Audience and Human Nature in Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Dryden's "The State of Innocence": A Comparative Study

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ABSTRACT

This essay compares Milton's epic poem *Paradise Lost* to its operatic version "The State of Innocence" by John Dryden. The comparison evokes historical, ideological and personal contrast; as well as differing views of audience, drama and heroism. Milton wrote in blank verse, and expressed the danger of passion and appetite in *Paradise Lost*, viewing Christianity as the structure and mythology of life. Dryden, on the other hand, preferred rhymed verse and wrote for a restoration Hobbesian audience that saw human nature as inherently malignant and determined by base appetites. Whereas Dryden’s “The State of Innocence” is secular and intended to please a restoration aristocratic audience, Milton’s *Paradise Lost* is religious, and was not intended for the stage. It expresses an elevated subject and evokes "sublime” ideas in the audience.

Individual heroism and the conception of human nature evidenced in the characters of Adam and Eve are also expressed differently. Adam and Eve in *Paradise Lost* are portrayed as innocent by nature and of free will and choice. Dryden, however, shows them in a modernistic manner as controlled by their instincts and desires and of animalistic degenerate nature. Dryden’s play “The State of Innocence,” the paper reflects, is an ironic play of Milton’s idea of the innocence of human nature in Paradise Lost, and is far from the sublime ideas of *Paradise Lost*: it focuses on Lucifer as the figure of power and gives minor importance to the expressive nature of Adam and Eve’s speeches. The thought that in Dryden’s Eden Adam and Eve prefigure the shameful sexual and greedy behavior of fallen human nature sadly contradicts Milton’s view of the fore parents as inherently good before and after their fall.

Keywords: Restoration ideology, heroic drama, epic, rhymed verse, blank verse.

1. INTRODUCTION

It seems almost unbelievable that John Milton (1608-1674) and John Dryden (1631-1700) both lived and wrote during the tremendous period of upheaval in seventeenth-century England. In some sense, the two poets, whose styles and lives were so different, might have as well been of different eras and periods of English literary history altogether. Milton was the stalwart religious poet whose dream of a civil government was briefly realized in the rule of Cromwell, and then diminished by the Restoration of Charles II. Dryden’s life spanned the experiment of Cromwell, and he was a rising star among the Court wits of the Restoration' when Milton died in 1674. To compare the great epic poem of one with its dramatic interpretation written by the other is a task which resonates with historical, ideological, and personal contrast.

Serious and worthwhile consideration of Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and Dryden’s dramatic opera “The State of Innocence” involves analyzing the two works as the artistic reflections of two poets with differing views of audience, drama, and heroism. For Milton, *Paradise Lost* and his Restoration heroic play "Samson Agonistes" were religious, and not expressed through performance, but in association with the sublime ideas presented in the works. The heroism of Milton’s characters in his poetry was the quiet and stalwart act of individual faith in God. In the context of the Restoration, Dryden’s audience was a Court dominated by a king who restored the monarchy and the aristocratic values of high living which were shunned by Milton and other Puritans associated with Cromwell. The Hobbesian beliefs of Dryden’s
Restoration audience saw human nature as inherently malignant, and ruled by base appetites. The acceptance of the unrestrained play of the passions was seen as hedonistic by the conservative remnants of Protestant rule who associated heroic virtue with individual restraint. In the end, the lavish and conspicuous flourishes of heroism evidenced in the heroic dramas of the Court differed greatly from the godliness of human nature depicted through Milton’s Christian heroes of “Samson Agonistes” and *Paradise Lost*.

Milton’s opposition to the Restoration staging of heroic drama is evidenced in his play “Samson Agonistes,” published in 1671. In “Milton, Dryden, and the Ideology of Genre,” D. M. Rosenberg explains Milton’s creation of a play “never intended for the stage” as a direct challenge to the conventions of Royalist dramas performed during the reign of Charles II. Heroic dramas performed for the Court generally involved scenes and scripts promoting outward demonstration of classical heroism associated with Augustan Age. Dryden’s *Indian Emperor* and *The Conquest of Granada* were ambitious plays of monarchy, honor, love and Imperial conquest. Set within exotic locales and permeated with sexual intrigue which mimicked that of Charles’ Court, the dramas were performed by the king’s players for a coterie of aristocrats who had recently been reinstated in England. The typical heroic drama was, in contrast to “Samson Agonistes,” the latter being a religious drama with little secular overtones of empire or civil honor associated with the Court of Charles II. Because Milton did not attribute to “Samson Agonistes” the “status” of the secular Restoration stage, with its exterior pomp of rhymed speeches and complex mechanical props, the heroic quality of the play approached a more significant interior dimension of meaning. In fact, the heroism of Samson derived from his action against pagan dragon worshippers whose loose behavior recalled that of the Court of Charles II. In light of the governance of England by the Puritans and Cromwell, the Court of Charles II may as well have been the Court of Dagon, with Milton as the Samson who sought to tear it down. As Rosenberg explains:

