious look on an overvaluation of sexual abstinence as a perversion of human nature which is "forbid'dn by God" (DDD 247). For Milton, matrimony is honorable, and so is the marriage bed.

The first human pair enjoy their impeccable and guiltless sexual pleasure, calling it "the Crown of all our bliss" (4. 728). Fundamental to this sexual desire is love, which Aquinas distinguishes from lust. The ground of ethics is love, and such love is the fulfilling and completion of the law. Pleasure is also needful because it is directly related to the preservation of the human species. Rejecting Augustine's unequivocal condemnation of sexual behavior, Milton puts himself in the line of Thomists who advocate sexuality. The good example of this is that narrator in Paradise Lost praises Eve as "the Mother of all things living," even after the Fall (11. 160).

For Milton the law of nature is an expression of his confidence in the possibility of man's essential competence of reaching toward the highest good. Man can reach the highest position because man is by nature to do what he can toward his fulfillment. Well versed in the Thomistic tradition of natural law which recognizes the potentials of human beings, in Paradise Lost he depicts man as teleologically determined: human nature as represented by Adam and Eve can be perfected and fulfilled because man, made in God's image, shares some attributes with God. In his discourse with Raphael, Adam is taught
that "the scale of nature / by steps we may ascend to God" (5. 512). The archangel also instructs Adam: "God made thee perfect, not immutable; / And good he made thee" (5. 524-5). The way that Adam and Eve fulfill their nature is to lead a moral life as God has intended.

Gardening is one way of completing their nature which is ethical and religious. Adam and Eve's gardening of paradise embodies the moral theme of Paradise Lost. They tend the garden in an effort to keep the promise made to God. In doing so, they not only pay homage to God, but also prove their closeness to God. Jeffrey Theis argues that "Adam and Eve and their descendants come close to God when they parallel God's actions through their cultivation of the land. . . . Not only is Adam sent forth from Eden to till the earth, he is also required to "improve it through human ingenuity" (66). Adam and Eve creatively work to give form to the garden, and in that regard, they do as God does in the creation of the world. The idea that nature is innocent is central both to the religious and to the artistic structure of Paradise Lost.

Barbara Lewalski rightly points out that "as images of God, Adam and Eve are . . . responsible for the world that was made for them by the 'sovran Planter,' which must be . . . raised to higher states of perfection" (91). The poem's "garden imagery," says Lewalski, "identifies Adam and Eve . . . as a part of the Garden: they too are planted by God, expected to grow and perfect themselves through cultivation, and to bear appropriate fruits" (93). Having focused on the harvest image, Lewalski concludes that "Adam and Eve are responsible for perfecting their own natures" and that "Adam and Eve imitate the Divine Gardener in enhancing Eden's natural beauties by art" (93). Thus they are morally obliged not only to the state of the garden, but also to themselves. Thus, Adam and Eve's taking care of the garden is not only an agrarian form, but also an ethical and intellectual version of self-cultivation and self-fulfillment. By taking care of the plants, they enhance their morality. If they were negligent in gardening, it would be a breach of the covenant and lead to an alienation from God. And alienation from God
will result in the loss of paradise, as Aquinas says:

man might dress and keep paradise, which dressing would . . . have been pleasant
on account of man's practical knowledge of the powers of nature. . . . man would
have striven to keep paradise for himself lest he should lose it by sin. All of
which was for man's good; wherefore paradise was ordered to man's benefit.

(ST I. q. 102, a. 3).

Adam's understanding of the ethics in gardening shows a parallel with that of Aquinas.
Labor is not only their moral responsibility, but also the privilege that differentiates them
from other lower animals. Adam comes to realize that work is what distinguishes him
from lower animals which "rove idle unemploy'd" (4.617). Adam also brings the import
of labor into the center of his issue:

    Man hath his daily work of body or mind
    Appointed, which declares his Dignity,
    And the regard of Heav'n on all his ways. (4. 618-20)

Since God cares about man's work, "taking no account" of other animals' doing, man is
both obliged to do work and privileged to work for his dignity.

Although Milton lived in the Renaissance period, when new theories of natural
law emerged and objected to the traditional philosophy of natural law, he adhered to the
scholastic idea of natural law by portraying Adam and Eve as inherently innocent and
moral.
Note

1. For example, Sir Robert Filmer’s Observation Concerning the Originall of Government, upon Mr. Hobs’ Leviathan, Mr. Milton against Salmiasi, (and) H. Grotius Ge Jure Belli (London, 1652) begins by criticizing Hobbes’s argument that the law of nature is self-preservation. William Lucy, twice Chancellor of Magdalen College Oxford, wrote a book entitled “Observations, Censures and Confrontations of Diverse Errors in the 12th, 13th and 14th Chapters of Mr. Hobbs his Leviathan (1657). In 1658 Bishop John Bramhall also published a book entitled Catching of the Leviathan, or the Great Whale, Demonstrating out of Mr. Hobbs his own Works, That no man who is thoroughly an Hobbist, can be a good Christian, or a Good Common-wealths man, or reconcile himself to himself. Because his Principles are not only destructive to all Religion but to all Societies; extinguishing the Relation between Prince and Subject, Parent and Child, Master and Servant, Husband and Wife; and abound with palpable contradictions. (London, 1658). Reverend T. Tenison, later Archbishop of Canterbury, published The Creed of Mr Hobbes Examined; in a feigned Conference between him and a student of Divinity (1670). Hobbes was a highly controversial figure.
CHAPTER THREE

(HUMAN GOODNESS AND SEXUAL MORALITY)

The previous two chapters examined the general and broad Thomist concept of natural law as reflected in Milton’s poetic and prose works: Comus, Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce, and Paradise Lost. This chapter will focus on only one subject of natural law, ethics, as a prominent area of Milton’s thought. A close examination of Milton’s use of Thomist ethics in Comus and Paradise Lost will shed new light on the polemical issue of human morality in the Renaissance. Ethics is one of the most debated subjects of natural law, and the traditional and the new school of natural law fundamentally conflict with each other on the issue of morality and nature. Ethics is of significance in natural law because natural law was understood by such philosophers as Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Aquinas in order to explain human nature or to prescribe the ways of man which are in accordance with human nature. The divergence of opinions concerning nature—whether or not human nature is inherently good—is a noticeable feature of Renaissance humanism. From that historical context Milton’s position on human beings should be understood. Also, natural law includes sexual morality as one of its subjects. In the first section, I will explain how Milton’s Comus and Paradise Lost show a kinship to the Thomist system of ethics in the Summa Theologica and in the Commentary on the Nichomachean Ethics. The second section will deal with Milton’s sexual morality as an integral part of his system of moral principles because that is an area in which traditional natural-law theorists and the Reformed divines sharply conflict.

I. Natural Moral Theology
Milton uses Thomas’s system of ethics in his characterization of Adam and Eve. Rejecting contemporary Protestant views of man as morally corrupt or self-centered, Milton presents to the reader a couple of examples of moral people--pre-lapsarian Adam and Eve--in the garden of Eden. In his attempt to portray the first parents as morally good persons, Milton vitiates some dogmas of the Reformation. The essential doctrine of Protestant theology lies in the recognition of the fallen nature of human beings. After the Fall, maintain Reformed thinkers, original sin is extended to all mankind. All is corrupted even in their mother's womb. In an attempt to break away from the Catholic authorities, Martin Luther attacks “the Pope’s theologians” who, in his view, do not take sin as seriously as he does (Works 12. 307). The starting point of Luther’s hermeneutic dogma is that human beings are wicked. He says that “We are nothing but sin” and criticizes “the masters of theology” who defend the “scholastic statement that natural powers are unimpaired, that is, that the will is good” (Works 12. 307-308). He goes on to say:

When he was created, Adam had a right will and understanding. He could hear and see perfectly. . . . Through the Fall his will, understanding, and all natural powers were so corrupted that man was no longer whole, but was diverted by sin, lost his correct judgment before God, and thought everything perversely against the will and Law of God. . . . From this loss of the knowledge of God proceed endless other sins. (308-9)

Jean Calvin expresses a similar view in Institutes of the Christian Religion: “Original sin, therefore, seems to be a hereditary depravity and corruption of our nature, diffused into all parts of the soul, which first makes us liable to God's wrath, then also brings forth in us those works which Scripture calls 'works of the flesh' [Gal. 5:19]” (II. i. 8). Even the infant: “while they carry their condemnation along with them from the mother's womb, are guilty not of another's fault but of their own. Indeed, their whole nature is a seed of sin; hence it can be only hateful and abhorrent to God” (II. i. 8). The Reformed
theologian draws the fallen nature of man at the center of his doctrine in order to stress man’s total dependence upon the Creator and to establish divine Grace as the sole source of salvation.

In the history of ideas, the Reformed divines are not the only philosophers who deny the inherent goodness of human nature. Another Renaissance thinker who also has generated one of the most controversial debates on human nature is Thomas Hobbes, who holds a contemptuous view of scholastic theories and becomes a proponent of the new school of natural law. The belief that human acts are initiated and governed by selfish motives leads Hobbes to argue that human nature is not necessarily innocent or innately good. Human beings are by nature self-centered, rather than innocent:

so that in the nature of man, we find three principal causes of quarrel. First competition ... which maketh men invade for gain. ... The first use violence, to make themselves masters of other men’s persons, wives, children, and cattle. During the time men live without a common power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called war; and such a war, as is of every man, against every man. (81-2)

Hobbes goes on to say that “to this war of every man, against every man ... that nothing can be unjust. The notion of right and wrong, justice and injustice have no place. ... Force and fraud are in war two cardinal virtues” (83). Hobbes thus construes human acts as devoid of theological assumptions such as the intrinsic goodness of human beings. Unlike Aquinas, neither Lutherans nor Hobbesians believe in the inherent goodness of human nature.

How does Milton react to these contemporary opinions on human nature? Unlike many of his contemporary philosophers, Milton looks back to the scholastic theory of natural law in order to answer what human natures are and how we should live a moral life. In the Summa Contra Gentiles St. Aquinas objects to the sweeping application of original sin to children written in Job 10: 19 on the ground of their lack of free will. The
sins carried to children are "not actual sin, for children do not have the use of free will, and without this nothing is imputed to man as sin" (Book IV. Ch. 50). Unable to imagine the evil power over good, Aquinas argues that "if the sin of the first man flowed into others, and--on the other hand--the good is more powerful in acting than the evil, then by so much the more was the satisfaction of Adam, and his justice, transferred through him to others" (Book III. Ch. 51). Drawing upon Aquinas's view of man as innocent, Milton differs from Hobbes in the concept of human nature. Milton tries to exalt the dignity and autonomy of man to a point of divinity.

In the Commentary on the Nichomachean Ethics, Aquinas explains that "moral philosophy" deals with "human action ordered to an end, or even man, as he is an agent voluntarily acting for an end" (I.1.3). Aquinas elaborates on the Aristotelian division by distinguishing human acts (actus humani) from acts of a human being (actus hominis). Acts of a human being may refer to anything done by man, yet only human acts are those over which humans have dominion. This doctrine supposes that man has dominion over his acts. Emanating from reason and will, every human act aims at a certain end, and according to Aquinas's natural moral philosophy, the end of human acts is good. This view conflicts with the Hobbesian interpretation of human nature as not necessarily good or evil, but as selfish.

In scholastic natural law, moral acts typically involve the cooperation of reason, will, and appetite. For Aquinas, ethics has a rational foundation:

> ... to the natural law belongs everything to which a man is inclined naturally to an operation that is suitable to it according to his nature. Now each thing is suitable to it according to its form. . . . Wherefore since the rational soul is the proper form of man, there is in every man a natural inclination to act according to reason: and this is to act according to virtue. Consequently, considered thus, all acts of virtue are prescribed by the natural law; since each of one's reason naturally dictates to him to act virtuously. (ST I-II. q. 94, a. 3)
Aquinas elaborates his theory of moral philosophy on the premise that “To act according to reason” is “to act virtuously” (ST I-II. q. 94, a. 3). He declares that the “function” of natural law is a measure through which we “discern what is good and what is evil” (ST I-II. q. 91, a. 2). Natural law in Thomas’ theology is a measure for the moral judgment. In brief, human beings are capable of making ethical choices thanks to the rational power naturally endowed within them. Ralph McInerny explains the Thomist concept of morality in relation to reason: “What characterizes the human agent is rational activity--having dominion over his acts thanks to reason and will--and the virtue of that activity makes the human act good” (202). Thus, Aquinas establishes a rational foundation of ethics.

Milton uses the traditional doctrine of ethics in the picture of Adam and Eve in paradise. The descriptions of Adam and Eve’s goodness hinge upon Thomas’ exegesis of the inherent goodness of man. In Paradise Lost the epithets of Adam frequently remind the reader of his goodness and moral strength, which are always related to reason. Adam appears in the god-like posture several times, and most of all, Adam is first introduced as the “goodliest man of men since born” (4. 323). Adam and Eve in the pre-lapsarian stage are marked by “simplicity and spotless innocence” (4. 318). Before the Fall, whatever Adam and Eve want and do, they are innocent and good.

Refuting the view of Hobbes, who sees the state of man as chaotic--independent of theological assumption, such as a divinely ordered universe--Milton joins with the traditional school of natural law in presuming God as the absolute source of goodness and nature as harmoniously ordered. Inconceivable to Milton is the Hobbesian notion of justice as situational, relative, or circumstantial. Considered from this particular historical point of view, Milton is responsive to the contemporary moral skepticism of the Renaissance intellectual climate represented by such a writer as Hobbes. At the beginning of Christian Doctrine, Milton clearly expresses his position:

If there were no God, there would be no dividing line between right and wrong.
What was to be called virtue, and what vice, would depend upon mere arbitrary opinion. (1. 2. 132)

Milton uses the natural law as defense of the traditional sense of morality, as William Kerrigan observes:

Christianity in Paradise Lost is invented before our eyes in response to theodical antinomies brought about by the foreseen fall of man. The environment out of which Paradise Lost is produced is Duns Scotus, scholastic proponent, who had become a laughing-stock to many seventeenth-century thinkers. (268)

As Patrides indicates “natural theology during the Renaissance was extended significantly to comprehend the traditional theory of natural law—nature incorporates a moral law” (79-80). And Milton draws natural law toward the center of his thought and uses this concept of natural moral philosophy in Comus and Paradise Lost through predominant visual images. The unwritten law that Milton distinguishes from written law in Christian Doctrine is a source of good, and its natural reason is associated with light.

I will give a more detailed explanation to light imagery that I mentioned briefly in the previous chapter because it is so significant an image in the Renaissance. Light is associated with the divine, as St. Aquinas writes in the Summa Theologica:

the Psalmist says: The light of thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us: thus implying that the light of natural reason, whereby we discern what is good and what is evil, which is the function of the natural law, is nothing else than an imprint on us of the Divine light. (I-II q. 91, a. 2)

As Aquinas’ central image of light signifies natural reason, Milton uses light imagery to represent reason. Light imagery, recurrent and prominent in Milton’s masque, is symbolic of natural reason, which is the measure through which good is distinguished from evil. In Comus Milton makes a moral use of light:

He that has light within his own clear breast
May sit i’th’ center, and enjoy bright day
But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts
Benighted walks under the midday sun. (383-6)

The light is used as a symbol for a moral principle or conscience ("clear breast"), and
darkness ("Benighted") is used as a term for moral obscurity or intellectual ineptness.
Light as natural reason is related to moral goodness and intellect. Thus, the light imagery
reinforces the masque's theme of morality.

If the light emitting from the stars suggests the Lady's moral qualities, the blazing
light in Book Three of Paradise Lost symbolizes moral and intellectual illumination of
God. Milton uses Aquinas' light symbolism in Paradise Lost by opening Book 3 with an
invocation to the holy light:

Hail holy light, offspring of Heav’n first-born,
Or of th’Eternal Coeternal beam
May I express thee unblam’d? Since God is light,
And never but in unapproached light
Dwelt from Eternitie, dwelt then in thee,
Bright effluence of bright essence increate. (3. 1-6)

By invoking light, Milton's narrator asks for poetic inspirations. In that sense, light is a
divine inspiration associated not only with intellect but also with ethics because, like the
Psalmist from whose passage Aquinas quotes, the poet is also a prophet capable of
foretelling God's wisdom and benevolence. And only the good are granted divine light
that will inspire poetic impulses.

