"Of Man Extracted": *Technics and Time* in *Paradise Lost*

What makes us human? This is the first question – in the sense that it is originary, even if it is not chronologically anterior to all others. Put differently, how did (or do) we begin? In *Technics and Time 1: The Fault of Epimetheus*, Bernard Stiegler relies on the Greek myth of Prometheus and Epimetheus to contest what he sees as a fundamental error of Western metaphysics: "As for the enigma of the origin, it has traditionally been untied by a thought of origin *qua* fall … If 'the discourse of the fall' means the discourse of the fall into the sublunary world, this always means also and at the same time, essentially, a fall into technics" (96). In contrast to this understanding, Stiegler advances a complex argument in support of what Tracy Colony identifies as a "central thesis … that technology is constitutive of the human as such" (73). Given Stiegler's intention to provide an alternative account of the origin of mankind, and the way that he explicitly positions his claims in opposition to "'the discourse of the fall,'" one could hardly be blamed for expecting the thinking of the human found in *Technics and Time* to be fundamentally incommensurable with the representation of the origin of man found in *Paradise Lost*. If, however, one reads Milton's treatment of the Book of Genesis through Stiegler's interpretation of the myth of Prometheus and Epimetheus, one finds that Milton's *deviations* from his source material result in a recounting of the loss of Eden that unsettles the distinction between the two narratives that Stiegler seeks to underscore – a blurring of the boundaries between apparently-contradictory traditions that in turn allows one to re-interpret Milton's Eve as at once the first technical object and the first fully human subject.

Scholars have long observed parallels between the Fall of Man and the myth of Prometheus and Epimetheus.[i] In *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, Jacques Derrida situates "the

time frame of redemption" at "the purposive intersection of two traditions … the Genesis tale as much as … the myth of Prometheus" (20). He notes, however, that "[i]n comparing Genesis with the Greek myths…I am not speculating on any hypothesis derived from comparative history or the structural analysis of myth. These narratives remain heterogeneous in status and origin" (44). Derrida thus maintains that the Greek myth and the biblical story are merely "two symptomatic translations … of … a certain situation … obtaining among … mortal living things" (44-45). There is evidence, however, that Milton saw more extensive parallels between the two tales.

Most significantly, Milton explicitly compares Eve to Pandora in a simile in Book IV of *Paradise Lost*, describing her as:

> ...in naked beauty more adorned,
> More lovely, than Pandora, whom the Gods
> Endowed with all their gifts, and O! too like
> In sad event, when to the unwiser son
> Of Japhet brought by Hermes, she ensnared
> Mankind with her fair looks, to be avenged
> On him who had stole Jove's authentic fire. (IV.711-717)

Notably, Milton's allusion does not evoke Epimetheus by name, referring to him only as the "unwiser son / of Japhet." These lines thus figure Prometheus as *doubly* absent; he is not named, and enters into the simile only as the implied (but unacknowledged) counterpart of Epimetheus, the "[un]wiser son" of their common father. Prometheus is likewise invoked through conspicuous absence in Book IX, as Milton describes Eve as being not "with bow and quiver armed, / But with such gardening tools as Art yet rude, / Guiltless of fire, had formed, or angels brought" (IX.390-92) as she parts from Adam on the morning of the Fall. Milton's deployment of this oblique allusion to Prometheus's theft of fire from the gods to describe the last moments in which Eve is "guiltless" of her own transgression of divine interdiction all but compels the reader to consider the theft of fire and the Fall of Man as parallel narratives.