Milton, like his own Samson, renounced, resisted, and defined his antagonist. In writing a play not intended for stage performance, the poet withdrew from the social function of Restoration theater; in writing a religious drama he militantly resisted the secular main currents of the cultural establishment: and by creating a hero who in an iconoclastic and revolutionary act destroys the theater of the Philistines, he defied the courtly culture of the ruling class. Through the example of his own play, Milton attempted to replace the Restoration theater of Dagon with a new theater, purified and truly restored because it was consecrated to God.

Milton’s dramatization of the act of an individual against the tyranny of a pagan society as a criticism of the hedonistic Court of Charles II is a political aspect of “Samson Agonistes” not inconsistent with Milton’s religious ideology. Although the overtones in “Samson Agonistes” may reflect the conflict between Puritan and Royalist struggles for power, Milton’s presentation of the individual heroism of Samson is above all a ramification of his belief in free will and the god-like nature of humanity. Milton believes that all matter was made from God. In the “Christian Doctrine,” he states forthrightly that “… all things are not only from God, but of God.” Sin is the active choice to disobey the directives of God, as natural behavior is the active choice to obey God and maintain faith in his omnipotence. For Milton, the tragedy of the fall of Adam and Eve in *Paradise Lost* arose from their choice to eat of the Tree of Knowledge, an act expressly forbidden by God. In book IX of *Paradise Lost*, Satan in Paradise chooses to take the form of the Serpent, the “subtlest of all the field.” Meanwhile, Eve suggests to Adam that they should work separately for a while. Adam agrees and Satan, taking the form of a Serpent, finds Eve alone and, talks to her, and compliments her on her beauty and godliness. Eve is amazed that the animal Satan can speak. Satan explains that he has risen from his animal state by eating of a certain tree, that gave him the ability to reason and talk. Upon seeing the tree, Eve recognizes it and tells the Serpent that it is forbidden. The Serpent argues that Adam and Eve have been wronged by God, and that the fruit will give them wisdom and god-like status, and God wants to keep this knowledge for himself. Eve is hesitant but reaches for the fruit and eats, and the Serpent quickly disappears in the woods. Eve is distraught and searches for Adam, who has been busy making a wreath of flowers. He is horrified to learn that she has disobeyed God. Realizing that Eve is lost, Adam would rather be fallen with her than remain pure and lose her. He eats of the fruit as well. Utterly caught in their actions, thoughtless and intoxicated, they give a lust and display
for the first time ugly passions such as hate, anger and mistrust. God tells the angels in heaven that Adam, Eve, and Satan must be punished, but with justice and mercy. First, the Serpent is punished, condemned to never walk upright again. Then, Adam and Eve are sentenced to pain. Eve and all the women must suffer the pain of childbirth and submit to their husbands, whereas Adam and all men must work, hunt, and grow their own food. In Book X, Adam and Eve are sentenced to fall, and, on earth, they face their approaching doom and blame each other for their disobedience. Later, in books XI-XII, God hears their prayers and forgives them, but will not allow them to live in Paradise. Milton’s *Paradise Lost* reads much from the *Bible*. The description of the original sin in the Bible goes in the following manner (in the form of a conversation):

And the man said, The woman who thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done?” And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast harkened unto the voice of thy wife, and has eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. 5

In the above account of the original sin, Eve is exposed as being blameworthy as she is said to have provoked Adam to eat the fruit, a Biblical story which Milton dictates in *Paradise Lost*. The same story of the fall is also abundantly repeated in English Literature, where Eve is projected as the one who starts the sin and seduces Adam to do so. Commenting on the representation of Eve in the annals of English literature Mary Poovey says:

This is the representation of women as Eve, ‘Mother of our Miseries.’ As late as the 1740s, woman was consistently represented as the site of willful sexuality and bodily appetite: whether figured as that part of man responsible for the Fall, as was characteristic of sixteenth-century texts, or represented as man’s foil, as in eighteenth-century texts like Swift’s and Pope’s poems, women were associated with flesh, desire and socialized, hence susceptible, impulses and passions. 6

In addition to dictating Biblical accounts in his poetry, Milton implied the test of faith and free will and encouraged it in society. This is what distinguishes him from other poets who also approached the original sin in their poetry like John Dryden who, affected by the Hobbesian views of the Restoration, projects humans in his dramatic opera “The State of Innocence and the Fall of Man” as deprived of free will and choice and as slaves to their appetites, as this paper explains later.