Milton's use of the light in Paradise Lost has drawn many scholars' attention.
Many read light in the metaphoric sense of wisdom of God. Rejecting other critics'
"identifying the light with the Son of God," Maurice Kelley argues that light in the lines
1-8 "is an invocation to light in the physical sense"; that is, the physical light from which
he was cut off by blindness (92). But Kelley's interpretation of light as merely physical
light is under attack by many Miltonists. William Hunter, for example, argues that
“Milton must mean that the light or stream represents the Logos and the sun or fountain represents the Father” (590). Michael Lieb also interprets the light as

a light that encompasses the experience of the vision Dei and, so doing
defines precisely the extent to which light manifests itself as a sacral phenomenon
in Milton’s thought. . . . This light becomes the ultimate means by which the holy
is known. Permeating the darkness of the physically blind, it provides
illumination that only the spiritually enlightened can enjoy. (194)

Theodore Banks demonstrates that “Light symbolizes goodness or knowledge, darkness of evil or ignorance. . . . It appears as one of the basic concepts of Paradise Lost, where the brilliance of God, heaven, and the angels is contrasted to the darkness of hell and the progressive dimming of Satan’s lustre” (125). He thus underscores the moral connotations of the images of brightness in Paradise Lost. Light is figuratively used by the epic poet as the light of reason or the light of nature. In need of some ideas for his religious determination, such as God’s goodness and wisdom, Milton uses Aquinas’ light imagery. Jackson Cope also pays attention to the light imagery in “the middle books of innocence between the fall of Satan and the fall of man as related with the structure” (94). Light is associated with the innocence of human beings.

Among visual images, light imagery is prominent in Paradise Lost. The cluster of light images in Paradise Lost represents moral and intellectual attributes. The images of the settings--heaven, hell, and paradise--signify the settings’ own characteristics. Heaven is distinguished from gloomy hell by its blazing light, symbolizing God and His abstract attributes, such as wisdom, benevolence, and bounteousness. Marked by “no light,” hell is an abode for Satan, the representative of moral perversity which is caused by his refusal to be guided by divine light (1. 61). The intellectual and ethical qualities are interrelated with each other in the doctrine of Aquinas’ natural law and in Milton’s representation of God.

Light imagery in Books 4-8 serves to illuminate Adam and Eve’s pre-lapsarian
characteristics. Milton’s Adam is figuratively linked with the sun, and Eve with the moon—with each representing respectively “Male and Female Light, / Which two great Sexes animate the World” (8. 150-1). That they are images of goodness and intellect is thematically strengthened by the solar and lunar light imagery.

Milton not only praises light, but he also draws moral and religious connection to light. Light is a means by which man should find truth; and, in so doing, man must know God’s will and come close to Him. In Areopagitica Milton says that “the light which we have gained, was given us, not to be ever staring on, but by it to discover onward things more remote from our knowledge” (550). Light here is associated with truth, and it is man’s duty to find truth in order to glorify God. Theologically charged, truth in that passage thus shows a parallel with Aquinas’ notion of light as natural reason.

Adam is of importance because God created the whole human nature in Adam; therefore, all human natures that would exist in man were in Adam. Hence, Adam is called a representative of all humanity. as the “goodliest man of men since born” (4. 323) The initial description of Adam as the “goodliest man of men since born” (4. 323) is developed into an almost God-like posture, as the narrative goes on, but is not contradicted until he falls. As an image of goodness, Adam is also “God-like erect” (4. 289). Adam’s attitudes towards God and Eve are noteworthy; occasionally, the reader glimpses Adam worshiping his Creator, cordially hugging and gently treating Eve, and checking the “fruit-trees” of “pampered boughs” as he gardens (5. 214-5).

The etymological significance of Adam captures the reader’s attention. In Hebrew, Adam means man and Eve denotes woman or life. Adam is the general father of all human beings and is thus construed both by Aquinas and by Milton as a representative of humanity. By picturing Adam as an exemplary model of goodness and innocence, Milton also suggests that all human beings as Adam’s progeny are innocent.

Not only Adam, but also Eve is portrayed as good and innocent: she retains “yet innocence and virgin majesty” (8. 505). Eve’s “graceful innocence,” a recurrent phrase,
reinforces the epic’s theme of the divine goodness which is reflected in human beings (9. 459).

Again, the significance of innocence lies in its power of overcoming evil. Innocence has the power to subdue evil, as the loyal angels are described as moral and inculpable:

Such high advantages thir innocence
Gave them above thir foes, not to have sinn’d,
Not to have disobey’d . . . .(6. 401-3)

Here morality is understood in religious terms of obedience to God.

God’s command not to taste the fruit is a moral injunction which stands as Adam’s ethical and religious obligation. In Milton’s systematic theology, human goodness is always related to obedience, and evil to disobedience to divine law; in other words, to follow God’s command is a good act for Adam and to disobey it is an immoral act. Before Adam is created, rebellious angels led by Satan waged war against the Father. This moral narrative is retold by Raphael, who descends from heaven to raise the first human pair’s moral consciousness. Nothing in Milton’s poetic representations is more serious a sin than these fallen angels’ insurrection: “Such evil [was] brought / By sin of disobedience” (6. 395-6).

Aquinas does not argue only for man’s capacity to do good. Any creature, including animals, can do that. The proclamation that Adam was created as a good person is not strong unless this view is fortified by the solid basis of human rationality that discerns good from evil. Aquinas lays a firm ground of ethics—that is, rationality or natural reason bestowed by God upon every man. According to his moral theory, the human is a moral agent because he is a rational being. A. P. d’Entreves notices a connection between reason and morality in Thomist ethics: “St. Thomas endeavors to base a natural system of ethics on ‘natural law.’ Natural law is the token of the fundamental harmony between human and Christian values, the expression of the
perfection of man and of the power and dignity of his reason” (45). D’Entreves thus highlights the religious character of natural law.

If God made man good and innocent by giving him reason and free will, then God must be defended. That is the position Milton takes when writing epic poetry. Milton uses the traditional concept of natural law for his theodical purpose, as Dennis Danielson argues: “what Paradise Lost undertakes” is “the theological apologetic” (113). Milton’s proclaimed intentions of writing Paradise Lost are to “assert eternal providence” and to “justify the ways of God to men” (1. 25, 26). The epic poem is specifically designed as a theodicy, and the best place for Milton to base his theodical claims is Aquinas’ Summa Theologica because one of the major reasons for Milton’s vindication of God is that man’s moral power is based on reason, a faculty given by God. Aquinas focuses on the correlation between the intellectual power and morality by virtually equating rational acts with moral acts:

since the rational soul is the proper form of man, there is in every man a natural inclination to act according to reason: and this is to act according to virtue.

Consequently, considered thus, all acts of virtue are prescribed by the natural law: since each one’s reason naturally dictates to him to act virtuously.

(ST I-II q. 94, a. 3)

Aquinas holds that we must depend on the intellect to pass judgment on what is good and what is bad. And God grants man the intellectual power, which is termed natural reason. Not only reason, but also free will to choose between good and evil are bestowed upon mankind by God. Like Thomas, Milton argues that God should be defended.

Danielson points out the “Free Will Defense” as the crucial “component of Milton’s theodicy” (117). The Free Will Defense is an argument according to which God, for reasons consistent with his wisdom and goodness, created angels and human beings with freedom either to obey or disobey his command. It, furthermore, claims that although innumerable such free
creatures have in fact disobeyed God’s commands and created an immense amount of evil, the amount of goodness that presupposes the exercise of freedom ultimately outweighs the total amount of evil. (117)

Many Renaissance writers, including Milton, hold that freedom is the primary source of inherent human goodness and equate it with reason.¹

William Kerrigan also draws attention to Milton’s faith in God’s goodness: “an almighty God and a free human will were true for Milton because they had to be true, because the meaning of the world he both derived from and imposed on the bible demanded they be true” (267). To justify the ways of God to men, Milton also has to establish man’s power of rational choice as precursory to moral action. And Milton does so by describing Adam as a man endowed with a considerable degree of rational power to choose, as God proclaims:

    ... I made him [Adam] just and right,
    Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.

    Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell. (3. 98-99, 102)

As announced in the opening of the epic, the writing of Paradise Lost is initiated by Milton’s deep-felt religious need for vindicating God. Kerrigan, for example, writes:

Milton employs a strategy of utilizing ... Aquinas’s natural law, such as a human inclination to goodness and free will, when Milton fuses narrative and theodicy in Paradise Lost--a two-sided intention neatly epitomized in the doubleness of the word argument, meaning both plot and proposition. The effect of theodicy on such scale is near to a reentering of Christianity about the justification of God. ... he attempts to justify God. (267)

The spirit of Christianity unquestionably pervades Milton’s moral thought. Human virtues are, according to Milton, what an individual owes to God and himself. Aquinas defines human acts as something over which man has dominion; that is to say, man is an
active agent (having a considerable power of freedom to choose), not a patient, of his own acts. As a corollary of this, virtues are attained only by means of personal choice, by judicious exercise of moral judgment, with the essential choice being between good and evil. And Aquinas' theory of natural law postulates that human beings have a natural inclination to good. Good is a spiritually elevated power as opposed to evil, which is the imbruting power. The Thomistic influence is seen in Milton's writings. Even though Aquinas optimistically views mankind's tendency towards good as natural, he does not rule out the possibility that this power of good may be greatly reduced even to the point of non-existence by bad habits. Consequently, continuous moral instruction of our posterity is necessary. Natural law is prescriptive in the sense that through its precept, to do good and avoid evil, it tries to regulate human behavior.

A striking parallel between Thomas and Milton is that both assert God's supreme providence in a way that establishes human beings' power to exercise rational choice as precursory to moral behavior. Milton says that "it followed as a necessary consequence that he [man] should be endowed with natural wisdom, holiness and righteousness" (CD 1.7.).

Milton is very much concerned with this moral instruction. Paradise Lost can be read as a moral warning or awakening through various incidents such as the Archangel Raphael's moral edification of Adam. Also, by showing what Adam has gone through, Milton prescribes what man should do and what he should not do. And the criteria of human actions are evidently articulated in the Summa Theologica: the primary precept of the natural law: "good is to be done and pursued, and evil is to be avoid" (I-II. q. 94, a. 2). In Christian Doctrine, Milton says that "for those states of mind which are good in man, and count as virtues, are holy in God" (1. 2. 135). Between the two-fold aspects of the primary precept of the Thomist natural law, the emphasis is given to the first, that good is to be done and pursued. Milton also says in Areopagitica that "God sure esteems the growth and completing of one virtuous person, rather than the restraint of ten vicious"
Both writers' emphasis on good implies that they believe good is natural and that evil is unnatural. Also, they hold that one should be encouraged to do good.

Milton's poetic representation of this primary precept of natural law is to encourage the reader to do good, by knowing and imitating God's goodness and benevolence. Adam is an original man who, in Milton's poem, is also a representative of a moral being. What constitutes Adam's moral principles is a Christian notion of obeying God's will. Having attentively listened to Raphael's moral teachings, Adam is now morally obliged to do good. First of all, he has to serve and worship God. To lead a religious life is for Adam and his descendants primarily a moral duty.

The significance of natural law lies in its explication of a relation between God and man. Raphael's instruction of Adam to "serve and fear God" (8. 168) is one of the most fundamental precepts of natural law. To obey God is of importance because only by doing so can man maintain a good relation with God. The relationship man has with God is most important. To disobey God is to make oneself alienated from God, and therefore, it is a violation of the essential doctrine of natural law: "natural law is a participation of the rational being in the eternal law" (ST I-II q. 94, a. 2).

Milton's early masque, Comus, also highlights moral qualities of the Lady by dramatizing her resistance to the lascivious Comus's sustained advances. The Lady has a clear sense of morality which is not compromising, but absolute:

I hate when vice can bolt her arguments,

And virtue has no tongue to check her pride. (759-60)

In Comus the Lady's refusal to conform to Comus's hedonistic and lustful demand illustrates Milton's moral position, which is not relativistic as the Hobbesian view of morality. The spiritual elevation of the Lady proceeds from her choices between good and evil. In reply to Comus's sustained temptations, the Lady sticks to her moral principles and chooses good:

none
But such as are good men can give good things,
And that which is not good, is not delicious
To a well govern'd and wise appetite. (702-5)

The Lady embodies the goodness of nature which is portrayed as a “good cateress” (763).

Milton’s grand epic poem can be construed as his sincere answer to an inquiry of “What is morally good?” Again, Milton reasserts that moral awareness of human beings stems from mankind’s religious belief. First, Adam shows a clear idea of what his moral duties are when he speaks to Eve about their tasks:

But let us ever praise him [God], and extol
His bounty, following our delightful task
To prune these growing Plants, and tend these Flow’rs (4. 436-8)

For Adam, to serve, to worship, and to obey are manifest acts of a religious man. To know God is to obey His will, and disobedience to God’s will is the cardinal sin, as illustrated by the following statement: “to such evil brought / By sin of disobedience” (6. 396). One of the ways that Adam does good is to garden carefully the “sovran” place where God allows him to live in (9. 426). Also, a divine command to tend the garden well (9. 575) becomes an internalized moral principle. Adam’s good care of the garden represents self-imitation of God, who is immensely good and benevolent to human beings and other creatures. Modeling himself on the goodness of God, Adam also has to do good to himself and others. That is a moral act for him to do required by God. By so doing, Adam and Eve are capable of enhancing their moral status, moving closer to God, who is perfect. Leading an ethical life is, thus, one way of perfecting and completing oneself. Every man can and should move toward perfection by his good deeds. That is the essence of Milton’s moral thought. Adam eventually comes to a realization that “to obey God is best” (12. 561).

Milton uses Thomist theories of natural law for two specific purposes: first he uses them to give moral lessons to the reader of what man ought to do and what man
ought not to, and second to readdress his belief in God. The ultimate, though not so clearly proclaimed, purpose of Milton's poetry is to teach moral lessons--through the experiences of Adam, who eventually comes to an awareness of himself--to all human beings. Second, he uses natural law in order to reaffirm his theodical assurance (despite the existence of evil, God is good; therefore, He must be justified). Aquinas' advocacy of theological learning can also be interpreted as his theodical effort to vindicate the ways of God. In the *Summa Theologica* Aquinas presupposes that man has a "natural inclination toward knowledge of God" (I-II. q. 94, a. 2). Like Aquinas, Milton understands learning in the religious context of natural law in which reason is taken as one of the most important attributes of mankind. Milton says in *Areopagitica*

> love learning for it self, not for lucre, or any other end, but the service of God and truth, and perhaps that lasting fame and perpetuity of praise which God and good men have consented shall be the reward of those whose publishd labours advance the good of mankind. (531)

Natural law also prescribes gender roles as both natural and moral. In the hierarchy of the domestic structure, natural law defines the husband as the head of the household, with the wife subservient to her husband. The ground of this hierarchy is Aquinas' well formulated theory of the natural superiority of the husband to the wife: "the image of God is found in man, and not in woman" (I. q. 9, a. 4). Also, Aquinas says that "man is yet further ordered to still nobler vital action, and that is intellectual operation" (I. q. 92, a.1). Milton reflects a similar doctrine of natural law and presents this gender hierarchy as natural, desirable, and good. For example, Milton has Adam say to Eve "in woman then to studie household good" (9. 233). Thus, natural law determines what women's obligations are. On first seeing Adam, Eve instantly calls him her "Guide / And Head" (4. 442-3) and is ready to submit to him.

What is notable in Milton's representation of gender relations is that as long as Eve stands faithful to Adam as an inferior, their marriage remains intact from Satan's
deceptive tactics. Milton shows Eve’s failure to stand in relation to Adam (as a subordinate) as the initial cause of the Fall and presents Eve’s violation of natural law that dictates gender relations as the initial reason for the break in the divinely created order of their matrimony. Yet, as will be discussed later in this chapter, Eve is not totally lost in Milton’s portrayal. She falls deceived, instead of being self-tempted like the fallen angels. Her genuine penitence and attempts at reconciliation with Adam testify to Milton’s confidence in the goodness of human nature. She remains good even after the Fall.

II. Sexual Morality

When dealing with gender relations, Milton inevitably brings up the issue of sexual morality as one of his primary concerns. Noticeably, neither Aquinas nor Milton expresses a contemptuous view of sexuality. On the contrary, Milton’s glorification of the ideal marriage of the first parents demonstrates a crucial indebtedness to Aquinas, who sees sexual relations as good and necessary. This attitude seems to be rather unconventional, considered from a historical context. In the history of Christian thought, sexuality is usually viewed as negative by numerous religious authorities. St. Augustine, for example, categorically condemns post-lapsarian sex as irrevocably corrupt because of the Fall. Patrides rightly points out the “condemnation of sexual relation” as “one of the most persistent strains in Christian thought” and goes on to say that “the notion of copula carnalis is regarded as a consequence of the Fall in the Augustinian thesis that Adam’s sin was seminally transmitted to his posterity” (165). The reason that St. Augustine objects to post-lapsarian sex is that, as a result of original sin, man lost authority over his reproductive organs, as he clearly says that “through the justice of God . . . our flesh, which had been subject to us, is troublesome by its insubordination” (The City of God XIV. 15). Man can simply will an erection, but is punished by the subjection of his
reproductive organs. Man is, St. Augustine warns, always prone to lustful passions.