Philip J. Gallagher thus argues that Milton's simile comparing Eve to Pandora "manages to capture all the essentials of the Promethean myth … Adam is the true Epimetheus, Eve is the true Pandora, God is the true Jove [Zeus], and Satan is the true Prometheus ('him who had stole Jove's authentic fire')" (1979: 148). Although he acknowledges that "the relationship between Satan and Prometheus is a much-vexed question in Milton scholarship" (147), Gallagher insists on the "tenacity with which Milton pursues the homology between Satan and Prometheus" (148), resolving this apparently-perverse identification through an elaborate argument that

> according to Milton the lies told by Satan during the War in Heaven and later in Hell become the trying out of the more thorough misrepresentation which he will later effect in inspiring Hesiod's *Theogony* and Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound* … in Milton's view, the Devil is directly responsible for the Greek myths of cosmic succession. (122)

Whether or not one accepts this portion of his argument, Gallagher is certainly on firm ground in pointing out that viewing Eve as the Christian version of Pandora "was a Renaissance commonplace," and that the recognition of parallels between Milton's Adam and Epimetheus is supported by Milton's reference in *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* to Adam's "native innocence and perfection, which might have kept him from being our true Epimetheus" (148).

Gallagher's argument falls firmly within the bounds what he elsewhere refers to as "Miltonic comparative mythology" (1976: 317) – a fertile and fascinating practice through which one can glean insight into how Milton adapts and revises the allusions that permeate *Paradise Lost*. This paper, however, will attempt something altogether more strange: reading *Paradise Lost* through Bernard Stiegler's reinterpretation of the myth of Prometheus and Epimetheus, not to ascertain Milton's understanding of the relationship between his poem's vision of the beginnings of man and prior mythological accounts, but rather to use the bizarre harmonics that resonate between the Stieglerian-mythological and Miltonic-biblical accounts of humanity's origin to shed new light on both Milton's poem and Stiegler's theorization of technics.

Stiegler locates the origins of man in "the fault of Epimetheus" (188) in order to distinguish his account from narratives of the Fall. In *Philosophical Myths of the Fall*, Stephen Mulhall explains that for Heidegger, "[t]he idea of Dasein's fallenness … delineates our everyday state as one in which an Adamic ability to name the essence of things has degenerated" (51). In contrast, Stiegler is adamant that in his thinking of technics and time there are not

> two steps to … [man's] emergence, a time of full origin, followed by a fall: there will have been nothing at the origin but the fault, a fault that is nothing but the de-fault of origin or the origin as default. There will have been no appearance except through disappearance. Everything will have taken place at the same time, in the same step. (188)

In Stiegler's account, Dasein does not *fall* into technicity, but rather *is brought into being* through its relationship to technics. Epimetheus's forgetting to adequately equip mankind for survival, he claims, means that humanity cannot be separated from the prostheses that sustain it:

> A pros-thesis is what is placed in front, what is outside, outside what it is placed in front of. However, if what is outside constitutes the very being of what it lies outside of, than this being is *outside itself*. In order to make up for the fault of Epimetheus, Prometheus gives humans the present of putting them outside themselves … whereas animals are positively endowed with qualities, it is *tekhnē* that forms the lot of humans, and *tekhnē* is prosthetic. (193)

Stiegler thus identifies the technical and the prosthetic as essentially synonymous with "exteriorization" (169) writ large; furthermore, he argues that only by inscribing its existence in its technical prostheses does humanity construct a past that is heritable for successive generations, one that is already there and shaping them from the moment of their arrival in the world. In short, "*Ēpimēthia* means heritage" (207), man's relation to an origin outside himself.

At the same time that mankind's technicity constitutes its relationship to the past, however, it is also constitutive of its relationship to the future: "Mortality is *promēthia* … Prometheus attempted to mislead Zeus, as a result of which there emerged the human condition" (192). Therefore, if man's technicity constitutes a "deviation" from its faulty origin, "the deviation, if there is one, is not in relation to nature but in relation to the divine. Again this

means that the real issue here concerns *the relation of mortals to immortality*, that *this anthropogony is in the first instance a thanatology*" (189). Put differently, Stiegler reads the myth of Prometheus and Epimetheus as suggesting that mankind's originary relation to technics also constitutes its finitude, either through the punishment of Prometheus redounding on human experience, or mortality being among the evils brought to man by Pandora, who thus figures "the arrival of birth as the mirror of death" (196). *Promēthia* is thus Heidegger's being-toward-death.