The individual test of faith in flawed characters is a worthy subject which Milton explored in both his epic poem *Paradise Lost* and his dramatic play “Samson Agonistes.” As Carol Barton contends: “Milton looks earthward toward the tall godlike but tragically flawed Samson . . . to find ultimate resolution in the tandem heroic ideal of Adam and Eve, the Human pair who though godlike are not gods, and though fallen are not reprobate.” 7 However, Milton was often criticized for attempting to translate, or re-write Holy Scripture when he dramatized Biblical stories. 8 In the Puritan tradition, Scripture was viewed as revealed truth whose reading was an unmediated form of communication with God. Milton’s license with Scripture, and his presentation of poetic versions of Christianity which rivaled the poetry and prose of the Bible were consistent, however, with his own understanding of Christianity. Milton justified his theological positions in *The Christian Doctrine*: “I thought fit to scrutinize and ascertain for myself the several points of my religious belief, by the most careful perusal and mediation of the Holy Scriptures themselves.” 9 He acknowledged the interpretative nature of his doctrine, yet the criticisms of Milton’s undertakings reflect a potential problem of the imposition of the doctrine of free will in society. Individual actions which depict the active faith of personal meditation upon Scripture often conflict with social contracts of government designed to organize societies. Milton’s own ideal Puritan government fell in part due to the problem of free will and the necessity for community rule. Milton, nonetheless, believed in Christianity as the structure and mythology which represented the sublime and universal qualities of human existence and its relation to the world.
For Milton, the Biblically inspired narrative was of a timeless nature, not limited to the temporality of court definitions of heroism.

In *Paradise Lost* and “Samson Agonistes” perseverance is highlighted: characters have to struggle in order not to disobey God and to fulfill obligations to or with God. In “Samson Agonistes,” Samson forgets his obligation to God, for he is supposed to deliver his people from the Philistines. Later, he tells his wife, Dalila, that his strength lies in his hair, which is a symbol of his “vows to God.” Dalila reveals Samson’s secret and his hair is shaven clean. He is captured, blinded, chained, and kept prisoner and slave to the Philistines. While being in Prison, Samson suffers and questions why God would put such a powerful gift in something as simple as his hair: “God, when he gave me strength, to show withal/How slight the gift was, hung it in my Hair.” Samson struggles also with his being blind. However, in the end, when his hair grows long again, he regains his strength and renews his relationship with God to defeat his enemies: “this day will be remarkable in my life . . . .” Finally he pulls down the temple, destroying himself along with his enemies.

We see the same struggle for perseverance in *Paradise Lost*. Adam and Eve are presented as weak and are easily tempted by Satan. Both are weak and flawed as humans. Eve is very proud of her looks as she shows narcissistic behaviour upon seeing her image in the water: “As I bent down to look, just opposite, /A shape within the wat’ry gleam appeared/ . . . /pleas’d it returned as soon with answering looks/Of sympathie and love, there I had fixt/Mine eyes till now, and pin’d with vain desire.” Adam, though created to be the dominant one to the species, follows after Eve relentlessly. We can see these images as clear hints of their downfall. Using Eve’s pride against her, Satan is able to convince Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, and all he had to tell her was that she was too beautiful to be second to anyone. Adam, too, is willing to disobey God and will do anything to be with Eve. So he is willing to eat the apple. Although Adam and Eve disobey God, they, like Samson, have the same redeeming qualities. Falling, they don’t give up hope; they pray to God for forgiveness: “. . . prostrate fall/Before him reverent, and there confess/Humbly our faults, and pardon beg, with tears/ Watering the ground . . . .” They refuse to be completely defeated by Satan. God grants them Eternal Providence because they were humble enough to admit what they did was wrong. They forgo also their thoughts of suicide, shame and regret. God chooses Adam and Eve to fall and be on earth to have a new obligation to God and to work through the hardships of their new morality and to struggle in order to deliver themselves and their offspring from Satan’s clutches.