Calvin follows the Augustinian teachings on man’s sexual desire and unequivocally condemns it by describing the works of the flesh as “a burning furnace” that “gives forth flame and sparks, or water ceaselessly bubbles up from a spring” (251). He continues to say that “our nature is so fertile and fruitful of every evil that it cannot be idle. . . . Whatever is in man from the understanding of the will. From the soul even to the flesh, has been defiled and crammed with this concupiscence. . . . The whole man is of himself nothing but concupiscence” (252). He then re-emphasizes: “the whole man is overwhelmed--as by a deluge--from head to foot, so that no part is immune from sin and all that proceeds from him is to be imputed to sin” (253).

One notable exception to this condemnation of sexual inclination can be found in Aquinas’ exegesis. For Aquinas, sexual inclination common to all animals is natural because it is aimed at an end; that is, the good purposes of the furtherance of the species and raising of posterity. When it comes to human sexual desire, Aquinas puts mankind in the same category of animals. Aquinas argues in the *Summa Theologica* that

> good has the nature of an end . . . hence it is that all those things to which man has a natural inclination, are naturally apprehended by reason as being good. . . . There is in man an inclination to things that pertain to him more specifically, according to that nature which he has in common with other animals: and in virtue of this inclination, those things are said to belong to the natural law, which nature has taught all animals, such as sexual intercourse, education of offspring, and so forth. (I-II. q. 94, a. 2)

Aquinas bolsters his position by reiterating that “the natural concupiscence of food, drink, and sexual matters” are “indeed ordained to the natural common good” (ST I-II q. 94, a .3).

Aquinas’ views of sexuality are represented in Milton’s works, such as *Comus*, *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, and *Paradise Lost*. Milton’s dramatization of the
Lady and Comus in *Comus* recalls the Thomist system of sexual morality. The Lady, although acknowledging the fertility and bounteouness of nature, does not believe in inordinate passion. Comus's excessive and uncurbed passion for the Lady and pleasure is nothing but lascivious, which can be called an unnatural crime in Thomist terms. In the area of sexual morality, sexual relations are permitted only within the bonds of matrimony for the sake of the preservation of mankind. Adultery and fornication are severely criticized by Aquinas and other Church Fathers, for they operate in a way detrimental to the family structure. Aquinas underscores the spiritual side of sexual relation in distinguishing sexual intercourse from lust: “contrary to sexual intercourse, which is natural to all animals, is unisexual lust, which has received the special name of the unnatural crime (I-II. q. 94, a. 3). Milton's characterization of Comus's inordinate passion for the Lady as unnatural and lustful owes much to Aquinas's doctrine. For example, one of the adverse effects of the canon law that Milton addresses in the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* is that canon law, by banning divorce, places “more of marriage in the channel of concupiscence” rather than in happy and blissful love-making (265).

Sexual morality in *Paradise Lost* requires the reader's attention. Milton presents the first parents' sexual drive as innocent, good, and even God-planned and draws attention to the sensual and sexual attributes of their love. First of all, being innocent and chaste, their love is devoid of sin; to be more specific, it lacks lust or lascivious impulses, as is described: “love unlibidinous reign'd” (5. 449). Their natural sexual inclination is what dignifies, not defiles, themselves because, as Aquinas so clearly argues in the *Summa Theologica*, sexuality is conducive to the preservation of the human species. And the preservation of the species is good; it is what God commands man to do after the creation of the world and mankind: “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” (Genesis 2:28). Aquinas interprets this sentence in Genesis as God's approval of sexual relations between the sexes. Milton's religious belief leads him to think that whatever God
commands is good for mankind because God cannot wish that which is not good for man. (To wish what is not good for man is just against God's nature.) And what is good for man is the preservation of the species.

The Edenic sexuality enjoyed by Adam and Eve is described in terms of joy and felicity. They are delighted in their physical union allowed in matrimony:

Adam is yielded by [Eve] and
Yielded with coy submission, modest pride,
And sweet reluctance amorous delay. (4. 310-2)

The young couple are most happy when having sexual relations:

Nor gentle purpose, nor endearing smiles
Wanted, nor youthful dalliance as beseems
Fair couple, linkt in happy nuptial League,
Alone as they. (4. 337-40)

As Aquinas explains how the primary precept of natural law--do good and avoid evil--can be specified in a concrete order of precepts, Milton poetically shows us how sexuality is a good ingredient of human society. Like all other created beings, argues Aquinas, mankind desires self-preservation. He also says that "there is in man a certain inclination to know the truth about God and to live in society" (ST I-II q. 94, a. 2). The basic unit of society is the family constituted by the union of man and wife. Reflecting Aquinas' idea, Milton presents physical relationships as good. The goodness of the first pair's sexual behavior is expressed in terms of the guiltless instinct of nature:

Hail wedded Love, mysterious Law, true source
Of human offspring, sole propriety
In Paradise of all things common else.
By the adulterous lust was driv'n from men
Among the bestial herds to range, by thee
Founded in Reason, Loyal, just, and Pure,
Relations dear, and all the charities

Of Father, Son, and Brother first were known. (4. 750-7)

While Calvin is never able to construe sexual relations as good or desirable, Milton artistically transforms physical union of Adam and Eve into the spiritual and divinely planned:

... thus these two

Imparadis’d in one another’s arms

The happier Eden, shall enjoy thir fill

Of bliss on bliss (4. 505-8)

This passage recalls Aquinas’ s doctrine of the goodness of sexual union and education of the young (ST I-II. q. 94, a. 2). Milton describes conjugal love in terms of divine schemes of making the creatures happy because connubial love is “[f]ounded in reason” and it is a basis for both physical union and family structure (4. 755).

The first human pair’s evening prayers and beautiful hymns, followed by their innocent love-making, are fraught with feelings of gratitude and happiness. Their sexual involvement is a union at once significant for the rest of mankind and instrumental for the further declaration of God’s benevolence and magnificence. Adam and Eve are most happy, as they pray to God:

we in our appointed work imploy’d

Have finisht happy in our mutual help

And mutual love, the Crown of all our bliss

Ordain’d by thee. (4. 728-30)

The preservation of the human species is possible only because Adam and Eve have enjoyed sexual relations, and their offspring is created according to the grand plan of God, as their praise of God indicates:

But thou hast promis’d from us two a Race

To fill the earth, who shall with us extol
Thy goodness infinite. (4. 732-4)

This argument is upheld by Danielson, who observes that Milton not only assumes but also boldly presents prelapsarian sexual relations that take place fully within the divine plan of creation. The goodness Adam and Eve enjoy is from God. . . . and we are reminded . . . that their union is at once significant for the rest of mankind and conducive to the further declaration of the goodness of God, who ‘has promised from us tow a race / To fill the earth.’ (123)

No sense of shame or guilt associated with sexual relations is found in Milton’s description of Adam and Eve’s sexual activity:

Nor those mysterious parts were then conceal’d,
Then was not guilty shame . . .

Simplicity and spotless innocence.
So pass’d naked on, nor shunn’d the sight
Of God or Angel, for they thought no ill. (4. 313-4, 319-21)

The first parents are also candid about their sexual inclinations, as they

Straight side by side were laid, nor turn’d . . .
Adam from his fair spouse, nor Eve the Rites
Mysterious of connubial Love refus’d: (4.741-3)

The marriage bed of Adam and Eve is “what God declares / Pure” (4. 746-7), and indubitably it is God who “bids increase” (4.749). In Milton’s view, no stigma should be attached to love-making between the happily married couple because it is a part of God’s plan to fill the earth with population.

Milton here demonstrates a perspective of sexuality quite different from that of the Protestant theologians in the sense that he never believes in the dichotomy between the body and the soul. Luther and Calvin are theologically and intellectually indebted to St. Augustine, who draws a line between the body and the soul and argues for the
superiority of the soul to the body. An innate and complete difference between them remains in Reformed dogmatics. Milton draws upon Aquinas’ monistic view that holds that the body is not necessarily different from the soul because the difference of the body and the soul lies only in degree, not in kind. Milton implies that because body may “up to spirit work,” the difference is one of degree (5. 478). As I have said, Aquinas’ natural law involves a natural sexual inclination; that is, a physical being’s natural inclination for a bodily union. Man naturally has a sexual desire because he is a physical being, and, most of all, because his sexual inclination is good and desirable. Raphael’s instruction of Adam also testifies to Milton’s use of Aquinas:

pure thou in body enjoy’st

And pure thou wert created. (8. 622-3)

Milton does not relegate the body to a position secondary to the soul. They are complementary with each other and are explained in equal terms. Hence, the first parents’ bodily union can be perceived as a soul-making.

Eve candidly expresses the felicity of love: “the good which we enjoy, from heaven descent” (11. 142). Adam and Eve practice, moreover, “the rites / Mysterious of connubial Love” (4. 742-3). For Milton physical love is not merely a remedy for “the temptation of immorality” (i.e. passionate burning) against which St. Paul warns in the first Epistle to the Corinthians (7:1), but also a binding force—lovers’ “union of Mind,” heart, and “one Soul” (8. 604).

Thomist doctrine of natural law also provides Milton with a framework of gender hierarchy. Each sex represents his or her distinctive characteristics, as Adam is portrayed in terms of “contemplation” and “valor,” and Eve is described in terms of “grace” and “softness” (4. 297, 298). Adam’s confession to Raphael reveals his understanding of gender differences:

in the prime end

Of Nature her th’ inferior, in the mind
And inward Faculties, which most excel
In outward also her resembling less
His image who made both. (8. 540-4)

This gender distinction reflects the idea of Aquinas, who proclaims that “the image of God is found in man, and not in woman: for man is the beginning and end of woman; as God is the beginning and end of every creature” (ST I. q. 9, a. 4). Milton grants a more active role to Adam and a passive role to Eve. Adam takes the lead in their sexual relations, and Eve meekly responds to her husband’s advances. When Eve first “espi’d” Adam, she finds him “tall,” yet “less fair” than the “wat’ry image” (which is herself), and she momentarily “turns” away from him (4. 477, 478, 480). Then, Adam assumes a male role of pursuing her by urging her to return to him: “Part of my Soul I seek thee, and thee claim / My other half” (4. 487-8). Eve recollects how Adam made a move:

with that thy gentle hand
Seiz’d me, I yielded, and from that time see
How beauty is excell’d by manly grace
And wisdom, which alone is truly fair. (4. 488-91)

Masculine attributes, such as wisdom and contemplation, are perceived by Eve as superior to womanly beauty. This passage also readdresses Thomist position on gender: “man is yet further ordered to still nobler vital action, that is intellectual operation” (ST I. q. 92, a. 1). Thomas’s gender theory justifies Milton’s description of male dominance, such as Eve’s “meek surrender” to Adam and her “submissive Charms” (4. 493, 497). Adam rigorously courts Eve, who originally “turns” from Adam, and finally leads her to the “nuptial bower” and initiates sexual union (8. 507, 510). This also shows a parallel with Aquinas, who prescribes gender roles in the Summa Theologica.

As mentioned earlier, the first human pair do not just have a desire for self-preservation, but they also recognize it as good, necessary, and divinely intended. Acknowledging the desirability of having sexual companionship, reproducing
themselves, and educating their offspring, human beings consciously direct themselves to
the human good, one of which is the preservation of the human species.

Aquinas may be said to be almost obsessed with the goodness and necessity of the
furtherance of the human species, as he says in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*: “natural
rectitude in human acts is not dependent on things accidentally possible in the case of one
individual, but rather, on these conditions which accompany the entire species” (Book 3.
Ch. 122). His concern is with a community and the species, rather than with one
individual. Milton admits the desirability of sexual union in matrimony as a basis of
human society; thus, he has Adam realize that his singleness is an unnatural state:

But man by number is to manifest

His single imperfection, and beget

Like of his like, his Image multipli’d

In unity defective, which requires

Collateral love, and dearest amity. (8. 422-6)

Adam understands marital union as something divine, as the term “deifi’d” implies:

yet so pleas’d,

Canst raise thy Creature to what highth thou wilt

Of Union or Communion, deifi’d. (8. 429-31).

Only through the union of man and woman can Adam approach the sufficiency of God
and repair the “unity defective” of man (8. 425).

Adam’s pursuit of a life-long companion is an initial stage of a public life. Since
man cannot live by himself, man has to form a society. The need for a society is well
articulated by Richard Hooker, who posits that “two foundations” of social life are “a
natural inclination, whereby all men desire social life and fellowship” and “an order,
touching the manner of their union in living together” (Of the Law of Ecclesiastical Polity
1. 10. 2). Milton’s Adam is naturally in need of a companion, and God grants his wish to
have a soul partner. The first parents are complementary with each other. Without Eve,
Adam cannot be perfect.

Adam also explains to Eve that “talk” between the married couple is like “food of the mind” (9.237, 238) and says that

this sweet intercourse

Of looks and smiles, for smiles from reason flow

To brute deni’d, and are of Love the food,

Love not the lowest end of human life. (9. 238-41)

For Milton conjugal love is not something that denigrates human beings; on the contrary, he even praises love-making as “delightfull intermissions” in Tetrachordon (2:346).

While Milton continuously presents sexuality as a divine gift, Calvin never wrote of it in that way. Like Luther, Calvin interprets it as sinful because the Fall inevitably brought about total depravity. Contrary to Reformed theology, Milton maintains that human sexual desire is without doubt a natural inclination, and that desire fulfilled brings guiltless joy and happiness to man.

According to Aquinas, concupiscence designating pleasure is itself not necessarily a bad or wrong desire. The desire for sexual union is aimed for good, that is, the preservation of the human species. Yet it should be differentiated from lust, which Aquinas clearly objects to as against nature and against God’s will. Aquinas says that lust has an adverse effect upon man in the Summa Contra Gentile: “matrimony is natural for man, and promiscuous performance of the sexual act, outside matrimony, is contrary to man’s good. For this reason, it must be a sin” (Book III. Ch. 122). And Aquinas further says that “The inordinate emission of semen is incompatible with the natural good; namely the preservation of the species” (Book III. Ch. 122). Aquinas again objects to lust in the Summa Theologica: “Contrary to sexual intercourse, which is natural in to all animals, is unisexual lust, which he labels as “unnatural crime” (I-II. q. 94, a. 3). While advocating wedded chastity and sanctifying conjugal sexuality, Aquinas thus denounces extra-marital relations as unnatural and criminal.
Obviously, *Paradise Lost* dramatizes an exemplary figure of corrupt sexuality, Satan, who, by his irrevocable fall, gives the reader a lesson of what will happen to Adam and Eve after disobedience and the Fall. But, fortunately, the first parents do not repeat what Satan has to go through due to his immoral actions. Contrary to Satan, Eve is described as finally retaining her innocence and intrinsic goodness despite the Fall. Rather than a representative of destruction, Milton’s Eve is almost always associated with a source of life, or as life itself, because of her natural goodness and fecundity. Eve means “Mother of human race (4. 475), “Mother of All Mankind” (11. 159), and “Mother of all things living” (11. 160).

Even in the aftermath of the Fall of Adam and Eve, Milton does not characterize human sexuality as entirely corrupt or depraved, as demonstrated by the description of Eve’s sexuality as a blessing, rather than a disease. Through her sexual desire, mankind continues to exist, and Milton presents the preservation as good. Eve is even called the “second Mary,” thus being a direct parent of Jesus Christ (10. 183). At the end of *Paradise Lost*, she utters a crucial word to Adam: “By me the Promis’d Seed shall all restore” (12. 624).

Repressed sexuality is neither effective nor desirable in Milton’s opinion. In *Areopagitica* Milton makes an analogy between bad books and sexuality. Deemed to be detrimental to man, bad books are threatened with elimination by members of the Parliament and others. However, Milton is against this governmental regulation:

Wherefore did [God] creat passions within us, pleasures round about us, but that these rightly temper’d are the very ingredients of vertu? They are not skillful considerers of human things, who imagin to remove sin by removing the matter of sin; for, besides that it is a huge heap increasing under the very act of diminishing . . . it cannot from all, in such a universall thing as books are, and when this is done, yet the sin remains entire . . . Banish all objects of lust, shut up all youth into the severest discipline that can be exercis’d in any hermitage, ye
cannot make them chaste, that came not thither so: such great care and wisdom is requir'd to the right managing of this point. (527)

He argues that “Suppose we could expell sin by this means; look how much we thus expell of sin, so much we expell of vertue. For the matter of them is the same; remove them, and ye remove them both alike” (527). The main point that Milton makes in this essay is that printing as well as sexuality cannot be regulated by any extrinsic forces.

