

Mariah Lawrence
Dr. Ainsworth
EN 335
30 April 2014

Falling Pawns:

An Argument Against God and His Conniving Ways as Evidenced by Satan and Eve

Abstract: This essay argues that Satan did not intend to bring harm to Eve by causing her fall. In fact, neither nor Satan nor Eve had the free will to intend anything. Every action they took was orchestrated by God, who planned to crush his own creation underfoot to give rise to his own glory.

Satan's interactions with Eve are bound by the pre-determined end God has chosen for humanity. Satan desires neither to free Eve from patriarchal control nor to enact violence on her in particular. However, Satan's actions are detrimental to Eve, not because of any malice towards her, but because of how the ultimate, controlling force of God's hand has planned to use both Eve and Satan as scapegoats for God's patriarchal religious hierarchy.

God's creation of Satan and Eve is vital to his plan for humanity, that is, to bring glory to himself by conveniently saving the human soul from the evil wiles of the Devil. From creating the angels, God placed Lucifer as his second in command, the nearest to him, the most loved, and also the one with a major creative flaw that allows to him to lead the rebellion against God. If it were not part of God's ultimate plan to have Lucifer rebel against him, he would have not created Lucifer with the capability to desire beyond his station. Likewise, if Eve were not to accept the tempting fruit, she would not have been allowed to ignore her purpose of submitting to Adam in everything.

To be pre-destined, for the purpose of this essay, is for an individual's personal choices to be foreknown and utilized by God for a purpose that does not benefit the individual. In this case, both Satan and Eve were created with the ability to choose choices that would benefit God alone, he knew the choices that both would take, being an omniscient ruler, and utilized these choices to

create a path for humanity that would end in his ultimate glory, while leaving Satan and Eve to rot with the choices that God wanted them to make.

Satan's interactions with Eve were not meant to bring pain to her specifically, they were merely a side effect of Satan's desire to ruin what God has created, for "spite then with spite is best repaid" (*Paradise Lost* 9:179). This desire, however, is also part of God's pre-destined path for Satan. In Book 4, when Satan considers what would happen should he request forgiveness, he ultimately determines that God would be "as far / From granting hee, as I from begging peace" (*Paradise Lost* 4:103-4). That is to say that Satan, already aware that God would refuse him forgiveness for the purposes of his plan, chooses not to even bother attempting to go against the pre-destined path his actions should take.

Olivia McDermott argues in her essay "The Restraint of Freedom in *Paradise Lost*," that there are fixed points in history, or in the future depending on one's position in time, that must happen, and the actions that individuals take, while ultimately leading to these fixed points, are measures of free will. She argues that Satan, Adam, and Eve have restrained free will, and that this is somehow benevolent of God, to stand back and allow his creation to lead themselves to ruin. This is assuming that everything God does is good, and for the ultimate benefit of his creation.

At least in *Paradise Lost*, God's ultimate goal does not seem to be the benefit of his creation. He purposefully gave a single one of his angels the ability to fall, and presented to him the disturbance that lead to the activation of the theretofore dormant pride and jealousy intrinsic in Lucifer's creation. There is no ultimate benefit for Satan. He is created with the opportunity to fall, forced to fall by God's clever revealing of the Son to take Lucifer's place, and then banished to Hell to suffer for eternity based solely around what God wanted him to do in the first place.

This does not seem like a benevolent God; this is a God who is willing to step on his own creation to benefit himself. He is like a toy maker who creates a doll that cannot stand on its own, and then destroys it when it will not stand after he places it on its own two feet. God created Lucifer with the purposeful flaws of pride and rage, and then acts as though these traits were Lucifer's fault all along.

The fixed point theory McDermott argues for does seem to be used through *Paradise Lost*. Satan must fall from Heaven, Eve must have wandered away from Adam in the Garden, Satan must see Eve as a weak entry into humanity, and Eve must accept the fruit. However, the actions taken by the participants are not free.

Eve was hand crafted by God. She was created for the sole purpose of being Adam's helpmeet, a submissive, beautiful, vain creature with no sense of the greater spiritual world outside of Adam's helpful relation of it to her. Eve was crafted second best. Everything about her personality and physical appearance are meant to make her weak. There is no way a weak, slightly stupid human could have been designed to do anything perfect in this new, perfect world. Particularly not when she is contrasted with her apparently perfect husband, who is not given a single weakness, except perhaps his love for his wife.

When Satan first lays eyes upon Eve is his apparently overcome by her perfection, although there is an implication that Satan's ability to enjoy beauty has been removed by God as part of his hellish punishment, "With what delight... if I could joy in aught" (*Paradise Lost* 9:113-5). Given the lack of gender in the angelic race, Satan's first response should not have been to Eve's physical "perfection" when he has been able to gaze upon the true perfection of God and upon the perfection of gender neutral angels his entire life. He is apparently struck "stupidly good" by the presence of this mortal woman, created weak and foolish by God, and

loses, for a moment, all thought of revenge (*Paradise Lost* 9:463-7). Logically, Satan should not have reacted this way to Eve unless her physical appearance is somehow indicative of her biological weakness. He already wants to find her alone in the garden, “He sought them both, but wish’d he hap might find / *Eve* separate” (*Paradise Lost* 9:421-2). Satan has never seen humanity before. He knows very little about them, but he has already come to the conclusion that Eve is the inferior, the weak entry into humanity that will allow him to destroy what God has created.