Although the sublime nature of the actions and ideas in “Samson Agonistes” or *Paradise Lost* was enwrapped in the context of Milton’s political and theological ideology, the sublime style of the works was recognized by the Restoration as the model of the older elevated English style. Dryden was the first to attribute Milton’s sublime style to a rhetorical technique and, in “The Author’s apology For Heroic Poetry and Poetic License” which prefaced “The State of Innocence,” his own operatic vision of *Paradise Lost*, Dryden took on the role of critic when he judged Milton’s heroic verse. As Dryden explained:

No man will disagree from another’s judgment concerning the dignity of style in heroic poetry; but all reasonable men will conclude it necessary that sublime subjects ought to be adorned with the sublimest, and consequently often, with the most figurative expressions.

Implied in the essay is the acknowledgement of Milton as the successful poet of the sublime and Dryden sincerely praises *Paradise Lost* as “… undoubtedly one of the greatest and most sublime poems which either this age or nation has produced.” Dryden’s commendation for Milton, however, was bound by the relationship of the younger poet to the older poet. In “A Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire” Dryden was particularly harsh in his analysis of Milton’s poetic technique. He signaled Milton’s use of blank verse as an excuse for the poet’s inability to write in rhyme, the current trend among many of the Court poets. Of Milton, Dryden wrote:

… for whatever cause he alleges for the abolishing of rhyme …his own particular reason is plainly this, that rhyme was not his talent: he had neither the ease of doing it, nor the graces of it; which is manifest in his *Juvenilia* or verse written in his youth, where his rhyme is always constrained and forced.

The Controversy between Dryden’s Restoration preference for rhyme and Milton’s dislike of “…the invention of a barbarous Age, to set off wretched matter and lame meter” reflected the tension of the style appropriate for the elevated subject of Milton and the
style suited for the more contemporary, often aristocratically pleasing, subjects of the Restoration poets. As John D. Cox notes in “Renaissance Power and Stuart Dramaturgy: Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden”:

If Milton paid any attention to any of the poems celebrating the Restoration, he could not have failed to notice that they often embodied what to him must have seemed the literary equivalent of the king’s lascivious lifestyle-namely a mode of praise that deliberately recalled courtly adulation before the Civil War.  

In fact, Milton’s implication that modern poets such as Dryden would write for “Custom” and select their subjects accordingly is an indictment which reflects Milton’s view of the lengths to which Court poets of the Restoration would go to create styles to please the Court audience. The poems and prefaces to many Restoration dramas which clearly and obsequiously praised benefactors and patrons were antithetical to the Puritan poet who dedicated his works to God. They also demonstrated that the fancy of Charles II often dictated the content and form of Restoration dramas and literature.

In 1660 Charles had expressed a desire for an English rhymed play20 which may serve as a partial explanation for Dryden’s “The State of Innocence.” The obsession of the Court with the rhymed heroic play was noted by Andrew Marvell in “On Paradise Lost” which prefaces the second edition of the epic. In his poem, Marvell rather sarcastically expressed the fear that “jealous I was that some less skillful hand … might hence presume the whole Creation’s day/ To change in Scenes, and show it in a Play.”21 Yet, amidst his own characterization of Milton as the great English poet of the sublime, and the charges of overzealous Restoration use of rhyme, Dryden published “The State of Innocence” as an operatic performance of the Fall of Man in 1677.22 More specifically, “The State of Innocence” is a musical stage adaptation of John Milton’s epic poem Paradise Lost. However, it “has never been performed because “the scenery and special effects like ‘rebellious angels wheeling in the air, and seeming transfired with thunderbolts’ over ‘a lake of brimstone rolling fire’ were too expensive for the King’s company for which Dryden was working, and too technically demanding for their Theater.”23 The success of the opera as a recreation of Milton’s sublime epic is questionable, yet the failures of style of “The State of Innocence” reflect the Restoration concerns which inform the piece.

The expression of “The State of Innocence” in rhymed couplets, and the focus upon Lucifer as the figure of power, create a drama which is far from the sublime style and subject of the original. The subtlety of Satan’s self-delusion, and the expressive nature of Adam and Eve’s speeches deriving from the blank verse of Milton’s epic are lost in “The State of Innocence.”