Following the Greek meanings of their names, Prometheus gives to mankind its futurity, expressed most powerfully as its mortality, while Epimetheus gives humanity its relation to its past. Finally, *Elpis*, the sole entity that remains in Pandora's jar, must be understood to mean "expectation … [t]he noun thus implies as much hope as its opposite, fear" (196-97). Thus, Stiegler argues, "in the anticipation, always already hidden, of their end – the knot that binds together *promēthia* and *ēpimēthia* – the temporality of mortals is set up … [a]s in the Heideggerean existential analytic … *Elpis* could be seen as (the relation) to the indeterminate, that is (the anticipation of) the future, and as such, 'the essential phenomenon of time'" (197-98). He goes on to develop this claim further, arguing that

> if, following Heidegger, anticipation is always for Dasein *re-turn* to its past and to its present, this return to its past and its present can only be the return to a past that is not *its* past – which means for us, in terms of *ēpimēthia*, that it can only be a pros-thetic return...The past of Dasein is necessarily outside of it. And yet Dasein is *only* this past that it *is* not. (232)

Stiegler's thus concludes that technics constitute time, by constituting the human in and as its relation to time (236). Mankind, for Stiegler, is therefore *always already* technical; if time is the ground of being, technics are the ground of time.

Despite Stiegler's insistence that the "fault of Epimetheus" provides a way of thinking man's origins that differs fundamentally from that offered by accounts of the Fall, however, there are powerful similarities between the Miltonic-biblical and Stieglerian-mythological visions of

man's genesis. Most significantly, just as Zeus refuses to give Prometheus fire, Adam tells Raphael how God has prohibited him and Eve from eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. In the process, he describes Eden in language that closely echoes the Hesiodic description of the human condition before Pandora; where Hesiod notes that "previously the tribes of men lived happily on earth, / Remote from suffering, from painful labor, and from dearth" (90-91), Adam recalls God telling him "'This Paradise I give thee, count it thine / … / 'Of every tree that in the garden grows / 'Eat freely with glad heart; fear here no dearth" (VIII.319-322). Eve also makes the case for parting from Adam on the morning of the Fall in language that specifically suggests an inchoate desire for the technical-prosthetic extension of mankind's faculty for interacting with its environment:

> Adam, well may we labor still to dress
> This garden, still to tend plant, herb, and flower,
> Our pleasant task enjoined; but, till more hands
> Aid us, the work under our labor grows,
> Luxurious by restraint; what we by day
> Lop overgrown, or prune, or prop, or bind,
> One night or two with wanton growth derides
> Tending to wild. Thou therefore now advise,
> Or bear what to my mind first thoughts present:
> Let us divide our labors … (IX.205-214)

As these lines foreshadow, Milton's account of the Fall will appear to function as just the sort of "fall into technicity" that Stiegler decries – even as it meaningfully mirrors his thought.

This becomes clear if one draws on Stiegler's understanding of technics to identify the fruit of the tree of knowledge as the first truly technical object encountered by mankind[ii]; an "exteriorization" (169) of a human faculty that allows its user to "return to a past that is not *its* past" (232), in the process placing him or her in a relation to indeterminate futurity – that is, (re)orienting being as being-toward-death. Such an identification is supported by Milton's description of Eve's consumption of the forbidden fruit:

> Greedily she ingorged without restraint,
> And knew not eating death: Satiate at length,
> And heightened as with wine, jocund and boon,
> Thus to herself she pleasingly began.
> Oh sovereign, virtuous, precious of all trees
> In Paradise! of operation blest
> To sapience, hitherto obscured, infamed. […]
> …dieted by thee, I grow mature
> In knowledge, as the Gods, who all things know; […]
> …Experience, next, to thee I owe,
> Best guide; not following thee, I had remained
> In ignorance; thou openest wisdom's way,
> And givest access, though secret she retire. (IX.791-810)

Although she is in error, Eve here identifies the fruit as a prosthetization of "Experience" compensating for an originary lack – in this case, of the very knowledge of good and evil that would likely have protected the Edenic couple from Satan's wiles. Moreover, by virtue of being thus presented as an epistemic technology, the tree deconstructs what Stiegler views as the false binary that Western metaphysics draws between *ēpistēme* and *tekhnē*, knowledge and technics.