Even though Aquinas’s doctrine of natural law allows for man’s loss of innocence through the sin and perversity caused by original sin, he does construct a theory that nature is not entirely destroyed by sin. He is optimistic in his view of human beings and their potentiality to do good despite original sin. Milton’s characterizations of the Lady in Comus and the general parents in Paradise Lost exhibit his hermeneutic similarity to the scholastic idea of man as innocent and moral.
Note

1. One of the writers who represents the traditional philosophy of natural law is Richard Hooker. See his *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. Also, Erasmus of Rotterdam (d. 1536) was a renowned humanist who argued for free will in *Discourse on Free Will*. (New York: Ungar, 1961).
CHAPTER FOUR

(REASON AND FREE WILL)

Milton's fame as a radical Puritan writer cannot be easily discredited. His early prose writings, Of Reformation (1641), Of Prelatical Episcopacy (1641), Animadversions (1641), the Reason of Church Government (1642), and the Tenure of Kings and Magistrates (1648) were intended to be contributions to the Puritan cause by attacking the hierarchical church system of England. However, he cannot be categorized as an orthodox Protestant in the strict sense because, unlike the Reformed divines, Milton incorporates several components of Thomist natural law, such as reason, happiness, and free will, into his theological system. The rational faculty of man, declares Milton, is what distinguishes man from other subrational animals and what dignifies man as a God-like being. Milton's exegesis postulates that man is close to God primarily because he is endowed with such divine qualities as reason and free will. Milton's view of human beings as closely associated with divine nature is represented by the description of Adam and Eve's rational power in Paradise Lost and his defense of the freedom of the press in Areopagitica. This chapter will explore the place of reason and free will in Milton's theology, focusing on the scholastic tradition of reason and Milton's idea of reason in Paradise Lost and Areopagitica.

I. Reason

Reason is the human faculty for formulating and investigating cognitive relations and is understood in contrast with perception, belief, imagination, or desire. It has as its
closest Greek equivalent logos, which is related to Latin ratio. For such Greek philosophers as Plato and Aristotle, logos is the supreme defining characteristic of god, and reason is used as a term designating the preeminent quality of man. Historically, reason is viewed differently according to various philosophers because it has various manifestations and possibilities. Traditionally, reason is used as a logical method of classification and definition. Aristotle provides a systematization of rational method in the distinction he draws between active and passive reason, and further distinguishes between theoretical reason and practical reason. The latter (practical reason) is extended to cover the entire domain of human conduct. Aquinas further develops the Aristotelian theory that human nature consists of the intellect and the will. The former (speculative reason) is known as the principle of non-contradiction; that is, “the same attribute cannot at the same time belong and not belong to the same subject and in the same respect” (Metaphysics 1005b 19-20). Aristotle’s first principle of practical reason includes all other precepts of natural law, which Aquinas develops into his moral philosophy.

As with Aristotle, reason for Cicero is a sovereign characteristic of humanity. However, St. Augustine constructs his theology based on man’s total loss of the power to exercise reason and free will as a consequence of the Fall. One of the areas in which the theories of natural law fundamentally conflict Puritan theology is reason. For example, whereas Aquinas recognizes a certain autonomy for the intellect and the will and believes in a certain degree of human freedom by arguing that “man has a natural inclination to know the truth about God . . . and to shun ignorance” (ST I-II q. 94, a. 2), Puritan theologians insistently subordinate reason to faith and predestination. The reason for this subordination of rationality to faith is that, as Alan Sinfield says, Reformed divines “draw their theological explanations upon St. Augustine” who doubts human beings’ power of reason (8). Taking as his motto Isaiah vii 9 in the Septuagint, “Unless you believe you shall not understand,” St. Augustine regards faith to be higher than reason. Aquinas’
thought is contrasted with the Lutheran concept of reason. Following St. Augustine, Luther posits that "reason and free will of man significantly deprive God of his deserved credit for the full measure of his grace" (*Tension Between Divine Will and Human Freedom* 254). There was a conspicuous decline in the prestige of reason in the Renaissance period, partly due to changing conception of reason in Reformed theology. The Fall had wrought adverse effects in every aspect in human life, but none was so terrible as in the area of the human intellect. The Reformed divines insist that fallen men's intellectual capacities are overvalued and, as a result of this overappraisal of reason, sovereignty of God's grace is threatened. Distinguishing reason between reason as a gift of God and reason as it is found in the fallen man, Luther attacks the latter. He maintains in "Last Sermon in Wittenberg 1546," that "the devil's bride, reason, the lovely whore, comes in and wants to be wise . . . she is the foremost whore that devil has" (*Works* 51. 374). Calvin basically views reason as incapable of comprehending God's will or contributing to an attaining of salvation. He warns what he deems to be the predictable result of reason if reason continues to be emphasized: man's pride may weaken faith. He teaches:

reason . . . was partly weakened and partly corrupted, so that its misshapen ruins appear . . . In man's perverted and degenerate nature some sparks still gleam. These show him to be a rational being, . . . yet they show this light choked with dense ignorance, so that it cannot come forth effectively. (*Institutes* II. ii. 12)

Unlike Aquinas, Calvin believes that to humble oneself by not assuming one's intellectual capacity is the only way to obtain salvation. Thus, the premise is that human reason is a dangerous faculty that must be subordinate to faith, as Calvin says that man's longing for truth, such as it is, languishes before it enters upon its race because it soon falls into vanity. Indeed, man's mind, because of its dullness, cannot hold to the right path, but wanders through various errors and stumbles repeatedly. . . .
Thus it betrays how incapable it is of seeking and finding truth. Then, it [reason] grievously labors under another sort of vanity: often it cannot discern those things which it ought to exert itself to know. . . . [Reason] carelessly pays little or no attention to matters it should particularly understand. Indeed, it scarcely ever seriously applies itself to the study of them. (Institutes II. ii. 12)

In the Reformed divine’s opinion, reason mostly leads man to pride, one of the cardinal sins.

While the Puritan teachers underscore the seriousness of reason’s fallen nature, Aquinas and his intellectual descendants like Hooker focus on the original state of reason as God’s image. The notion of man as God’s image is taken from the Bible, but it is Aquinas who confers on this passage a theological interpretation of why and how man is made in the image of God. Aquinas declares in the *Summa Theologica* that “man is said to be the image of God in his intellectual nature; he is mostly perfectly like God according to that in which he can best imitate God in his intellectual nature” (I. q. 93, a. 4). Aquinas calls the reader’s attention to the possibility that man can come to apprehend the truth through his reason.

The idea of reason as God’s image is a recurrent theme throughout Milton’s works. His *Areopagitica* is a defense of human liberty. On the premise that man is made in the image of God, Milton bodies forth the argument for freedom. Milton emphasizes reason as the image of God: “As good almost kill a man as kill a good Book; who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, Gods Image; but hee who destroys a good Booke, kills Reason it selfe, kills the image of God, as it were in the eye” (492). This passage is charged with theological assertions; that is, reason is equated with God and reason has to be respected accordingly. Milton’s *Paradise Lost* is, in many respects, a representation of Aquinas’ theological position on reason. When first introducing Adam, Milton portrays Adam as “Godlike erect” (4. 289) and Adam and Eve as
in thir looks Divine
the image of thir glorious Maker shone
Truth, Wisdom, and Sanctitude. (4. 291-3)

Compared with the statement of Calvin, who believes that God's image in Adam is "so corrupted that whatever remains is frightful deformity" (Institutes I. 16. 3), Milton's description expresses human dignity. Truth and Wisdom as Milton perceives in man are indicative of Adam's intellectual power; thus Milton describes Adam's closeness to God. The creation account further evidences man's God-like rational power: Adam is "endu'd / With Sanctity of Reason" (7. 507). Majorie Nicolson's argument that "there is a rational relation between faculties in the human and divine nature" further endorses Adam's divine nature (431). Reason is a special gift of God, as Raphael explains to Adam:

God on thee
Abundantly his gifts hath also pour'd
Inward and outward both, his image fair. (8. 219-21)

Reason is not only a gift; but more than that, it is what dignifies man, as the Archangel affirms when he says to Adam that God "hath honor'd thee" by awarding reason (8. 227). Raphael treats the general father with reverence and honor during his visit by calling him "Son of Heav'n and Earth" (5. 512).

What makes Thomist natural law distinctive from other philosophies is that Aquinas lays an emphasis on reason, as Aquinas places reason as the center of his theory of natural law: "Whatever stands to reason in this sense, has the nature of a law" (ST. I-II. q. 90, a.2). Why, then, is reason so significant in natural law? The reasons for this importance are as follows. First, Aquinas echoes Cicero's egalitarian impulses; if all men are endowed with reason which is a god-like faculty, then, all men are equal and should be treated accordingly. Milton reflects Thomist egalitarianism in Paradise Lost, when Adam reproaches Nimrod for his tyranny. Adam laments and chastises Nimrod's rule
over men by calling him an

... execrable son so to aspire

Above his brethren, to himself assuming

Authority usurpt, from God giv'n:

He gave us only over Beast, Fish, Fowl

Dominion absolute; that right we hold

By his donation; but man over men

He made not Lord, such title to himself

Reserving, human left from human free.

But this usurper his encroachment proud

Stays not on man. (12. 64-71)

This long passage reveals Milton's belief that no man should rule over other men because all men are equal under God.

Second, rationality is regarded as the foundation of ethics of human beings. Indeed, Aquinas' copious works the Summa Theologica and the Summa Contra Gentiles may be said to be designed for moral teachings because they are fundamentally ethical in nature. While the Reformed divines try to locate truth or meanings in God's arbitrary and unpredictable gift called grace, Aquinas finds those gifts in the rational power of man. Aquinas' natural law postulates that the rational soul has two powers: the intellectual cognition and the intellectual appetite, usually called the will. The proper object of the intellect is truth (ST I. q. 79, a. 2). In "Free Will and Predestination," Calvin says that "man is so enslaved by sin as to be of his own nature incapable of an effort or even an aspiration towards that which is good" (707). Thus Calvin negates even the possibility of human beings becoming good by their own endeavor. Whereas reason has no place in Calvinist ethics, Aquinas believes that human beings are morally good because they are rational—endowed with reason by God.
The importance of Thomist doctrine rests with its incorporation of “morality” into human reason. In the *Summa Theologica*, Thomas divides reason into two categories of theoretical (speculative) and practical reason and identifies the first principle of practical reason: “that good is to be done and pursued and evil to be avoided” (I-II, q. 94, a. 2). Natural law is the source of the precepts of morality, and they are rational in nature. The basis of human morality for Aquinas is reason, the faculty that dictates what is good and what is evil: man obeys the natural law by following natural inclinations and if all men follow their natural inclination, “everyone will act according to reason” (I-II. q. 94, a. 2). Reason plays the paramount role in Thomas’s “Treatise on Law” in the *Summa Theologica*. Reflecting Cicero’s equation of Law with Nature and Reason, St. Thomas asserts that “reason imitates nature” (ST I. q. 60, a. 5). The importance of reason in natural law cannot be overemphasized, as Aquinas says in the *Summa Theologica* that “the natural law is something appointed by reason” (I-II. q. 94, a. 1) and that “natural law is something pertaining to reason” (I-II. q. 91, a. 3). Reason is thus viewed as a superior defining characteristic of humanity.

As with Aquinas, Milton says in *Christian Doctrine* that morality has something to do with practical reason: “Lastly, everyone is provided with a sufficient degree of innate reason for him to be able to resist evil desires by his own efforts; so no one can add strength to his excuse by complaining that his own nature is peculiarly deprived” (I. iv. 186). Milton’s system of ethics should be understood in this context, as William Madsen draws attention to Milton’s moral thought: Milton is religious “in that he makes will an equal cooperator with reason in the moral act. Indeed, it is precisely because reason and will cooperate that man can be said to have freedom” (238). Don Wolfe also calls the reader’s attention to the “unending possibility of reason's ascendancy in man” in *Paradise Lost* (424). By ascendancy, Wolfe means moral improvements.

In the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Aquinas makes it clear that reason is aimed at
knowing truth: “The end of the intellect is the end of all human actions. The end and
good of the intellect, however, is truth. Consequently, the ultimate end of the whole man
and of its operations and desires is to know the first truth, which is God” (Book III. Ch.
25). Aquinas also draws a connection between reason and morality in the Summa
Theologica:

The root of liberty is the will as the subject thereof; but it is the reason as its
cause. For the will can tend freely towards various objects, precisely because the
reason can have various perceptions of good. Hence philosophers define the free-
will as being a free judgment arising from reason, implying that reason is the root
of liberty. (I-II. q. 17, a. 1. & 2. emphasis is mine)

Central to Hooker’s philosophy is the close relationship between morality and reason:
Choice there is not unless the thing which we take to be so in our power that we
might have refused and left it. . . . To choose is to will one thing before another.
And to will is to bend our soules to the having or doing of that which they see
to be good. Goodness is seen with the eye of the understanding. And the light
of that eye, is reason. So that two principall fountaines there are of human action,
Knowledge and Will, which will in things tending towards any end is termed
choice. (Of the Law of Ecclesiastical Polity I. vii. 2. emphasis is mine)

For Hooker, goodness must be understood within the parameter of the human intellect.

Aquinas also follows the Aristotelian division of reason into theoretical reason
and practical reason. The latter is extended over the entire domain of human conduct, as
he defines reason as “the rule and measure of human acts” (ST I-II. q. 90, a. 1).

Emphasizing “reason” as “the guidance in human acts” (ST I-II. q. 76, a. 1), Aquinas
argues for the power of reason to dignify humanity. Milton echoes the Thomist view of
man as possessing reason and free will by praising reason as the divinely endowed gift.
He describes Adam and Eve as being created in the state of innocence and freedom with
reason as their guide, as Eve is aware that “we [Adam and Eve] / Live Law to ourselves, our reason is our Law” (9. 653-4). Law is synonymous with guidance; therefore it is no wonder that Eve considers reason as their “guidance.” Eve’s understanding of reason shows the Thomist influence on Milton and the Renaissance in general.

Reason is the chief and pre-eminent faculty of man for both Aquinas and Milton. In the *Summa Theologica* Aquinas postulates reason as “the first principle of all human acts: all other principles obey reason, though in different degree” (I-II q. 58, a. 2). This doctrine is reiterated by Adam when he points out to Eve reason as the paramount faculty: “in the soul [there] are many lesser Faculties that serve Reason” (*PL* 5. 301-4).

St. Aquinas teaches that “good is the first thing that falls under the apprehension of the practical reason, which is directed to action: since every agent acts for an aspect of good” (*ST* I-II q. 94, a. 2). That Thomas’s emphasis on “man’s inclination to good” is based on “reason” is represented in *Paradise Lost*. Adam’s goodness stems from the power to exercise reason, as Milton says in the above passage in *Christian Doctrine*. In other words, without the capability to use reason, Adam cannot be a good man. Adam is repeatedly presented as an innocent and reasonable man. Milton reflects Aquinas’s theory of reason in a description of paradise.

Aquinas explains human reason in its relation to human acts. Among the acts performed by man, only those actions over which man has dominion are called human acts, and what guides human activity is reason: “reason has the guidance of human acts” (*ST* I-II q. 76, a. 1). Ralph McInerny explains that for Aquinas “what characterizes human agent is rational activity, which is the activity of the faculty of reason itself” (“Ethics” 202-3). And human acts have their source in reason and will, as Aquinas subordinates other principles to reason: “reason is the first principle of all human acts: all other principles obey reason” (*ST* I-II q. 58, a. 2). This Thomist legacy is found in Richard Hooker’s *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*: “the law of nature” means “the
law which humaine nature knoweth it selfe in reason universally bound unto, which also for the case may be termed most fitly the lawe of reason: this law, I say, comprehendeth all those things which men by the light of their naturall understanding evidently know” (I. viii. 10).

Milton’s writings from *Prolusions* to *Paradise Lost* to *Christian Doctrine* demonstrate that he understood the law of nature as agreeable with right reason, which was held in the seventeenth century to be the chief faculty implanted in all men by God. The concept of right reason originated in Greco-Roman speculation, with Plato and Aristotle, and entered the Renaissance through Stoicism, scholasticism, and Renaissance humanism. Plato believes that reason is more than a merely rational faculty of man. Plato says, “god is perfect[ly] righteous; and he of us who is most righteous is most like [god]” (*Republic* 176b). Aristotle inherits this notion of “righteousness” and thinks that good conduct requires good counsel about means and ends of the virtue which unites intellectual ability and moral excellence. Like the Cambridge Platonists, Milton holds that right reason is “the candle of the Lord,” an idea upon which he bases his ethical system. Man can make moral judgments because of right reason, that discerns right from wrong. Milton’s *Christian Doctrine* offers a valuable clue to fathom his thought on human nature, including reason and free will. In that treatise Milton reiterates Aquinas: “man is made in the image of God. . . . the law of nature is itself sufficient to teach whatever is in accord with reason (i.e. whatever is intrinsically good)” (1. 10. 353).

