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Humanity as Art

“The instrument of the creation will die, but his creation does not die”- Luigi Pirandello. Milton writes a similar quote about himself in Sonnet XIX, “in this dark world and wide, /And that one Talent which is death to hide, /Lodg’d with me useless” (2-4). Both of these men were premier writers in their time, but more importantly they were also creators. They both created works that not only stand the test of time, but also exemplify their value to the world. They had the gift of creating art and expressing complex thoughts and feelings. God had the gift of being the ultimate creator. It would have been a waste of Pirandello’s and Milton’s talents if they never picked up pen, similarly it would have been a waste of God’s abilities to not create a marvelous and mysterious world. God’s world is a testament to his abilities a creator, “God saw, / surveying his great Work, that it was good: For of Celestial Bodies first the Sun/ A mighty sphere he fram’d unlightsome first, / Though of Ethereal Mould: then form’d the Moon/ Globose, and every magnitude of stars, / And sow’d with Stars the Heav’n thick as field” (*Paradise Lost* 7: 352-357). God created the entire universe from nothing. He is an omnipotent and immortal being, but his most impressive ability is the ability to create a beautiful world and independent people. Though the universe is an imperfect place, the beauty in nature is due to good and his “great Work” and God is omnipotent and knows his work is good. The quotes speak of death and God is an immortal being. However, in *Paradise Lost* the image of God as

purely good and always correct does die. Creating humanity was the only way God's existence could be acknowledged. Human beings are distinguished from all other earthly beings by their ability to think critically and by their ability to imagine the intangible. As the world unfolds and humanity grows, the existence of God and the intentions of God eventually become questioned. These questions are not a sign of God's weakness as a creator, but rather his strength as a creator. The best artists in the history of the world have the most difficult works to interpret; Picasso, Dali, Joyce, etc. The premier minds in creative fields do not give instructions on how their creations should be perceived, they instead allow their audiences to reach their own conclusions. Like a good artist, God allows people to interpret his works as just or unjust. In *Paradise Lost* it is stated that God created the world from Chaos, but nothing is mentioned about the origins of God. It is not surprising that in attempting to create a world and beings in his own image from Chaos, that God ended up creating a place as complicated as his own existence.

God did not create people so they would not fall. He created humanity with intellect and free will so they could choose whether to fall or not, "I made him just and right, /Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall. /Such I created all th' Ethereal Powers" (*Paradise Lost* 8: 97-99). God did not create an indestructible or incorruptible race. Instead, he created beings that had a conscience. As proven by Adam and Eve, and the rest of humanity, a conscience does not prevent people from doing the wrong thing; it just prohibits them from enjoying it. Man had the choice to obey the word of God or face the consequences. Since the consequences were unknown the fall of Adam and Eve illustrates that people are inherently curious. Curiosity might kill cats, but it is not the downfall of humanity. Though Eve's curiosity got the best of her in Eden, the human desire to expand understanding is not a flaw; instead it is a gift, like free will, "To intellectual, give both life and sense" (*Paradise Lost* V: 485). Some forms of knowledge are

to be pursued, while others should be left alone. This shows that curiosity is linked with free will and thus has both positive and negative aspects associated with it. In fact, humanity has a long history of good people attaining knowledge while evil people put it to use; for example, Albert Einstein was a pacifist, but his work was used to develop the atomic bomb. Man is a reflection on God since it is his creation and made in his image; this idea is illustrated in this passage, “So from the root/ Springs lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves/ More aery, last the bright consummate flow’rs and thir fruit/ Man’s nourishment, by gradual scale sublim’d” (*Paradise Lost* 5: 479-484). Humanity is a part of God. Since God created Man he is associated with their existence. In this sense Humanity is like a branch on the tree that is God. Humanity is part of God. How human beings act helps create a perspective through which to view God. Like a branch contributes to the image of a tree, people are a part of God’s image. That being said, God’s creations are imperfect because they are independent of God. If humanity was perfect and in God’s image it would not be a creation, but rather a recreation. God needed to create something imperfect so he could continue to work on his masterpiece and with his masterpiece. Mary Elizabeth Adams raises this point in “Is Free Will Damning?”: “with the foreknowledge of a rebellion and fall, God plans to transform evil into good by displaying his grace and offering an alternative” (Adams 2). Adams asserts that specific choices corrupt humanity, but free will is not the downfall of humanity. This is a great point. Adam and Eve love each other and treat nature with respect in Eden. The two live harmoniously in Eden together until one choice completely alters their fate. Adam and Eve made all of their own decisions every day until Eve decided to eat the forbidden fruit. None of their other decisions caused them to fall, but God knew they would eventually make a decision causing them to fall.