The parallels continue after Adam and Eve have both eaten of the tree, as they experience their first encounters with "justice and … [the] sense of shame" (Plato 322c). The latter comes first, as Adam tells Eve that they must " … devise / What best may for the present serve to hide / The parts of each from other, that seem most / To shame obnoxious, and unseemliest seen" (IX.1091-1094); the former, of course, comes with God's punishment for their transgression, "...when he, from wrath more cool, / Came the mild Judge, and Intercessor both, / To sentence Man" (X.95-97). Finally, the sentence levied on Adam and Eve corresponds almost precisely to the punishments visited on mankind in the Greek myth. Stiegler highlights the consequences of Prometheus's attempt to deceive Zeus:

> The golden age is succeeded by a period of ills in which humans no longer dispose of anything ready to hand … now irredeemably bent to the yoke of *ponos*, the labor that must be spent in payment for the lack of origin, for corn to appear. For, from now on, *bios* remains hidden in the belly of the earth, disappearing yet again and forever, like the mortals themselves, while the obligation to work, to *handle instruments*, will reappear over and over again for these same mortals, until, grown old through *care*, they at last pass away. (192)

Here, on the other hand, is Milton's God decreeing Adam and Eve's punishment for falling:

> ...to the Woman thus his sentence turned.
> Thy sorrow I will greatly multiply
> By thy conception; children thou shalt bring
> In sorrow forth; and to thy husband's will
> Thine shall submit; he over thee shall rule.
> On Adam last thus judgment he pronounced.
> Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife,
> And eaten of the tree, concerning which
> I charged thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat thereof:
> Cursed is the ground for thy sake; thou in sorrow
> Shalt eat thereof, all the days of thy life;
> Thorns also and thistles it shall bring thee forth
> Unbid; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;
> In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,
> Till thou return unto the ground; for thou
> Out of the ground wast taken, know thy birth,
> For dust thou art, and shalt to dust return. (X.192-208)

It would seem, then, that the account of the Fall of Man in *Paradise Lost* only meaningfully differs from Stiegler's account of the myth of Prometheus and Epimetheus insofar as the genesis and technologization of mankind very markedly do *not* "[take] place at the same time, in the same step" – which is, of course, the crucial way that Stiegler's myth differs from prior accounts of the advent of mankind. Were such a reading correct, then, the account of technicity in *Paradise Lost* would simply affirm the singularity of Stiegler's (re)vision.

But something is afoot, to which the poem offers the subtlest of hints: When Eve first tells Adam that she has eaten of the forbidden tree, Milton tells the reader that "Adam, soon as he heard / The fatal trespass done by Eve, amazed, / Astonied stood and blank, while horror chill / Ran through his veins, and all his joints relaxed; / From his slack hand the garland wreathed for Eve / Down dropt, and all the faded roses shed" (IX.888.893). These last lines are nothing other than a subtle allusion to the Hesiodic account of Pandora's creation in which Milton is so thoroughly versed: "... the fair-haired Hours did twine / Garlands of flowers about her head, the freshest they could gather; /And Pallas Athena on her skin fit all these things together" (74-76).

The implication seems clear: Although the poem's narrator has previously called Eve "More lovely, than Pandora, whom the Gods / Endowed with all their gifts, and O! too like / In sad event" (IV.712-14), Eve is *not* to be understood a simple analogue: "the true Pandora."