As in the theological treatise, reason is presented in *Paradise Lost* as a God-like quality endowed upon man by God

There wanted yet the Master work, the end
Of all yet done; a Creature who not prone
And Brute as other Creature, but endu’d
With sanctity of Reason (7. 505-8).
Reason, warns Raphael,

    is judicious, is the scale

    By which to heav'nly Love thou may'st ascend,

Not sunk in carnal pleasure, for which cause

Among the Beasts no mate for thee was found. (7. 591-4).

As God is just, so is Adam just for the same reason. As God governs the cosmos, so Adam governs all the other creatures by virtue of the goodness stemming from his divine nature. In the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* Milton justifies man’s dominion over all other creatures because man “measures and is commensurate to right reason” (292).

Philosophers of natural law inaugurate the theory that underscores the interrelation between reason and free will: there is a hierarchy in reason; thus lesser rational animals have no rational power to exercise. Only man can reason, by the will of God. Another parallel between Aquinas and Milton is their justification of man’s dominion over other creatures on the basis of reason imparted to Adam by God. In the *Summa Theologica* Aquinas endorses human mastery over the beasts:

    by the order of Divine Providence which always governs inferior things by the superior. Wherefore, as being made to the image of God, man is above other animals, these are rightly subject to this government. . . . Whereas man possesses a universal Prudence as regards all practical matters. (I. q. 96, a. 1)

Aquinas further posits that reason is one of the supreme functions and upholds man’s dominion over animals: “in man reason has the position of a master and not of a subject” (*ST* I. q. 96, a. 1). In the *Summa Theologica* Thomas also endorses human control over animals: “natural dominion over other creatures attaches to man by virtue of his reason” (II-II. q. 66, a. 1). The first step of man to wield control over animals is to name them. Milton’s portrayal of Adam as a name-giver of all animals draws upon Aquinas’ exegesis of man’s authority over all other creatures. At the moment of creation, Adam already
comprehends the divine scheme of the creation. Adam knows that God has “conferr’d upon him” the “many signs of power and rule over other creatures” (4. 430) and that he is given “dominion over all other creatures that possess / Earth, Air, Seas” (4. 429-31).

This mastership account is reiterated in Book 8, where God says to Adam: “I bring them [animals] to receive / From thee names” (8. 343-4). Adam’s ability to name all the animals signifies his inherent wisdom and intellect, the reason given by God, as he narrates to Raphael how he began to speak:

to speak I tri’d, and forthwith I spake,

My Tongue obey’d and readily could name

Whatever I saw. (8. 271-3)

Adam recollects how he comes to name:

I name’d them as they passed, and understood

Their nature, with such knowledge God endu’d

My sudden apprehension. (8. 353-5)

This passage is a dramatization of Aquinas’ statement that “names [which man gives to animals] should be adapted to the nature of animals. Therefore, Adam knew the animals’ natures; and in like manner he was possessed of the knowledge of all other things” (ST I q. 94, a. 3). The close kinship between Aquinas and Milton is evidenced in their endorsement of Adam’s capacity to apprehend naturally the nature of animals and to easily name them according to their natures.

Aquinas interprets the Scriptural passage of Adam’s naming as indicative of man’s intellectual power. Milton has Adam relate to Raphael how he (Adam) naturally names the beasts.

Milton also accredits Eve with Adam’s capacity to name. Eve has named the flowers, as she laments when departing from Eden: “O flow’rs . . . I . . . gave ye Names” (11. 273, 276, 277). That is indicative of Eve’s rational power.
Aquinas sets forth a theory that naming is an important example of man’s rational capacity. Milton goes beyond the authoritative nature of naming: the naming of human beings is different from that of animals; that is, the naming is a sign of authority, but when a person is involved in the naming of other human beings, it is also a sign of freedom and affection. For example, each of the original parents is first named by the other. Eve initially calls the man she first sees Adam: “Thy Mansion wants thee, Adam” (8. 296) and Adam first calls the woman before him Eve: “Return, faire Eve” (4. 481). As Leonard rightly observes, “Adam’s naming of Eve is a free and spontaneous act which proves to be the most persuasive argument in winning Eve’s love” (43). Adam names her Eve because through his rational power he perceives that she is the mother of all things living, as Eve denotes the origin of life. Eve is thus not a random name, nor is it general as woman, which means a person extracted from man. Eve is a proper name that designates a unique characteristic perceived by Adam.

In the pre-lapsarian stage, all that Adam does is according to reason. His spontaneous naming of all the animals testifies to his capacity to exercise reason. In the aftermath of the Fall, Adam still has some degree of power to exercise reason. If Adam and Eve fall by exercising free will, they also move toward their regeneration by using free will. The first example is their willingness to exercise free will for the second time that enables them to have another chance of a new life. After the Fall, however, Adam is genuinely penitent because of his power to exercise reason:

God made thee of choice his own
To serve him, thy reward was of his grace,
Thy punishment then justly is at his Will.
Be it so, for I submit, his doom is fair,
That dust I am, and shall to dust return: (10. 766-9)

Adam is not totally lost because he still possesses reason. As Stanley Fish observes,
reason has “brought him to a conviction of his own guilt which can no longer be in
doubt” (283). Contrary to Calvin’s warnings that both the “supernatural” and “the
natural gifts [of the intellect and the will] have been corrupted” by the fall (Institutes II. ii.
12), Adam has finally learned the lesson by means of natural reason.

A second example is Adam’s refusal to commit the sin of suicide when Eve
suggests that they both die in order to prevent their sin from being transmitted to their
progeny: “Let us seek Death” (10. 1001). Adam decisively rejects this idea because his
reason tells him that taking one’s life is against God’s intended creation of humanity:

To better hopes his more attentive mind
Labouring had raised. (10. 1011-2)

He says that committing suicide “will provoke the Highest / To make death in us live”
(10. 1027-8). Without reason, they could have made another mistake.

Like Adam, Eve is also a rational being, as exemplified by her initiation of
reconciliation with Adam. First, she admits to Adam that although he sinned “Against
God only,” she sinned “against God and thee” (10. 930-1). And then she tells Adam of
her willingness to bear all the responsibilities:

... all

The sentence from thy head removed may light

On me, sole cause to thee of all this woe. (10. 933-5)

Only after the reconciliation with Eve can Adam make peace with God. Her role as an
agent for Adam’s reconciliation with God is crucial in their obtaining salvation, the
second life. Through her innate reason, Eve recognizes the sin that she committed, and
she is now willing to take all the responsibilities upon herself. She thus provides a way
for Adam to repent and obey God.1 Through the use of reason, she prevents Adam from a
sinful alienation from God. Eve is portrayed as capable of restoring both Adam and
mankind. And her exercise of reason enables her to do that.
Reason is generally thought to be the opposite of passion. However, Aquinas understands reason as the opposite of immoderation, not of passion: "The purpose of reason is to subdue, not sensual pleasure, but immoderation" (ST I. q. 98, a. 2). Rather than seeing passion as totally bad, Aquinas says that only inordinate passion is bad, as Madsen rightly posits that for Aquinas "appetite is natural in the sense that it is a part of man's nature, but it is unnatural to exalt it over reason, which ought to rule it—not suppress it—at all times (244). This view differs from that of Calvin, who categorically condemns passion as the origin of sin: "man, having been corrupted by his fall, sins voluntarily . . . with the bias of his own passion" ("Free Will and Predestination" 707). The whole dramatization of Paradise Lost is hinged upon one incident: whether Adam is capable of using this noble and God-like faculty, reason, in such a way that he brings passion under the sway of reason. Before the Fall, Adam's reason is perfect and his desire for Eve is both legitimate and sanctioned by God; but when he faces the difficult decision—whether to eat the interdicted fruit out of his love for Eve or to obey God and not to taste—he chooses Eve over God. Until the Fall, Adam is not to be blamed for the pleasure he has enjoyed. At this critical juncture, Adam succumbs to an irrational passion for Eve, without paying attention to Raphael's warning:

Take heed lest passion sway
Thy Judgement to do aught, which else free Will
Would not admit. (8. 645-7)

In the aftermath of the Fall, "reason in man [was] obscured or not obeyed" (12. 86) because his reason fails to regulate his excessive passion for Eve, as Michael describes:

Immediately inordinate desires
And upstart Passions catch the Government
From Reason. (12. 87-9)

Adam falls because his reason fails to overcome passion for Eve.
Puritans consider that to assert the glory of the human intellect deprives God of glory and thereby shows one’s own rebelliousness. On the other hand, natural law for Aquinas is an expression of the ways in which man comes to an understanding of the truth of God through reason. Reason is not only a supreme defining faculty of man, but it also is a valuable tool through which man comes to grasp the will of God. That is why reason occupies a significant place in natural law. First of all, everyone is endowed with reason, as Cicero and Aquinas include all men in the category of rational agents. McInerny finds the epistemological cornerstone of natural law in the assumption that “there are starting points of human thinking that are accessible to all” thanks to the divinely endowed reason (“Ethics” 208). Reason is regarded as a God-like faculty.

II Reason and faith

In theology, reason is usually distinguished from faith because religion has long been considered to be revelational rather than rational in nature. Reason and religion in the Western world have been frequently at odds with each other. Theological discrepancies come primarily from different views of the intellect. St. Augustine, for example, takes as his motto a passage in Isaiah vii. 9.: “Unless you believe you shall not understand” and even treats reason as a notion opposite to faith (City of God 29). He bodies forth the illumination theory in which the intellect is regarded as unmanageably debilitated and, hence, unable to possess true knowledge without an extrinsic illumination. Reason is far more often regarded as a prison or a constraint to be escaped from. The reason for this denigrating view of human reason is that “man may exalt himself, not only in the self-awareness and self-confidence whereby he takes away God’s glory as creator and giver, but also in his own autonomous action and self-glorification” (Althous 66). Opposing the Augustinian extrinsic illumination theory, Aquinas insists
that the human intellect is able to achieve its goal of true knowledge (God) on its own without any further illumination from God. He says that “man’s final glory or happiness consists only in the knowledge of God” (ST I-II. q. 3, a. 7). Certainly, man’s intellectual power to know God is an imperative in Thomist theology. Natural reason innate in man enables him to apprehend Christian truth. Thus, as Mary Clark rightly observes, Aquinas “saw philosophy as desirable, not detrimental to Christian believers” (19).

Reason and free will are most crucial notions in Milton’s religious belief. While Milton views faith as compatible with reason, Puritans object to that idea. As described by Perry Miller, the Puritans believe that

the world is not governed by reason, or power, or love, but by “I am,” who is a jealous God and wreaks vengeance upon those who idolize his titles instead of worshiping Himself. Puritans reasserted the divine simplicity and warned men to guard their thinking lest they again identify God’s essence with whichever of the attributes seemed most attractive to them. They were endeavoring to reach truth about God. (13)

What the Puritan divines are concerned about is man’s attempt to assume the divine power or role out of his (man’s) pride in the intellect. One of the basic Lutheran dogmas is that faith transcends reason and faith believes against reason, against “one’s own heart,” against one’s own “feeling,” against “experience” (Works 40. 54).

Calvin is no exception to this scornful view of reason in that he also sees knowledge as working adversely to faith. He also says in “Free Will and Predestination” that “We obtain salvation from which no other source than the mere goodness of God” (709). Whereas Calvin insists that human will or knowledge plays no role in increasing faith or in attaining salvation, Milton has the notion of the compatibility of reason and faith; they go hand-in-hand. Reason and Christian faith in Milton’s theological system are complementary, not contradictory elements for attaining salvation. Clearly, Milton
devoted himself to the study of God. One of the reasons for his assiduous study is that he believes his knowledge will strengthen faith. He advocates knowledge as the basis of faith in Christian Doctrine:

It follows that we must have a right knowledge of God before we can receive him or approach him. Thus faith springs from a true knowledge of God, though this may be at first be imperfect. Then faith progresses towards good, from this beginning. (I. xx. 476)

Milton's confidence in knowledge was influenced by the tradition of Thomist natural law. Aquinas, for example, defines natural law as "the rational creature's participation in the eternal law" (ST I-II. q. 91, a. 2). In that famous definition of natural law, Aquinas equally emphasizes "rational" and "eternal" which can be regarded as "reason" and "beyond reason" (i.e. "faith"), respectively. Aquinas' equal weight of Greek rationalism and Christian belief can be clearly found in Milton's Paradise Lost. Most of all, Aquinas' belief in human reason not only as a remedy to sweeping passion, but also as a ground of morality for mankind is antithetical to the Protestant rejection of reason in favor of faith. Aquinas insists on man's ability to exercise reason: "Every man, in as much as he is reasonable, has some share in governing according to the free choice of reason" (ST II-II, q. 47, a. 12). For Thomas faith and reason are harmonious and complementary, not antithetical, as Jan Aertsen says: "Aquinas's synthesis of faith and the natural desire to know indicates that faith must not be conceived of as an elimination of our intellectual nature, but as its perfection" (33). St. Augustine, on the contrary, teaches that human desire for intellect is incompatible with, or even dangerous to, faith and salvation. And the Reformed divines who are intellectual descendants of St. Augustine think of reason as merely a mechanical and functional faculty that has nothing to do with morality. Calvin even unequivocally denies the value of human work in his efforts to glorify God's omnipotence:
it is therefore in vain that so many burning lamps shine for us in the workmanship of the universe to show forth the glory of its Author. . . . Surely they strike some sparks, but before their fuller light shines forth, these are smothered.

(Institutes II. vii. 356)

Both Aquinas and Milton emphasize reason as the measure for human acts. One of the premises of Aquinas’ natural law is that man has a natural inclination towards the knowledge of God. Hence, the intellect cannot contradict faith. Knowledge is conducive, not detrimental, to the growth of faith both in Aquinas’ doctrine and Milton’s poetic representation of Adam and Eve. Milton portrays Adam as an inquisitive being, equipped with intellectual capacities. Adam’s dialogue with Raphael testifies to his intellectual capacity which is postulated by Aquinas, who believes that “man has a natural inclination to know the truth about God . . . and to shun ignorance” (ST I-II. q. 94, a. 2).

III Free Will

In the Summa Theologica, Aquinas argues that man is a free agent and provides a theological and philosophical framework within which the concept of free will is worked out as one of the central issues. Most of all, free will always goes hand-in-hand with reason. They cannot be thought of as being separate, as Aquinas asserts that “there is free choice, where there is intellect” (ST I. q. 59, a. 3). The interrelationship between reason and free will is again emphasized by St. Aquinas: “man is master of his own acts by reason and will: hence free will is said to be a function of will and reason” (ST III q. 1, a. 1). Hence in Thomas’s theory of free will, as Petrik argues, “rationality is set forth as a necessary condition for free choice” (97). Reason is that which distinguishes man from the beasts. Animals and inanimate matters must obey God because they do not have free will. But according to Aquinas, humans may or may not obey God because of the reason
possessed by man. Aquinas intends freedom to extend to rational creatures: freedom is predicated of those creatures which act in accordance with judgment, understood as falling within the power of reason.

Whether man has a free will or not is an age-old controversy, and history has proved that it is difficult to reach a definite answer to that inquiry because the issue becomes complicated when it is to be explained in connection with foreknowledge, fate, or reason. Whereas Cicero defends free will by negating foreknowledge, St. Augustine attacks Cicero’s defense of free will by affirming God’s foreknowledge. He negates free will by asserting God’s omniscience: “Our wills themselves are in the order of causes, which is, for God, fixed, and is contained in his foreknowledge, since human acts of will are the causes of all human activities. Therefore he who had prescience of the causes of all events certainly could not be ignorant of our decisions, which he foreknows as the causes of our actions” (City of God 192).