Truly, the aspects of Dryden’s opera which appear to best recover the sublime nature of Paradise Lost are Dryden’s written stage directions. Not committed to the monotonous form of rhymed speeches, nor to the colloquial language of a Lucifer who sees Eve and wants to “…blast her in the act of love,”24 the descriptions of the visual settings come close to depicting Milton’s own perceptions of Chaos, Hell, and Eden. The setting for the initial scene of “The State of Innocence,” for example, is Chaos and the physical fall of Satan and his crew from Heaven. Dryden’s directions call for “… a chaos, or a confused mass of matter: the stage is almost wholly dark: A symphony of warlike music is heard for some time; then from the Heavens, (which are opened) fall the rebellious Angles.”25 If the scene could be presented on stage as effectively as it is painted by Dryden in the stage directions, “The State of Innocence” might rival in visual presentation the written sublimity of Paradise Lost. However, the limits of staging the tragic spectacle of the satanic presence and the Fall of Man were such that for financial reasons “The State of Innocence” was never performed. That the physical setting of the first Act of the opera attempted to convey events which unfold over at least five Books of Paradise Lost indicated the immensity, and perhaps, absurdity of Dryden’s task. The further complication that any sense of staging could affect the intellectually and emotionally disturbing connection of an audience to the fall of forefather and foremother indicates that Dryden’s directives may have necessarily remained text-bound. Yet, as textual staging, they are powerful and do remain consistent with the symbolization of many events in Paradise Lost.

Although the physical limitations of enacting Dryden’s opera problematized the poet’s attempt to translate Paradise Lost into a dramatic piece for the Restoration stage, the conception of human nature evidenced in the characters of Adam and Eve merits attention as a critical touchstone of Restoration ideology. In “The State of Innocence” the trappings of Hobbesian views of human nature are apparent in a manner which
locates the opera in a more “modern” context than that of *Paradise Lost*. The reading of Adam and Eve as two human beings ruled by often-destructive passions and appetites is the reading of the pre-determined and degenerate nature of the human condition. To be sure, Milton expressed the danger of passion and appetite in *Paradise Lost*. Adam is admonished by Raphael to “… govern well thy appetite, lest sin/Surprise thee and her black attendant Death.” Later, Raphael warns that “…apt the Mind or fancy is to rove/Uncheckt and of her roving is no end.” However, the manifestation of passions and unreasonable fancy is traced in *Paradise Lost* through the gradual move to the post-lapsarian condition. In “The State of Innocence”, Adam and Eve are engaged in a power struggle with their appetites, and against one another, from the beginning of their arrival in Eden. Adam expresses the mixed thoughts he feels about desire and duty:

> Hard state of life! Since Heaven for-knows my will,
> Why am I not ty’d from doing ill?
> Why am I trusted with my self at large.

When Adam approaches Eve with the intent of having sexual intercourse with her, the “natural” impulse towards procreation and intimacy of *Paradise Lost* is seen by Eve as a situation ripe with potential for power and dominance. In an aside in Act II of “The State of Innocence,” he explains that

> Somewhat forbids me, which I cannot name;
> For, ignorant of guilt, I fear not shame:
> But some restraining thought, I know not why,
> Tells me, you long should beg, I long deny.

Eve’s speech reflects a savvy understanding of sexual favor as a means to gain power over Adam. Her desire to manipulate is a driving force which affects her behavior though she does not know “why,” a quintessential commentary upon the essentially malignant nature of humanity.

The animalistic forces of the Hobbesian human nature employed in Dryden’s “The State of Innocence” preclude the notions of heroism associated with Milton’s radical free will. Adam and Eve in “The State of Innocence” lament their fall, yet the move from Paradise is not unexpected from creatures whose very natures seemed to indicate the infeasibility of their existence in Paradise. There are moments in “The State of Innocence” where the speeches of Adam and Eve border upon the figurative sublimity of *Paradise Lost*, and evoke the tragedy of the fall. Lucifer’s opening acknowledgment that Hell “… is the loser’s lot/ In liquid burnings, or on dry, to dwell/In all the sad variety of hell” suggests the terrible ramifications of a fall which alludes to the eventual one of Adam and Eve. However, these points are overshadowed with the belief in the irretrievably lost nature of original creation. Ultimately, Dryden’s message in “The State of Innocence” is an ironic play upon the idea of humanity’s innocent nature. As Bruce King states: “Dryden’s reasoning throughout his plays and poems is essentially the same: man is naturally unhappy because of inordinate passions, which can only be curbed and made temperate by faith in God and an after life.”