This point is further driven home by Michael's reproach to Adam, after he attempts to blame Eve for tricking him into falling: "Was she thy God, that her thou didst obey / Before his voice? … Adorned /She was indeed, and lovely, to attract / Thy love, not thy subjection; and her gifts /Were such, as under government well seemed; / Unseemly to bear rule; which was thy part / And person, hadst thou known thyself aright" (X.145-154). Indeed, this is the second time in the poem that Milton depicts an angel remonstrating Adam for blaming his own failings on Eve; the first comes as Raphael reproaches Adam for suggesting that Eve's beauty and charms cause him to lose his higher faculties, telling him "Accuse not Nature, she hath done her part; / Do thou but thine; and be not diffident / Of Wisdom" (VIII.561-63). None of these moments are found in the biblical Book of Genesis; they are wholly Milton's invention, and all militate against the sense that the story of the Fall, as related in *Paradise Lost*, maps onto the myth of Prometheus and Epimetheus in the way that our original reading seemed to suggest.

The resistance to such an identification offered by these moments pales in comparison, however, to that provided by a much more significant divergence between Milton's poem and the Bible: In Milton's account, the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil does not, in itself, contain any knowledge of good and evil. This is a shocking realization, but one that is multiply reinscribed by the poem. To begin with, Raphael, in his account of Creation, refers to the tree as "the tree, / Which, tasted, works knowledge of good and evil" (VII.542-43), a strange locution that is echoed in Adam's account of how God described the tree to him: "But of the tree whose operation brings / 'Knowledge of good and ill, which I have set / 'The pledge of thy

obedience and thy faith, / ... / 'Remember what I warn thee, shun to taste, / … / ... for know, / 'The day thou eatest thereof, my sole command / 'Transgressed, inevitably thou shalt die" (VII.323-30). Both of these divine descriptions suggest that the *act* of eating of the tree "works knowledge of good and evil"; only Satan, however, claims that God "enclosed / Knowledge of good and evil in this tree" (IX.722-723). The implication is clear, if surprising: The fruit of the tree has *no* technical efficacy whatsoever, and is in no way a mnemotechnic prosthesis, or exteriorization of past knowledge or experience.

This reading is reinforced by a verbal construction that is again repeated within the poem, this time pertaining to the effects of the tree on Adam and Eve. First, Adam laments to Eve that they are "true in our fall, / False in our promised rising; since our eyes / Opened we find indeed, and find we know / Both good and evil; good lost, and evil got; / Bad fruit of knowledge, if this be to know" (IX.1065-73); later, God tells the heavenly host that "like one of us man is become / To know both good and evil, since his taste / Of that defended fruit; but let him boast / His knowledge of good lost, and evil got; / Happier had it sufficed him to have known / Good by itself, and evil not at all" (XI.84-89). Crucially, God claims that Adam and Eve's knowledge of good and evil has obtained "since" eating the forbidden fruit, rather than *by* so doing – and indeed, in contrast to the biblical account, it seems that the fruit has not imbued Adam and Eve with any new knowledge, but rather brought them firsthand experience of evil as only it could, given that to *not* consume it is God's "sole command" directed to them. This interpretation is consistently maintained, and further underscored, by Milton's description of Adam and Eve's recognition of their nudity: "Soon found their eyes how opened, and their minds / How darkened; innocence, that as a veil / Had shadowed them from knowing ill, was gone; / Just confidence, and native righteousness, / And honor, from about them, naked left / To guilty Shame" (IX.1053-58).

Again, it is clear that rather than bringing any substantive new knowledge to the couple – in this case, knowledge of their nakedness – all that eating the fruit has done is obviated their perfect innocence, with attendant consequences.