Like St. Augustine, who doubts the validity of free will and subordinates it to faith, Puritan divines warn against free will. Luther argues that free will is “obviously a term applicable only to the Divine Majesty; for only he can do, and does (as the Psalmist sings) ‘whatever he wills in heaven and earth’” (Ps. 135:6). Luther also thinks that “if free will is ascribed to men, it is ascribed with no more propriety than divinity itself would be—and no blasphemy could exceed that” (Dillenberger 188). Luther does not admit the possibility that man has a free will in “The Bondage of The Will”:

For if we believe it to be true that God foreknows and foreordains all things . . . and nothing can take place but according to His will (which reason herself is compelled to confess), then, even according to the testimony of reason itself, there can be no free will in man, in angels or in any creature. (703)

For Luther, the notion of free will is never a comprehensible one because, in his view, it contradicts the doctrine of salvation by God alone, and it is thus identical with heresy. He
believes that the Catholic position on free will strips God of His credit for the full measure of his grace, as he says: “that human power is completely subverted in order that the power of God may be established in man . . . appears to be highly useful and essential to true religion” (706). In “Sermons At Leipzig and Erfurt,” Luther first discusses free will and then its inability to have an impact on morality:

the free will of man, praise and extol it as you will, can do absolutely nothing of itself and is not free in its own volition to know or to do good, but only in the grace of God, which makes it free and without which it lies bound in sin and error and cannot get loose by itself. (Works 51. 57)

His view of free will as blasphemous leads him to criticize Aquinas for “writing a great deal of heresy” and holds Thomas accountable for “the reign of Aristotle, the destroyer of godly doctrine” (Works 32. 258). Indeed, as Luther attacks, Aquinas underscores the importance of freedom by proclaiming in the Summa Theologica that “human works are subject to free choice” (I. q. 59, a. 3).

Luther’s position on free will was also attacked by several Renaissance humanists. Erasmus of Rotterdam, one of Luther’s detractors, first surveys the history of the idea of free will, and argues that free will exists. In “On Free Will” Erasmus says that “from apostolic times to this day no one has ever claimed the right to deny all efficacy to the free will, with the sole exceptions of Manichaeus and John Wyclif. . . . Pelagius seemed to attribute too much to free will, and Scotus still more, but Luther first mutilated it by cutting off its right arm, then not content with this he throttled free will and destroyed it altogether” (680, 691). He asks a couple of rhetorical questions: “what is the purpose of all these warnings, precepts, threats . . . demands, if we do nothing, but God, according to His immutable will, works everything in us, wills it, and accomplishes it. . . . Why does He command us to seek by so many labours that which He has already decided to grant us freely?” (685). Erasmus afterward expresses his opinion on free will by
pointing out one weakness of determinism: "those who deny absolutely the existence of free will, and claim that everything is done by pure necessity, assert that God produces in all men good works but also bad. It follows, then, that if man has no claim to be considered the author of his good works, he also cannot be regarded as the author of his bad works" (687). Those who oppose free will must face the dilemma that God also produces evil. Acknowledging this dilemma, Erasmus takes the position for free will: "I prefer the doctrine of those who allow something to free will, and at the same time acknowledge the greater share of grace" (691).

Aquinas' argument that "forasmuch as man is rational is it necessary that man have a free-will" (ST. I. q. 83. a. 1) was a prevalent notion in the Renaissance. Milton's contemporary, Richard Baxter, for example, expresses a similar opinion in Catholick Theologie:

I think, that God made man a free self-determining agent, that he might be capable of such Sapiential Rule: And that it is a great Honour to God, to make so noble a Nature . . . And though man be not Independent, yet to be so far like God himself, as to be a kind of first-determiner of many of his Volitions and Nolitions, is part of Gods natural Image on Man. (114-5)

Hooker's statement that "to be free and to will in any meaningful way is to bend our souls to the having or doing of that which they see to be good" can be understood in the Thomist tradition (I. vii. 2).

Aquinas teaches that "by free will man moves himself to act" and that "free will is nothing else but the power of choice" (ST. I. q. 83, a. 1 & I. q. 83, a. 4). Likewise, Milton argues for freedom and articulates the Thomist stance on free will by equating freedom and choice. In Areopagitica he writes that

Many there be that complain of divine providence for suffering Adam to transgress, foolish tongues! When God gave him reason, he gave him freedom
to choose, for reason is but choosing; he had bin else a meer artificial Adam, such an Adam as he is in the motions [puppet shows]. We our selves esteem not of that obedience, or love, or gift, which is of force. (527)

Here Milton opposes forceful obedience to God because what is devoid of free choice is not valuable or praiseworthy. He goes on to justify the high providence of God proven by His grant of freedom to man:

though [God] command us temperance, justice, continence, yet [He] pours out before us, even to a profuseness, all desirable things and gives us minds that can wonder beyond all limit and satiety. (Areopagitica 527)

In that sense Milton's notion of freedom is, as Savage says, "moral freedom--the freedom that men create for themselves in the knowledge of moral obligation to which they wish themselves bound" (292-3).

One of the reasons that the issue of free will has long been a polemical one is that the doctrine of free will is concerned with ethical problems, one of which is whether good or evil nature is inherent or not. In Thomist natural law, the free will issues are assimilated into moral discourse by being directly connected with reason. What is will?

In the Thomist system of the human intellect, the will refers to the intellectual appetite which is also called the will and, in general, it does strive for goodness. As an appetite, the will moves the intellect, too. The will is concerned with human acts which Aquinas thinks to be moral in nature:

Man acts from judgment because by his apprehensive power he judges that something should be avoided or sought. But because this judgment is from some act of comparison in the reason, therefore he acts from free judgment and retains the power of being inclined to various things. (ST I. q. 83, a. 1)

Only free agents can do the right things, and for Milton freedom is the condition of human morality. Our source of morality is the power to use free will. When we do not
judiciously use free will, we sin. Because sin is committed by our own choice, God is in no way involved in our sin. Milton's exegesis of free will also involves moral issues:

From the concept of freedom, then, all idea of necessity must be removed... If [necessity] restricts free agents to a single course [ad hoc unum], this makes man the natural cause of all his actions and therefore of his sins, just as if he were created with an inherent propensity towards committing sins. If it compels free agents against their will, this means that man is subject to the force of another's decree, and is thus the cause of sins only per accidens, God being the cause of sin per se. If it assists free agents when they are willing, this makes God either the principle or joint cause of sins. Lastly, if it does nothing at all, no necessity exists. (CD I. xiv. 76-8)

Christian Doctrine also includes the free will defense: God has decreed that

in the love and worship of [himself]... men should always use their free will.

If we do not, whatever worship or love we men offer to God is worthless and of no account. The will which is threatened or overshadowed by any external decree cannot be free, and once force is imposed all esteem for services rendered grows faint and vanishes altogether. (I. iv. 189)

In Paradise Lost God's announcement of how He made man bears some resemblance to the free-will statements in the Summa Theologica:

I made [man] just and right,

Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.

Such I created all th'Ethereal Powers
And Spirits, both them who stood and them who fail'd;
Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.

(3. 98-102)

Milton's God declares that He would not be content with compelled obedience because
that is not true obedience, but something merely stemming from necessity:

Not free, what proof could they have giv’n sincere
Of true allegiance, constant faith or love,
Where only what they needs must do, appear’d,
Not what they would? what praise could they receive?
What pleasure I from such obedience paid,
When Will and Reason (Reason is also choice)
Useless and vain, of freedom both despoil’d,
Made passive both, had serv’d necessity,
Not me. (3. 107-111)

Freedom is not only a gift by God, but man’s right use of it is also a moral responsibility, as God says that men and angels are

Authors of themselves in all
Both what they judge and what they choose; for so
I formed them free, and free they must remain. (3. 122-4)

To remain free is man’s moral obligation. God sets up a boundary of human freedom: man is only free insofar as he obeys God, and to obey God is a rational act. Raphael recapitulates the message of God’s ordinance to Adam:

And God made thee free, but to preserve
He left it in thy power, ordain’d thy will
By nature free, not overrul’d by fate. (5. 525-7)

He then talks about the nature of faith of the angels:

freely we serve,
Because we freely love, as in our will
To love or not; in this we stand or fall. (5. 241-3)

As God declares, Adam is able to use his free will. A compPELLING example of Adam’s
exercise of his freedom is his request for a companion of his kind. Adam’s request for a partner is made by his free will: “Thus I embold’n’d spake, and freedom us’d” (8. 434). This supplication “pleas’d” God and Adam soon finds God’s “acceptance” (8. 437, 435) when God makes Eve for the sake of Adam. As God also praises Adam for “expressing well the spirit within thee free,” Adam is aware that he has the freedom to request a companion and eventually gets what he wants and enjoys the companionship (8. 439).

There is a parallel between Adam’s request for a partner and Eve’s request for separate work in Eden. Both Adam and Eve receive what they want. On the day of the Fall, Eve suggests that she work apart from him so that they can work more efficiently. In a response to Adam, who is reluctant to let her go, Eve appeals to the concept of the sufficiency of freedom in man:

What is faith, love, virtue unassayed
Alone, without exterior help sustain’d? (9. 335-6)

As God grants what Adam longed for, Adam allows Eve to leave. When Adam permits Eve to go, he assumes the role of God, reminding the reader of what God has said in Book 3: “sufficient to have stood, though free to fall” (98). Adam allows her to leave with the following parting remark:

Go in thy naive innocence, rely
On what thou hast of virtue, summon all,
For God towards thee hath done his part, do thine. (9. 373-5)

Though he somewhat doubts Eve’s power to exercise free will, he allows her to leave because of his belief that

God left free the Will, for what obeys
Reason, is free, and Reason he made right. (9. 351-2)

Here Adam is aware that this freedom is “a prerequisite to genuine allegiance, faith, and love” (Milton’s Good God 126). Adam acts upon the principle that Eve is a free being,
and, accordingly, Adam lets her work separately.

After the Fall, Eve blames Adam with the acrid reproach for letting her go:

Why didst not thou the Head
Command me absolutely not to go,
Going into such danger as thou said'st?
Too facile then thou didst not much gainsay,
Nor didst permit, approve, and fair dismiss.
Hadst thou bin firm and fixt in thy dissent,
Neither had I transgress'd, nor thou with mee. (9. 1155-61)

In response to Eve's blame, Adam defends himself by saying that he did so because he recognizes that she also possesses freedom. As God bestows and recognizes man's free will in Book 3, so does Adam recognize Eve's rights to choose:

[If] this has been force,
And force upon free Will hath here no place.
But confidence then bore thee on, secure. (9. 1173-5)

What Adam says here is that any compelled obedience is worthless and not real obedience. Adam grants Eve permission to work apart from him because he recognizes Eve's freedom to initiate a separate work, as God listened to Adam's former request for an equal society and made Eve for him. Adam respects her free will and capacity to use it. Also, his refusal to force her echoes Thomas's remark that "coercion is altogether repugnant to the will" (ST I. q. 82, a. 1).

Once given the permission, Eve must exercise her freedom judiciously. As R. D. Bedford says "free will act[s] with full responsibility and accountability" (6), and Eve is thus responsible for her free acts.

Aquinas' notion of freedom is religious, as he states in the Summa Theologica that "freedom from sin is true freedom" (II-II. q. 183, a. 4). Milton's doctrine of freedom
is also theological, as exemplified by his description of the sinfulness of Adam and Eve’s taste of the forbidden fruit. After that disobedience, they are no longer free because the activity is a sin. They can no longer be free of sin. This argument is supported by Dennis Danielson, who argues that “True freedom involves the obedience of will to reason” (123). Originally man is endowed with freedom, but he is responsible for keeping it, as God proclaims:

I form’d them free, and free they must remain,
Till they enthrall themselves: (3. 118-9)

To remain free without committing sin is not only God’s imperative, but also a rational being’s moral obligation.

In his effort to underscore the significance of free will, Milton tries to minimize the effect of God’s foreknowledge on man. From his theological perspective, to highlight divine foreknowledge may result in the weakening of man’s moral power. In Christian Doctrine, Milton talks about the relation between morality and foreknowledge:

There can be no absolute divine decree about the action of free agent. Moreover, divine foreknowledge can no more affect the action of free agents than can human foreknowledge. . . . divine foreknowledge definitely cannot itself impose any necessity, nor can it be set up as a cause, in any sense, of free actions. If it is set up in this way, then liberty will be an empty word, and will have to be banished utterly not only from religion, but also from morality. (I. iii. 164)

The main point here is that regardless of God’s foreknowledge, man has to do what is morally right. Adam’s advocacy of human freedom grows out of his moral principles. Savage argues that for Milton “man is free only in so far as he is rational” (293). The passage is similar to Aquinas’s declaration that “free will is a function of will and reason” (ST III. q. 1, a. 1). Michael reminds Adam that “true Liberty” is “always with right Reason” (12. 83-4). Through Michael, Milton emphasizes that freedom without
right reason is not really freedom. Milton’s belief is based on a passage in the *Summa Theologica*:

> The root of liberty is the will as the subject thereof; but it is reason as its cause.
> For the will can tend freely towards various objects, precisely because the reason can have various perceptions of good. Hence philosophers define free-will as being a free judgment arising from reason, implying that reason is the root of liberty. (I-II q. 17, a. 1)

Aquinas’ notion of freedom is reflected in Milton’s concept of freedom, which is at large Christian, but different from that of the Puritans in the sense that, following the Thomist tradition, Milton has a much wider range of freedom than Calvin’s doctrine which holds that man’s independence is insignificant. Milton’s doctrine of natural law postulates that man even has the freedom to accept or reject divine grace. Milton says in *Christian Doctrine* that “Since we are not mere puppets, some cause at least should be sought in human nature itself, why some men embrace and others reject this divine grace” (I. 4. 186). In his epic poem, Michael says to Adam that even grace requires our “free / Acceptance” (12. 304-5). Also, because freedom is so important an asset of man, in Milton’s hermeneutics, “divine foreknowledge does not compromise the moral accountability of created intelligences” (Meyer 7). Milton breaks from Puritans on this point. At the bottom of the Puritan doctrine lies “the arbitrary freedom of God’s sovereign will” (Loney 38). Calvin asserts that grace is not the matter of human choice, and this view of freedom to reject it would be a blasphemous statement. In *Institutes of the Christian Religion* Calvin says:

> Accordingly, they have spoken very truly who have taught that favor with God is not obtained by anyone through works, but on the contrary works please him only when the person has previously found favor in his sight. (III. xiv. 775-6)

The goodness, according to Calvin, comes from the implanted actor, rather than the work
itself. Both Adam and Eve are put in the situation in which they have to make a choice. Milton dramatizes their choice: man must make a judicious use of the gift of freedom.

While Calvin thinks that to exalt human beings will result in the disgrace of God, Aquinas's believes that "free choice expresses human dignity" (ST I. q. 59, a. 3) because "God has free choice" (ST I. q. 19, a. 10). Milton adopts Aquinas' exegetical principle that man is ennobled in the portrayal of Adam and Eve as free agents who are ennobled and enjoy free choice in Eden until they fall.

One of the main issues related to free will is that human freedom is apparently opposite to God's foreknowledge. How does Milton try to resolve the seemingly incompatible concepts of human free will and divine foreknowledge? Milton believes that human freedom as compatible with God's will:

The condition upon which God's decision depends, then, entails the action of a will which he himself has freed and a belief which he himself demands from men. If this condition is left in the power of men who are free to act, it is absolutely in keeping with justice and does not detract at all from the importance of divine grace. (CD I. iv. 189).

Milton goes on to say that "In the love and worship of God, and thus in their own salvation, men should always use their own free will. If we do not, whatever worship or love we men offer to God is worthless and of no account" (CD I. iv. 189). He tries to resolve the dilemma and arrives at a conclusion that human freedom can be compatible with God's foreknowledge.

To conclude, Milton's descriptions of Adam as God's image and his naming of all the animals demonstrate a parallel with Aquinas' explanation of man and his rationality. Aquinas wrote that each man is given cognitive notions (the intellect) and appetitive inclinations (the will) which serve him as a rational guideline for his free choices and moral actions. This doctrine is clearly reflected in the writings of Milton.
Departing from Puritan teaching that views reason and free will as blasphemous and dangerous to faith, Milton sees them as compatible and complementary. Free will is not only a theological assumption in Milton's works, but, as Meyer says, it is also "a governing idea of his life" (6). Adam and Eve's exercise of free will causes the Fall, but they also gain a new life because of their capacity to use reason and free will in the right way. With Milton's poetic analysis of natural law, which Aquinas had discussed in detail, we have encountered a re-appraisal of the Augustinian and Puritan positions on the intellect and free will in Milton's works.
Notes

1. In addition to this rational quality, Eve is distinguished by moral excellence, as Kester Svendsen also pays attention to Eve’s merciful act in “Adam’s Soliloquy in Book X of ‘Paradise Lost’”:

   Eve teaches Adam what he could not learn in his soliloquy; for she rouses his pity by offering to take all punishment on herself. She thus teaches him mercy as a feature of his superiority to her; and his faith in God’s mercy wakens from that moment. (368)

2. However, as William Meyer observes, Milton’s emphasis is laid more upon “human freedom and moral choices than on God’s foreknowledge” (7). As Loise Martz says, “the power of choice is essential to man’s perfection and man’s happiness” (127).
CHAPTER FIVE

(LOVE AND HAPPINESS)

I Happiness

In Book 8 of Paradise Lost, when the Archangel Raphael leaves the garden of Eden for Heaven, he advises Adam and Eve to “Be strong, live happy, and love” (8. 633). The angelic counsel reflects happiness as Milton’s central thought. Both Milton’s Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce and Paradise Lost place an emphasis on happiness and love. This chapter deals with happiness as the final subject of Thomist natural law which is represented by Milton in his works. Along with reason, freedom, and innocence, happiness is one of the major subjects of natural law. However, most Milton scholars do not interpret Milton’s concept of happiness in Thomist terms, although the predominant atmosphere of happiness cannot be explained away by Protestant doctrine. As a solution to this problem, I propose that the Thomist emphasis upon happiness informs the optimism which can be found in Milton’s Paradise Lost.