Prior to the creation of the world God had nobody to talk with, nobody to share feelings with, and no way to express himself. By creating the world, God felt a sense of accomplishment knowing his creation was “good”, “Where only what they needs must do, appear’d, /Not what they would? what praise could they receive?” (*Paradise Lost* 3: 104-105). Raphael also gave praise to God when speaking with Adam, “but to create/ is greater than created to destroy, / Who can impair thee, mighty King” (*Paradise Lost* 7: 606-608). In this passage Raphael indirectly tells Adam that God is better than Satan. Satan only has the abilities to tempt and destroy. Satan can be viewed as a being that was created to destroy, while God is actually referred to as “the Creator” in the text. God realized that humans would not feel any sense of accomplishment if he did everything for them. If there was no polio Jonas Salk would not admired for creating the vaccine for polio. If there were no prejudice Martin Luther King Jr. would not have become a hero for civil rights. Progress and improvement cannot happen in a perfect world, perfection is static and bland. God would know. He is perfect yet felt the need to create an imperfect universe out of nothingness. God even made Adam experience his loneliness as the only being in the universe by creating Adam as the only human on Earth. However, God showed compassion when Adam asked for a companion. When Adam received Eve, God’s newest creation, he showered God with praise and appreciation, “Creator bounteous and benign, / Giver of all things fair, but fairest this/ Of all thy gifts, nor enviest. I now see/ Bone of my Bone, Flesh of my Flesh, my Self/ Before me; Woman is her name” (*Paradise Lost* 8: 491-495). This passage proves God is a successful creator because his creation is not being submissive. Instead, Adam asked for a companion to share his paradise with and God granted him his wish. Adam was not necessarily obedient, but he was grateful. Adam is truly appreciating the work of God by loving Eve. Once Eve was created human interaction took place. Human interaction is a concept as

difficult to understand as God. People go war in the name of God. Wars are fought over resources or differing economic policies. Even on a micro level people are difficult to understand. At the University there are numerous of course labeled “social sciences” which aim to establish how people live and work together. People owe God for their existence but God does not want people to be his slaves he just wants people to love him if they so choose, “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 mee” (*Paradise Lost* 3: 107-110). As their creator God does not need his creation’s obedience, he needs them to act as freely as he did when he created the world. God had free will when he created the world, but he knew his work would be judged. God understood his actions in creating the world would put him in position where he would be held accountable, but still created a great world. People have to realize that actions that even though God has given them free will, their actions still have consequences. Thus if humans fall it is of their own volition, “They trespass, Authors to themselves in all/ Both what they and what they choose; for so/ I form’d them free, and free they must remain” (*Paradise Lost* 3: 122-124). This exemplifies God’s reason for creating. God refers to humans as authors. Authors are creators and by saying this God is demonstrating that humans are in charge of their own fates, he merely created them. The course that humanity takes is free from his influence and since he created them free, it would comprise the integrity of God’s creation if he intervened every time a person was in trouble or made a poor decision. This makes sense because creation is also a form of exploration and in creating Man God realized his capabilities, “And God made two great Lights, great for thir use/ To man, the greater to have rule by Day, / The less by Night altern: and made the Stars, / And set them in the Firmment of Heav’n/ To illuminate the Earth, and rule the Day/ In thir vicissitude, and rule the

Night” (*Paradise Lost*: 7: 346-351). God created light, but he did not control light. Night rules some of the time due to the movements and changes in light. Even though God created Day and Night he still made the Sun and Moon as physical representations for each respectively. In the same vain, God created humans to be a type of physical representation of himself and his Son. In creating humanity God knew he did not want every person to live life the same way. God wanted each person to determine his or her own fate. God feels it is only fair that humans experience the same self-understanding he got from creation, by letting them live a life comprised of their own choices and creations.

Ultimately God’s existence is inexplicable and in turn his motives for creating are difficult to explain. One thing is certain about God: he can only exist in Heaven and on Earth, he cannot exist in Hell. Man has one simple way to stay out of hell for eternity; be just, “And call to mind his cov’nant: Day and Night, / Seed-time and Harvest, Heat and horay Frost/ Shall hold thir course, till fire purge all things new, / Both Heav’n and Earth, wherein the just shall dwell” (*Paradise Lost* 11: 898-901). This passage explicitly outlines God’s intentions. He created Heav’n and Earth for just and fair people. Those who are unjust cannot exist in Heav’n or Earth and conversely those people who are just cannot live in hell. It is not that God created just or unjust people. To the contrary, people make decisions and live lives that either just or unjust. Those who live just lives not only get to live on Earth but they also get to behold God’s more glorious creation, Heaven. “The instrument of the creation will die, but his creation does not die”. God himself will never die, but humans will, physically. God’s original image as all knowing has died with his creation of humans who have the ability to question him, but mankind will never cease to exist because Man can dwell in three places; Earth, Heaven, and Hell. Heaven and Hell are eternal places where imperfect beings can live, thus humanity will never

change or die because Man will always be flawed, but Man will also always be free. Like an artist God can only exist in one place, but God's work is "good" and can exist without God constantly intervening. People might stop spreading the word of God but like a work of art, mankind and its history will stand the test of time and those who behold humanity will have their own perceptions of God's work as an artist.