To conclude, Milton’s epic poem *Paradise Lost* and Dryden’s "The State of Innocence" have different writing styles and evoke different views of audience and human nature. Dryden’s drama, as this paper has demonstrated, was written to please the Court audience and implicated Hobbesian and Restoration ideology. Milton’s epic, on the other hand, highlighted religious faith, perseverance and sublime subject; and excluded secular overtones associated with the Court of Charles II. If Dryden’s play which condenses the ideology of Restoration views on human nature and passions depends upon the afterlife for temperance, “The State of Innocence” is written for the audience who sees much of godliness as hopelessly removed from the realities of contemporary life. The concrete evidence of appetites and passions contrasts the abstract sense of an existence after death with promises of a different nature for humans. In this context, the final lines of “The State of Innocence” which advise “For outward Eden lost, find Paradise within” appear to plea for an interior recovery of Paradise more appropriate to Milton’s audience. The Fall in *Paradise Lost* was tragic. Yet, as a free act, the Fall was the product of a nature able to control it’s well: Milton’s view of the heroic individual power of choice relied upon the goodness of human nature and its inherent god-like structure. With the power to access the sublime nature of a Spirit substantiated so radically in themselves, Milton’s Adam and Eve come closer to accessing the sublime nature of Eden or innocence available to the Fallen world. Dryden’s Adam and Eve shall have to wait until their essential nature is changed in order to sense Eden, and the faith required for that hope may be that which makes “The State of Innocence” a drama far more tragic than Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. 
NOTES

(1) Restoration Literature is the English Literature written during the historical period commonly referred to as English Restoration (1660-1689), which corresponds to the last years of the direct Stuart reign in England. It's a literature that includes extremes and it encompasses *Paradise Lost* and many other works by Dryden. For more information, see the website: http://en. Wikipedia. Org/wiki/Restoration_Literature. (Date of retrieval, 23 Jan., 2007).


(3) Rosenberg, 2-3.


(5) *The Bible*: Genesis 3:12-17.


(11) Ibid., line 1388.


(13) Ibid., Book IX, lines 1087-90.


(20) Cox, 343.


(22) Dryden’s use of the term opera is discussed in James Winn, *John Dryden and His World* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1987), 262. See also Dryden’s preface to “Albion and Albanius: An Opera.”


(26) For example, Adam, in “The State of Innocence,” realizes that he is “constrain’d” (Act I., Scene I), and that his choice is “but consent; not will” (Act IV., scene I). He can foresee also that Eve can easily be “seduce[d] to sin,” and won’t be able to resist falling: “Cheat not your self, with dreams of Deity;/Too well, but yet too late, your crime [of eating the Fruit] I see.” (Act V., Scene I). Both acknowledge that “pleasures” are “abound” and “Blest in ourselves” (Act III., Scene I), and that “Where appetites are giv’n’ there will be “sin to tast” ( Act V., Scene I). In addition to such Hobbesian animalistic feelings of enslavement to desire and appetite, other animalistic passions of lust, rage and hatred are projected also in “The State of Innocence.” Lucifer, for instance, feels jealous and angry at Adam and wants to be human to fulfill his pleasures as Adam and Eve do. He questions:

Why have not I like these [Adam and Eve], a body too, Form’d for the same delights which they pursue?

I could (so variously my passions move)

Enjoy and blast her (Eve), inn the act of love.

Unwillingly I hate such excellence;

She wrong’d me not; but I revenge the’ offence. (Act III.,
Scene I)


(29) Ibid., Act IV., Scene I.

(30) Dryden, “The State of Innocence,” Act III., Scene II.

(31) The idea also that in Dryden’s Eden, Adam and Eve prefigure the shameful sexual and greedy behavior of fallen human nature sadly contradicts Milton’s view of the foreparents as inherently good before and after their fall.


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Restoration Literature is the English Literature written during the historical period commonly referred to as English Restoration. It is a literature that includes extremes and it encompasses extremes from Restoration literature, as it has been written during the historical period from the mid-seventeenth century to the last years of the direct Stuart reign in England. It's a literature that includes extremes and it encompasses extremes from Restoration literature, as it has been written during the historical period from the mid-seventeenth century to the last years of the direct Stuart reign in England. It's a literature that includes extremes and it encompasses extremes from Restoration literature, as it has been written during the historical period from the mid-seventeenth century to the last years of the direct Stuart reign in England.