This can only mean that Satan has been created with the intention of viewing Eve in a very specific, gender stereotypical manner, one that God planted into him at the moment of his creation, far before Satan was given the choice to fall, or the “free will” of any individual outside of God could interfere with God’s plans. She is also curiously already alone, far away from the man that Satan has already been designed to fear, if his impressed reaction to Adam’s mortal muscles is anything to go by. The whole situation is too convenient to have been anything but planned down to every action taken by the participants in this little play God has created.

But this also means that Satan doesn’t have any particular desire to make Eve fall or any reason to perhaps want to save her by taking her away from God and Adam, the patriarchal forces keeping her in her weak, submissive state. Satan’s every reaction to humanity in either gender has already been created in him by God to make sure that Satan will chose exactly the action needed to lead to the fixed point of the fall, and ultimately bring God more glory and renown for his wondrous gift of the Son to save humanity from the evil that he is, also ultimately, causing.

Eve is conveniently stupid, not recognizing that perhaps a serpent, speaking to her when none have done that before, could perhaps be the shape-changing Devil that she and Adam had already been warned against. Yes, God warned humanity of the coming evil, but he also set up

humanity to ignore his call by making Eve unwary, and giving her the opportunity to leave Adam, who Satan would have feared enough to avoid. Warning humanity against Satan is little more than a show that he made some attempt to intervene on humanity's behalf; it is just a part of the story that God is weaving early on for Adam and Eve to tell their decedents, that God cared enough to warn them, and falling was their own fault. Or, rather, Eve's fault, because Adam has been given all the tools needed to reject Satan, whereas Eve is made purposefully vulnerable.

When Satan speaks to Eve at the Tree, he relies upon flattery to tempt her, no doubt playing on the assumption that, because she is a woman, she will be easily won by flattery. A reaction keeping with the gender normativity created by God. He calls her "sovrain Mistress," "Fairest resemblance of they Maker fair," and "A Goddess among Gods" (*Paradise Lost* 9:532-46). Throughout this exchange he attempts to lure her with the hope of surpassing her given role. Eve is not sovereign, she is not a goddess, and she is not even the fairest resemblance of God, that aware goes to Adam.

And here is where Satan and Eve share their flaws. God created Satan and Eve similarly. Both were placed second in command to a far superior being, both are prideful of their own abilities, Satan in his ability to perhaps overthrow God, and Eve in her ability to care for herself outside of Adam's paternal gaze, and both desire to move above the station that they have been given because of this pride. God created Satan to fall from heaven, he also created Eve to fall from grace. These two creations, created so alike and created with the faults necessary to make them fall in a way that works so perfectly with God's ultimate plan, cannot be assumed to be in control of their own actions.

Jacob Boyd argues in his essay “Faulty Machinery,” that the blame for the fall does not lie entirely with Eve, that “she behaves as any innately naïve and inferior being would” (Boyd 7). Although in this essay, no fault for this lies with Eve, the argument that all of Eve’s circumstances and personality lead to making the choice to eat the fruit, which seems logical to her, remains true. However, the blame lies solely with the God who set her up to fall, gave her all the tools she needed, and presented her with Satan, who was also set up to fall.

Satan’s actions, going along with his pre-determined personality on the pre-determined course of events, leading towards the pre-determined end goal, are completely detrimental to Eve. In punishment for causing humanity’s fall she is forced back into a submissive role, removed of any freedom with Adam that she may have had to act on her own volition, she is banished from Eden, and she is punished further with the pain of childbirth that would bring her incredible pain, and go on to kill millions of her female decedents. But Satan, while he meant to destroy God’s creation, did not do it for the sake of destroying God’s creation, he did it for the sake of getting back at God in retribution for his hellish punishment for doing precisely what God wanted him to do. All pain that Satan brings to Eve stems from God, and in the end, the only character in this poem that meant to bring true harm to Eve was God. She was created to be a scapegoat, and punished for doing what she was created to do, to fall.

In fact, the only character that brings harm in this poem is God. He is both the author of Satan’s personality flaws, the orchestrator of Satan’s fall, and the punisher of Satan’s logical rebellion. God is the author of Eve’s personality flaws, the orchestrator of humanity’s fall, and the punisher of Eve’s logical response to Satan’s temptation. The only difference between the two is that God choses to “save” humanity at a later date with his conveniently created Son, whose revealing was the initiating force that led to Satan’s fall, from an evil that he orchestrated,

to reverse a fall that he planned for. There is no free will for Satan or Eve. They are mere pawns, created to be harmed and punished for actions they were destined to make by their own creator.

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