That the "knowledge" of good and evil attained by eating the tree is practical and experiential, rather than properly epistemic insight, is further reinforced by the totality of Books V and VI of the poem, in which Raphael recounts Satan's rebellion and the War in Heaven to Adam and Eve. This episode is again a Miltonic invention, and an enormously significant one, for not least among its consequences is that Raphael *gives Adam and Eve extensive knowledge of good and evil* but a single day prior to their separate decisions to disobey God's edict. Raphael 's lesson includes a recounting of Michael's speech to Satan, in which he explains the origins of evil ("Author of evil, unknown till thy revolt, / Unnamed in Heaven, now plenteous as thou seest / These acts of hateful strife, hateful to all, / Though heaviest by just measure on thyself, / And thy adherents: How hast thou disturbed / Heaven's blessed peace, and into nature brought / Misery, uncreated till the crime / Of thy rebellion!" [VI.262-69]), a reference to "the place of evil, Hell" (VI.276), a taste of Satan's relativism as he jeers at Michael about "The strife which thou callest evil, but we style / The strife of glory" (VI.289-290), and a description of how "the faint Satanic host / Defensive scarce, or with pale fear surprised, / Then first with fear surprised, and sense of pain, / Fled ignominious, to such evil brought / By sin of disobedience; till that hour / Not liable to fear, or flight, or pain" (VI.392-97). Furthermore, the poem suggests that Adam and Eve may even have an *innate* knowledge of evil, prior to Raphael's visit – for as Adam comforts Eve about her Satanically-inspired nightmare in Book IV, he muses "nor can I like / This uncouth dream, of evil sprung, I fear; / Yet evil whence? in thee can harbor none, / Created pure" (IV.97-100), before consoling her: "…yet be not sad. / Evil into the mind of God or man /

May come and go, so unreproved, and leave / No spot or blame behind" (IV.116-119). As a result, Milton's modifications of the biblical account of the Fall complicate any attempt to classify *Paradise Lost* as the story of a "fall into technics" (Stiegler 96).

Insofar as Stiegler's version of the Greek myth, however, shifts its emphasis from Prometheus's theft of fire to Epimetheus's original act of forgetting, it provides an alternative framework for interpreting *Paradise Lost* – one that results in a new way of looking at Milton's Eve. If one recalls Plato's account of the "fault of Epimetheus," one sees that Prometheus is described as "desperate to find some means of survival for the human race" (321d) – but, as the Oxford English Dictionary notes, "survival" does not only mean averting death, but also continuing to exist "after the cessation of something else"; in other words, survival can connote the ability to issue successive generations as much as the ability to defend oneself from danger.

To that end, Milton's description of the creation of Adam, and Adam's subsequent petitioning of God to alleviate his "solitude" (VIII.364) and grant him "fellowship... / … fit" (VIII.389-90) appears to indicate an originary deficiency in man – not yet mankind – that corresponds neatly with the fault of Epimetheus. Indeed, Adam says as much to God:

> Supreme of things.
> Thou in thyself art perfect, and in thee
> Is no deficience found: Not so is Man,
> But in degree; the cause of his desire
> By conversation with his like to help
> Or solace his defects. No need that thou
> Shouldst propagate, already Infinite;
> And through all numbers absolute, though One:
> But man by number is to manifest
> His single imperfection, and beget
> Like of his like, his image multiplied,
> In unity defective; which requires
> Collateral love, and dearest amity.
> Thou in thy secrecy although alone,
> Best with thyself accompanied, seekest not
> Social communication; yet, so pleased,
> Canst raise thy creature to what heighth thou wilt
> Of union or communion, deified:

> I, by conversing, cannot these erect
> From prone; nor in their ways complacence find.
> Thus I emboldened spake, and freedom used
> Permissive, and acceptance found...(VIII.414-435)

While here man is not, precisely, 'without qualities,' as in the Greek myth, he nonetheless is created with an originary "deficience" that leaves him "completely unequipped" (Plato 321c) for "survival" (321d). And, as in the Greek myth, the consequence of this originary "default" is the advent of human technicity – for what is Eve if not a literal "pros-thesis" (193), placing man(kind) "*outside itself*" by way of an "exteriorization" (169) that allows for the transmission of a "heritage" (207) – or, indeed, for heritage itself? As Adam declares, upon first seeing Eve: "I now see / Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, myself / Before me: Woman is her name; of man /Extracted: for this cause he shall forego / Father and mother, and to his wife adhere; / And they shall be one flesh, one heart, one soul" (VIII.494-499). One might object that the creation of Eve, performed willingly by God, cannot correspond to Prometheus's theft of technics – but again, Milton's account here differs meaningfully from the biblical text. In the latter, it is God who declares that "*It is* not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18), while in *Paradise Lost*, Eve results from Adam's petitioning God to correct his "single imperfection" – that of having been created single, and thus unable to survive himself.