One of the major philosophers of happiness is Aristotle, who defines happiness as “the highest good, and the most noble, and the most pleasant” (Nicomachean Ethics 1098 b 25). Likewise, Aquinas gave careful thought to happiness throughout his life. His early theological treatise the Summa Contra Gentiles already includes his philosophy of happiness. In natural law, happiness differs from faculties like reason and free will because it is the final goal of man. Aquinas maintains that whatever we human beings seek, we do under the aspect of good. We want and do something for other purposes. For example, we eat food for the sake of our physical well-being, not for the sake of eating. The only exception to this is happiness: we want happiness for the sake of
happiness, not for other reasons. That is why we regard happiness as man’s ultimate end, the goal to which the goals of other actions are subordinated. Aquinas defines happiness as man’s ultimate purpose in the *Summa Theologica*: “Happiness is the last end” (I-II. q. 3, a. 1). Aquinas goes on to say that “happiness is called man’s supreme good, because it is the attainment or enjoyment of the supreme good” (*ST* I-II. q. 3, a. 1). All human agents, argues Aquinas, actually pursue the same ultimate end of happiness. Aquinas expounds happiness in detail:

> the last end of human life is bliss or happiness. Consequently the law must needs regard principally the relationship to happiness. . . . and since man is a part of the perfect community, the law must needs regard properly the relationship to universal happiness. (*ST* I-II. q. 90, a. 2)

The second difference of happiness from other components of natural law is that it belongs both to natural law and eternal law, too. Perfect happiness consists in the vision of God—which is explained only by eternal law. Aquinas’ division of happiness into two kinds draws upon Aristotle: one is perfect happiness and the other is imperfect happiness. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle places man’s happiness in this life, indicates that happiness is imperfect, and concludes that we “shall call men happy,” but only as men (1100b-1101a 20). Aquinas realizes that imperfect happiness can be had in this world and that happiness is the final goal of man. But the perfect happiness can be achieved only by God’s grace which belongs to eternal law.

Significant in moral philosophy (natural law) for both Aristotle and Aquinas, ethics deals with happiness, which is the purpose of every person and the means of attaining that goal for the individual, the family, and the body politic. The foundation of both goal and correct means is called the natural law. The basic concepts of Aquinas’ happiness are as follows: “Happiness is man’s supreme good” (*ST* I-II. q. 2, a. 4) and “the ultimate felicity of man lies . . . in loving God” (*Summa Contra Gentiles* Book III. Ch.
While Aquinas maintains that man pursues happiness within his society, Luther basically denies the possibility of happiness in this world because “the devil is hostile to [Christ] and to His Word and to His Rule, to Baptism, and to all Christendom, we have to suffer. . . and we must not imagine that we will have happiness and peace on earth” (Works 28: 106). This total disavowal of happiness reveals Luther’s pessimism, in contrast to Aquinas’ optimism.

Contemplating the ultimate end of human life and human activities, St. Thomas maintains that the end of life belongs to moral philosophy. Thomas says that “happiness is an operation according to virtue” (ST I. q. 88, a. 1). The ultimate happiness is found in moral actions. Aquinas thus approves of man’s seeking happiness by presenting man as a moral, intellectual, and psychological being. However, Aquinas’ moral philosophy does not exclude pleasure; it includes pleasure as a concomitant ingredient of natural law. The reason for this is that pleasure is somewhat related to good. What is good? Good is what completes and perfects us. Man cannot be happy as long as something remains for him to desire and seek after. It is good because happiness is “incompatible with any evil” (ST I-II. q. 2, a. 4). Thus, Aquinas also defines happiness as the “fulfillment of a rational agent who is a master of his own actions and is capable of recognizing or giving intellectual consent to his own perfection” (ST I. q. 26, a. 1). When he explains good or perfection, he does so in terms of pleasure: “pleasure is like the perfection that is conducive to the species of the thing” and in order to uphold his argument, he relies upon the Aristotelian statement that “pleasure perfects operation as beauty perfects youth” (SCG Book III. Ch. 26). Thomas acknowledges that pleasure is a necessary ingredient of happiness: “pleasure is not the ultimate end, it is . . . a concomitant of this end” because “pleasure arises out of the attainment of the end” (SCG Book III. Ch. 26). Aristotle also says that there are kind of “pleasures which are thought to be good” and it is the pleasures which
perfect those activities that would primarily be called the "pleasures belonging to man" (Nicomachean Ethics 1176 a 25). The issue of what constitutes happiness is also an age-old question for moral philosophers.

Aquinas' life-long interest in the intellect of man is again reflected in his emphasis on the intellectual nature of happiness. Aristotle emphasizes that happiness requires intellect by writing that happiness "can belong, through some kind of learning and diligence, to all those who have not been incapacitated for virtue" (Nicomachean Ethics 1099 b18). Reflecting Aristotle, Aquinas adds a new dimension to happiness by postulating that man has a natural and rational delight. That happiness which man has in the intellect makes one different from other animals. Vernon Bourke argues that "what is good for man is reasonably calculated to make him happy" (62). In his short theological treatise the Summa Contra Gentiles Aquinas says that "happiness is the proper good of an intellectual nature," and that "happiness, or felicity, consists substantially and principally in an act of the intellect" (Book III. Ch. 26). The intellect is necessary for the understanding of God's will. Aquinas concludes that "the ultimate felicity of man lies in the contemplation of truth" (Book III. Ch. 37). The notion of happiness is theologically charged: "man's ultimate felicity consists in the contemplation of wisdom, based on the considering of divine matters" (Book III. Ch. 37).

Even though Thomas approves of pleasure as good, he does not condone fornication because he thinks it is not good. Good is what is conducive to oneself and helps man to perfect himself. Any act which does not help one to be happy is not good. For example, Aquinas denounces flirtation as immoral and irrational not so much because God dislikes it as because God sees that it adversely affects happiness of man. It is not helpful to the successful life of the man engaged in that activity. The successful human life is one of self-fulfillment.

Like Aquinas, Milton brings up the issue of happiness as one of the major reasons
for marriage and dissolution of marriage. In paradise, Adam and Eve are perfectly happy because they have nothing to desire, as Adam praises God: "Thou hast provided all things" (PL 8. 363). Like Aristotle and Aquinas, Milton believes that man is created by God to be happy (PL 11. 58). Milton also thinks that happiness is the final goal of mankind. One of the compelling descriptions of Eden is its happiness. First of all, Eden is "a happy rural seat" (4. 247) and "the Garden of bliss" (PL 8. 299). Milton’s Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce also advocates human happiness: expectations for a meet help and concomitant solace in matrimony are justified. Therefore, when the expectation cannot be met, we must legally recognize its effective dissolution. Happiness was God’s intention when he created man and the world.

Milton has Adam actively seek his happiness by asking God for his life-long companion. First he expresses his unsatisfying, thus unhappy, communication with lower animals and his desire for “Collateral love and dearest amity” (8. 426). This means that man cannot be happy without companionship: man’s happiness requires society with his own kind. In order to attain happiness, Adam asks God:

In solitude

What happiness, who can enjoy alone,

Or all enjoying, what contentment find? (8. 364-6)

In this scene, Milton departs from the Genesis account of the creation of Eve. In the Bible, God has compassion for Adam (because Adam has no partner) and creates Eve without the request of the lonesome Adam. But Milton’s Adam takes the initiative in alleviating his pain of loneliness by asking God for a companion. God already knows and grants Adam’s request because Adam’s request is made out of his nature; that is, man seeks his partner for his happiness. Happiness is defined here as companionship with another person because man is by nature a social animal constantly seeking companionship. For example, Milton’s Adam naturally loathes “solitude” and asks for a
partner in order to be happy with his soul mate (8. 364).

Like Aquinas, Milton places an emphasis upon the intellectual nature of happiness. In the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* Milton presents marriage as “the expresse end of Gods institution,” and refers to marriage as the satisfaction of “the intellectual and innocent desire which God himself kindl’d in man to be the bond of wedlock” (269). Milton here indicates an intellectual element of happiness.

The scholastic theory of natural law postulates that human beings naturally move towards perfection because of their intellect and see that perfection as good. Likewise, Milton views happiness as the ultimate goal of man. In married life, compatibility between man and wife is the primary element. Milton relies upon the Genesis narrative in which God says that “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him” (2: 18), when he emphasizes compatibility as the central issue of divorce tracts. Taken from that biblical context, Milton contends that loneliness is “Gods forbidden” (247). In matrimony Milton apparently focuses on spiritual and emotional communications with a spouse. Believing that man’s happiness is a special “gift” which is awarded by God, Milton draws domestic happiness at the center of his natural law (11. 59).

Thomist natural law postulates man’s natural inclination to know about the truth of God as the fundamental one. When this natural desire is met, man is most happy. In that sense, wisdom or intellect is a prerequisite to happiness. Aquinas’ first theological dissertation, the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, discusses the intellectual dimension of happiness. Aquinas teaches that the “wise man is happy” (Book III. Ch. 44) and “the highest happiness of man is operation according to the highest of the intellectual virtues (Book III. Ch. 44). Intellect is thus seen as important in happiness, a point later reiterated by Aquinas in the *Summa Theologica*. Aquinas maintains that “the happiness of this life consists in an operation of the intellect” (*ST I-II* q. 4, a. 5) and that “happiness
belongs to man in respect of his intellect: and, therefore, since the intellect remains, it can have happiness" (ST I-II. q. 4, a. 5).

The setting of Milton’s epic poem is noteworthy. It is “paradise the happie seat of man” (3. 632) and a “blissful seat of paradise” (3. 527). Adam and Eve live in “heave’n on earth, blissful paradise” (4. 208). Milton’s careful construction of the paradisal setting fits the intention of God, who “created this new happie Race of Man” (3. 679). So, it is not surprising that Raphael instructs Adam that “Attend that thou art happie, owe to God” (5. 520). Angels are happy in heaven: “Thir happie hours in joy and hymning spent” (3. 417). Adam recognizes that God

form’d us ... and plac’d us here
Full to the utmost measure of what bliss
Human desire can seek or apprehend? (5. 516-518)

Here the term “bliss” shows Milton’s focus on happiness.

Adam and Eve are initially introduced as the “Blesst pair: and O ye happiest if ye seek” (4. 774). Aware of his happy state, Adam expresses his jocund state of mind to Eve:

Sole partner and sole part of all these joys,
Dearer thyself than all. (4. 412-3)

Everything in paradise seems to Adam to be put “In all this happiness” (4. 417). Adam and Eve spontaneously confess that their happiness and love are “Heav’n-sent (5. 520; 8.227 f.) and enjoy their connubial bliss.

Raphael’s advice to Adam is to

enjoy
Your fill what happiness this happy state
Can comprehend. (5. 503-5)

Raphael’s approval of happiness represents Milton’s optimism, not Calvin’s pessimism.
When Adam is first awakened, he experiences happiness. He relates to Raphael the first experience fraught with joy and happiness:

About me round I saw

Hill, Dale, and shady Woods, and sunny Plains,

And liquid Lapse of murmuring Streams; by these,

Creatures that lived, and moved, and walked, or flew,

Birds on the branches warbling; all things smiled,

With fragrance and with joy my heart o’erflow’d. (8. 261-6)

As Adam narrates here, the garden of Eden is a site of all kind of sensuous pleasures, and the pleasures culminate in the marriage of Adam and Eve. Their matrimony is the apex of human delight.

Conjugal love of the general parents is thus described:

Thus taking hand in hand alone they pass’d

On thir blissful Bower: it was a place

Chos’n by the sovran Planter, when he fram’d

All things to man’s delightful use. (4. 691-4)

The love between Adam and Eve is the counterpart of celestial love. God wants his love fulfilled in their love. The harmony of Adam and Eve is the earthly counterpart of the harmony that reigns in Heaven.

Milton’s careful construction of the setting reinforces the happy tone of the matrimony of Adam and Eve. Nature also responds to Adam’s happy mood by translating Adam’s experiences through the senses that enhance Adam’s happiness.

Adam says that “I feel that I am happier than I know” (8. 283).

Flow’rs worthy of Paradise which not nice Art

In beds and Curious Knots, but Nature boon

Pou’rd forth profuse on hill and Dayle and Plain. (4. 241-3)
This passage demonstrates Milton’s confidence that nature participates in the happiness of Adam and Eve. Paradise is a perfect place for their happiness. Paradise, the dwelling place for Adam and Eve, is portrayed as a “happy rural seat of various view” (4. 247). Rich with sensuous images such as color, smell, and taste, this passage culminates in Adam and Eve’s happiness in paradise. The enriched sensory images reinforce the happy atmosphere of Book 4 of *Paradise Lost*.

> the blissful Bower... is a place
> Chos’n by the sovran Planter, when he fram’d
> All things to man’s delightful use; the roof
> Of thickest covert was inwoven shade
> Laurel and Myrtle, and what higher grew
> Of firm and fragrant leaf. (4. 691-696)

Sensory pleasures are highlighted when the first parents feel happy. Another happy scene in *Paradise Lost* is seen in the bard’s offering a blessing to the newly wed couple

> Sleep on,
> Blessed pair, and O yet happiest if ye seek
> No happier state, and know to know no more. (4. 773-5)

God proclaims that he

> at first with two fair gifts
> Created him [Adam] endowed, with Happiness
> And Immortality. (11. 57-59)

The first parents are perfectly happy and enjoy God’s blessing in paradise. As Joseph Summers says, “Adam and Eve are related perfectly for their place... they are endowed with the possibility of perfect fulfilment in time, of perfect happiness and joy of perfection of all the knowledge of which they are capable in their state” (148-9).

Even nature participates in their happiness:
Here in close recess

With Flowers, Garlands, and sweet-smelling Herbs

Espoused Eve deckt first her Nuptial bed,

And heav’nly Choirs the Hymenean sung. (4. 708-711)

The first parents are blessed by the angels’ hymns.

II. Love and happiness

In his *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, Milton claims that the base of marriage is love and happiness; therefore, marriage without happiness loses its ground for existence. He says in the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* that in matrimony “Gods ever doing is to bring the due likeness and harmonies of his workes together” (272). He also argues that “marriage is a covnant the very beeing whereof consists, not in a forc’d cohabitation, and counterfeit performance of duties, but in unfeigned love and peace” (254). *Paradise Lost* expresses this view of happiness as the center of matrimony:

Raphael teaches Adam that “without Love no happiness” (8. 621). Commonplace though the lesson seems, this angelic statement reflects Milton’s central thought on marriage and happiness. What constitutes human happiness is love because without love, no one can have pleasure; and without pleasure, no one can feel happy. Aquinas realizes that “happiness cannot be without pleasure” (*ST* I-II. q. 84, a. 4). Pleasure, whatever it may be—sensory, bodily, external, or spiritual— is a source of happiness, and Aquinas approves of pleasure and happiness as legitimate objects of pursuit. Following Aquinas, Milton has Raphael admit to Adam that pleasure is “whatever pure thou in the body enjoy’st” (8. 622). Raphael here implies that it is good to take pleasure.

*Paradise Lost* also deals with the issue of conjugal love and domestic happiness, as Raphael stresses the significant role of love to Adam:
Love refines

The thought and heart enlarges. (8. 589-590)

Love contributes not only to the intellectual development, but also to spiritual and religious measure, as the angel again says: “Love ... / Leads up to Heav'n, is both the way and guide” (8. 612-3). Raphael goes on to say to Adam:

Let it suffice thee that thou know'st

Us happy, and without Love no happiness. (8. 620-1)

Again Raphael presents marriage as the source of happiness. Paul’s admonition of the burning of the flesh and his view of marriage as the second best choice next to abstinence (celibacy) that Reformed divines inherit does not accord with Milton’s view of marriage. The Puritan notions of marriage as the sole legitimate means of propagation of the race and as a prevention of adultery cannot be found in Milton’s description of the origin of matrimony. Milton’s emphasis on compatibility as a ground of happy marriage vitiates the grim Protestant view of marriage. Adam is aware that in order to be happy, one must have an equal company and asks God for his companion:

Among unequals what society

Can sort, what harmony or true delight?

.................................

Of fellowship I speak

Such as I seek, fit to participate

All rational delight. (8. 383-4, 389-91)

The Thomist claim of man’s natural inclination to society is poetically represented:

The cause of desire

By conversation with his like to help,

Or solace his defects. (8. 417-419)

Happiness is a rational delight which Adam takes in the conversation with his equal
partner, Eve. As Aquinas emphasizes the intellectual dimension of happiness, Milton presents rational delight as one of the major objects that Adam pursues.

Adam here realizes that he is imperfect without union with Eve. Man fulfills himself only in society with other people, as Adam recognizes that he cannot be perfect without an equal companionship with his "other self," Eve. Unless he perfects himself, he cannot be happy. Happiness is goodness, and good is what completes and perfects us. And God is on the side of Adam for Adam's happiness. God promises to Adam:

What next I bring shall please thee, be assur'd,
Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self,
Thy wish exactly to thy heart's desire. (8. 449-51)

God announces that Eve is another self of Adam, thus elevating the status of Eve to that of Adam because that is the only right way that Adam can be happy. Adam is happy as long as he is doing good, which is fulfilling and completing himself. And without his equal society, he cannot fulfill or complete himself. Milton in this sense defies the allegorists' interpretation of Adam as Reason or Soul and Eve as Sense-impression and emphasizes the first couple's companionship as the base upon which happy marriage is instituted. The companionship that Milton so vigorously seeks as the source of happiness suggests his egalitarian view. Gender equality is underscored as a source of marital happiness. Thus Milton's focus is given to connubial bliss represented by companionship, not merely procreation.

Milton insists that marriage must not be thought of as a defilement because it is a source of human happiness. Milton longs for conjugal happiness above procreation, as God acknowledges that Eve is the "heart's desire" of Adam (8. 451). Adam's first encounter with Eve is replete with joy and love, as he exclaims: "so lovely fair" (8. 471). Adam expresses his delight:

And in her looks, which from that time infus'd
Sweetness into my heart, unfelt before,
And into all things from her Air inspir’d
The spirit of love and amorous delight. (8. 474-7)

“Delight” is one of the most frequently used terms when Adam describes his domestic happiness and expresses an understanding of God’s creative will.

Adam’s happiness reaches its highest point when he finds that Grace was in all her steps, Heav’n in her Eye,
In every gesture dignity and love. (8. 488-9)

The passages indicate that Adam’s love for Eve is the source of his happiness.

Happiness in married life for Milton lies in compatibility. In the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce, Milton places an emphasis upon “honest peace and just contentment” as the root of happiness (218) and presents “household unhappiness on the family” as the compelling ground of divorce (219). Milton says that “mutuall happiness should be the reason for matrimony” and that “marriage is aimed at the good of man and the glory of God” (277, 281). God has promised to Adam a meet help to assuage his loneliness. Happiness, in Milton’s view of matrimony, should be the main cause of marriage. Milton’s view of marriage is “God’s command of fulfilling the creative will” (Halkett 108).

Love is “what God declares / Pure, and commands to some, leaves free to all” (4. 745-6). On the other hand, he “who bids abstain” is “our Destroyer, foe to God and man” (4. 477, 478). Adam cherishes smiles between man and wife as signs of affection and delight:

    smiles from reason flow,
    To brute deni’d, and are of love the food,
    Love not the lowest end of human life.
    For not to irksome toil, but to delight
He made us, and delight to reason joined. (9. 239-243)

The reader knows that Adam here clearly understands that God made him to live in happiness. Thus, along with reason, happiness is God's gift. Matrimony expresses the full humanity of his reason, will, emotions, and appetites operating in harmony; it is the culmination of human happiness that can be obtained in this world and is legitimately acknowledged by the medieval scholastic, Thomas.

Protestant divines, on the other hand, never thought of marriage as necessary for human happiness. Paradisal happiness enjoyed by Adam and Eve is denied by them. Luther, for example, expresses his view on matrimony: "It is a...noble gift...to have will and desire for celibacy...and the virgin [has] much happiness" (Work 28. 11).

Happiness in marriage did not seem to him to be an important element of matrimony. A typical Protestant opinion on marriage is expressed by William Perkins, who approves of marriage only in legitimate procreation: "marriage was made & appointed by God himselfe, to be the fountaine and seminarie of al other sorts and kinds of life, in the Common-wealth and in the Church" (Christian Oeconomie III 671).

Different from Luther or Perkins, Milton considers happiness and the union of the souls the foremost reason for marriage. The main argument of the divorce tract is that marriage cannot survive where unfitness stemming from incompatibility exists because the primary purpose of matrimony is happiness. Unlike his contemporary Puritans, Milton holds that the likeness of personal disposition takes precedence over the likeness of kind. He recognizes the existence of gender differences between man and wife, but he also underscores the similitude of disposition between them. Regardless of sex, there is one area common to all humanity: spirituality. That is, in Milton's religious and moral thought, happiness lies in the spiritual conversation between man and wife.

III Happiness and Perfection
The doctrine of happiness so thoroughly developed by Milton occupies a major place in Aquinas' theory of natural law. According to natural law, man does something under the aspect of good. What is good? Aquinas believes that our good is what fulfills and completes us. To love, to obey, and to know God are the ways in which we can perfect and fulfill ourselves. Happiness lies in man's pursuit of perfection. One of the ways of being perfect is to obey and worship God. Ultimate happiness rests with man's vision of the beatific vision, the vision of God. So there is a moral and religious implication of happiness in the theory of natural law.

Love between a married couple should be transformed into the love of God. And happiness lies in that spiritual love. In Paradise Lost what binds Adam and Eve is the love of God. They are happy as long as they pray and obey God. Their nocturnal prayers and hymn to God while tending the garden contribute to their happiness. This suggests that the source of their marital happiness is God and their faith in God. The theological implication of happiness is a recurrent theme of Paradise Lost. The faith and love that Adam and Eve experience are the sources of their happiness. As discussed in Chapter 4, faith is closely related to reason. The relation between the intellect and happiness, the proper action of man as man, is to understand God. Halkett observes, "Milton sees true marriage as a final expression of the divine harmony inherent in the composition of things, the capstone of the universal order. If marriage results in concord and serenity, it is the work of God, a fulfillment of the divine plan; if it arouses discord it is the frustration of that plan and the work of the devil" (53).

Marriage is instituted as a means of procreating and as a legitimate relief of sexual urges. But the purpose of marriage goes further than that. A fuller vision of Eve as a life-long companion and Adam's other self in all functions of life confirms Milton's primary concern with happiness in a married life. Human happiness lies in love. The love he refers to is a higher love than merely physical desire, as Raphael instructs Adam:
in passion
True love consists not; love refines
The thought, and heart enlarges, hath his seat
In reason, and judicious, is the scale
By which to heavenly love thou mayst ascend,
Not sunk in carnal pleasure, for which cause
Among the beasts no mate for thee was found. (8. 588-94)

Adam expresses how he feels happy when he sees Eve:
So much delights me
Those thousand decencies that daily flow
From all her words and actions mixt with love
And sweet compliance, which declare unfeign'd
Union of mind, or in us both one Soul;
Harmony to behold in wedded pair. (8. 600-6)

In that passage, Milton underscores happiness as the base of married life.

The husband cannot have peace of mind or enjoy happiness in a marital union
without compatibility. In the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce Milton argues for
mutual and spiritual love: “all ingenuous men will see that the dignity & blessing of
marriage is plac’d rather in the mutual enjoyment of that which the wanting soul needfully
seeks, then of that which the plenteous body would jollily give away” (252). He places
an emphasis on love: “Love in marriage cannot live nor subsist, unless it be mutual; and
where love cannot be, there can be left of wedlock nothing, but the empty husk of an
outside matrimony” (DDD 256).

Love between the married couple should be transformed into the love of God.
Aquinas relates happiness to “the perfect love of God,” as he says that “final and perfect
happiness can consist in nothing else than the vision of the Divine Essence” (ST I-II. q. 3,
Perfection consists chiefly in charity. To love God and to love one’s neighbor are mutually related.

Like many writers, Milton establishes a hierarchy in love by placing spiritual love above conjugal love. Raphael’s blessing to Adam and Eve, “live happy,” is followed by a moral warning:

but first of all

Him whom to love is to obey, and keep

His great command. (8. 633-635)

Here Raphael’s edification of them is twofold: first to love God is to obey him, and second, to love God should be the first priority. Adam finally fails to put his love for God above his passion for Eve. His failure entails a loss of happiness.

If happiness is the final goal of man, why should Adam be blamed for his affection of Eve? The reason for his punishment is the inordinate, and therefore irrational, love for Eve which exceeds that of God. Adam’s love for Eve results in the surrender to temptation and leads him to disobey God. But as Halkett argues, Adam’s love for Eve is the “passion not in the sense of uncontrolled sexual desire but in the sense of an excessive desire for human love. In the act of disobedience, Adam simply chooses Eve over God; he rejects human love as a means and deifies it as an end” (122). Adam is not wicked, but demonstrates a human weakness in that he wants to be happy in the company of another human being; that is why he chooses Eve instead of God. When Adam hears from Eve that she already tasted the forbidden fruit, Adam contemplates death and then says to her:

How can I live without thee, how forgo

Thy sweet Converse and Love so dearly join’d. (9. 908-909)

This passage demonstrates that Milton’s priority is set up in love and communications, rather than in God’s Words. It is natural that Adam the human seeks happiness because,
as St. Thomas repeats, happiness is the final goal of every human being. The problem in *Paradise Lost* is the misplaced notion of happiness. Happiness lies in the act of obeying God.

Also Adam and Eve should have made efforts to perfect themselves. As Raphael says, they are naturally capable of being perfect: they are “perfect within, no outward aid require” (8. 644). When they neglect to perfect themselves, they lose happiness.

Postulating that happiness is the final goal of every human being, Aquinas argues for the possibility of attaining happiness not only in this world, but also in the other world. Man naturally seeks happiness because it is good for man and conducive to the community and the human race. Happiness consists in love and pleasure that Aquinas approves of as contributory to the furtherance and perfection of the human species.

Milton demonstrates the influence of Thomist optimism and presents marriage as a means through which man obtains happiness and perfects oneself. Adam actively seeks his happiness by asking God for an equal companion and enjoys conjugal bliss. For Milton connubial happiness is an expression of the divine harmony in man. The wealth of the sensual images on the garden of Eden in *Paradise Lost* enhances the happy atmosphere of the matrimony of the general parents. They eventually learn that their passion should be transformed into the spiritual love and love for God wherein their real matrimonial bliss lies.

IV. Conclusion

Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Aquinas, and Hooker presented similar ideas concerning natural law, such as an equation of nature and God, confidence in the human capacity to exercise reason and free will, and most of all, the inherent goodness of man. Man is capable of discerning what is right and what is wrong and of knowing the means to
achieve a goal; that is, happiness. Aquinas lays out an ideal of human conduct that would make us happy. Most of all, human beings are created to be happy by God. Man thus deserves happiness. Natural law is a theory about moral reasoning. Man does some acts for the sake of what he takes to be morally good. And, man is capable of making moral judgment thanks to the naturally endowed power of reason. A good moral reasoning inevitably leads man to happiness because happiness consists in virtuous acts. Thus, the intellect and moral virtues are important for man to obtain happiness. And the two are related.

The Renaissance period was marked by the proliferation of ideas regarding nature, human nature, the sciences, and even divine grace. Such distinguished thinkers as Protestant Reformers and Hobbes opposed the view of man as innocent and rational. Reformed divines also eliminated the possibility of happiness in this world. Aquinas believes that the laws of nature reflect the laws of God, in which universal truth exists and man acts according to reason and virtue. For Thomas, natural law is an intermediary law between eternal and human law. He postulated that man can be closer to God through the connection with natural law. Natural law for Thomas thus expresses the dignity of man because it functions as an intermediary law between eternal and human law. In contrast, Reformed divines, on the ground that all men are fallen and depraved after the Fall, attacked the Thomist doctrine of natural law as too optimistic at best and blasphemous at worst. Thomas's advocacy of reason and free will as divine qualities reflected in man seemed to the Protestant divines so arrogant as to deprive God of His power. In their belief, only when man humbles oneself can one have faith and attain salvation. Milton had a different attitude from the Protestants. Like Aquinas, Milton's way of glorifying God was to acknowledge that man has a natural inclination to know about the truth of God, to procreate the race, and to live in a society.

Although the outbreak of the Reformation effected some degree of decline in the
influence of medieval scholasticism, Aquinas’ influence did not cease to exert some influence on such Renaissance thinkers as Richard Hooker and Milton. Thomist egalitarianism, especially, was bequeathed to Milton and perhaps helped shape Milton’s religious positions regarding man and human nature. Aquinas’s notion of reason as equally bestowed upon man also reveals his confidence in everyone’s capacity to discern right from wrong. His belief in every man’s capability to know the means by which to achieve his goals stems from his egalitarianism. He says that “all men are equal by nature” (ST. II-II, q. 104, a. 1). Central to Thomas’s theological discourse is this egalitarian impulse which cannot be found in Protestant doctrines.

One of the salient features of Aquinas’s philosophy of natural law lies in its reassessment of reason. And some philosophers and intellectuals still regard that which is religious to be anti-intellectual. However, as Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump indicate, the medieval philosopher’s “attitude” was “determinedly anti-anti-intellectual” (8). Following Augustine, Protestant reformers argue that reason and free will are symbols of human arrogance. Only when man denies free will and reason can he have true faith. For Milton, this negation of free will necessarily results only in the weakening of man’s moral power. Grounding his principle of natural law upon the interrelation between reason (the intellect) and morality (the will), Aquinas asserts that every knowing subject is oriented to good; and more important, not to be so is unnatural. For Milton, only a man with reason and free will can be a moral man. Also, only a free man can be a moral agent. As Clark observes, “Thomas’s morality is theocentric” and “man finds himself in loving God—doing what he should—and in finding himself, man finds freedom and wholeness” (314). Lastly, reflecting traditional natural law theory, Milton sees happiness as the ultimate goal of man, because man was made to live in happiness according to God’s creative will. Milton believes that happiness can be attained in this world, a belief that
conflicts with Protestant teaching that happiness is unattainable in this world because of Adam’s Fall. Only God’s grace can save man, and only a selected few will be saved by an arbitrary will of the sovereign. Only God has the freedom to choose whoever He likes. Milton’s Adam is an ardent seeker of happiness. The reason for his disobedience of God is his passion for Eve. He locates his happiness in his company with Eve, which he falsely believes to be the source of his ultimate happiness, rather than in the faith of God and obedience. This misplaced happiness brings about the Fall.

Thomas’s religious dogma on redemption directly conflicts with that of Calvin, who believes in the salvation of the selected few. Aquinas teaches that “the grace of Christ [was] transmitted to all begotten of him spiritually by faith and baptism” (ST. I-II, q. 81, a. 3). Milton does not think that God would save only a few, as Reformed divines believe. An egalitarian emphasis that every man is made in the image of God and endowed with reason would not allow him to believe in the salvation of the selected few. Reflecting the Thomist theory of natural law, Milton further argues that man even has the freedom to accept or reject God’s grace. Opposing Aquinas, Calvin argues that God’s grace is irresistible because it is beyond human power. Thus, Aquinas and Milton stretch the meaning of human freedom.

The intricacy of Milton’s theology in his works indicates his complicated system of belief. Milton’s works are products of his endeavor to define what a human being is in a divinely ordered cosmos. What a man is is determined not only by his individual qualities such as rational and moral power, but, more important, by his relation to God. Man’s relation with God is what makes man a human being. Accordingly, if man disobey, he causes an alienation from God. And that is the worst sin that man has ever committed.

This dissertation has focused on how the doctrinal differences between traditional natural law and Reformed theology are reflected in Milton’s writings. Best known as a
radical Protestant who wrote many prose pamphlets and poems for religious and political purposes, Milton is generally regarded as a thinker who takes Protestantism as the governing intellectual and religious principle of his works. Yet, despite the fact that Reformed theology is prominently represented in his writings, Milton was not an orthodox Protestant because his religious doctrines are so complicated that his ideas go beyond orthodox Protestant doctrine. In the area of natural law whose origin goes back to Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Aquinas, Milton differs from the Puritan divines.

Milton articulates this theory of natural law in one form or another throughout his life, from his early masque Comus, to the middle-age tract Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce, to the late epic poem Paradise Lost. His interest in the philosophy of natural law seems to continue throughout his life, and an understanding of his religious stance enhances the reader's appreciation of Milton's works.
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