If Eve is thus the origin point of mankind's prosthetic technicity, however, she is also the first human to experience what we understand as the human condition; at once the first technical object and the first truly human subject. Having fallen *before* Adam, she is the first to experience her being as being-towards-death; in her first speech after eating the forbidden fruit, she agonizes over the prospect of her futural ceasing-to-be: "...But what if God have seen, / And death ensue? then I shall be no more, / And Adam, wedded to another Eve, / Shall live with her enjoying, I

extinct; / A death to think! Confirmed then I resolve, / Adam shall share with me in bliss or woe: / So dear I love him, that with him all deaths / I could endure, without him live no life" (IX.826-833). More originally, however, she is the first human being to experience the *thrownness* characteristic of Dasein – that is, one's being born into a world determined by "a past that is not *its* past" (Stiegler 232). Adam, who comes to be in a world innocent of history, does not experience this kind of *Geworfenheit*, as is evident from his account of his first conscious moments: "…to speak I tried, and forthwith spake; / My tongue obeyed, and readily could name / Whate'er I saw. Thou Sun, said I, fair light, / And thou enlightened Earth, so fresh and gay, / Ye Hills, and Dales, ye Rivers, Woods, and Plains, / And ye that live and move, fair Creatures, tell, / Tell, if ye saw, how I came thus, how here?" (VIII.271-277). While Adam does seek his "cause," that cause is not *of* the world; rather than inheriting a predetermined situation, and coming into a being that is always-already being-with – as an *I* that must always negotiate its relations with a *they* – Adam is able to name and define his world in a way that no other human could ever hope to.

This stands in sharp contrast to Eve's account of her awakening. While Adam begins by naming creation, asserting himself on a still-new world, Eve describes how her desire draws her to her reflection, before she is diverted into a social role that precedes and predetermines her:

> ...There I had fixed
> Mine eyes till now, and pined with vain desire,
> Had not a voice thus warned me; 'What thou seest,
> 'What there thou seest, fair Creature, is thyself;
> 'With thee it came and goes: but follow me,
> 'And I will bring thee where no shadow stays
> 'Thy coming, and thy soft embraces, he
> 'Whose image thou art; him thou shalt enjoy
> 'Inseparably thine, to him shalt bear
> 'Multitudes like thyself, and thence be called
> 'Mother of human race.' What could I do,
> But follow straight, invisibly thus led? (IV.463-474)

And indeed, not only does Eve enter into being-towards-death before Adam, but, as the lines above indicate, she embodies a relation to futurity – even before the advent of mortality – that is more profound than his. While Eve is told that to Adam she "'...shalt bear / Multitudes like thyself, and thence be called / Mother of human race'..." God's first address to Adam identifies him only as "'First Man, of men innumerable ordained / First Father …" (VIII.296-97) – an articulation bearing a different temporality, and articulating a relationship between Adam's being, his activity, and his relationship to time that differs from Eve's. Where Eve's futurity is active, Adam's is both passive and impersonal.

One must thus reimagine the figure of Eve. Diane McColley argues that

> Milton's habit of comparing Eve, even before the Fall, to such archetypal temptresses as Circe, Pandora, and Venus on Ida … [leads m]ost critics [to] assume that Milton is following the tradition of the tainted lady and that these allusions confirm Adam's fallen and unregenerate complaint that Eve is 'crooked by nature.' The implication of such a reading is that either God's providence is unreliable or that he created Eve to effect a 'fortunate fall.' Since Milton set out to 'assert Eternal Providence' and thought blaming God for sin the primal blasphemy, it will repay us to examine these mythical allusions for their regenerative connotations. (48)

To do so, McColley revisits Milton's allusion comparing Eve to Pandora, and notes that

> Milton does not say that Eve is like Pandora now, nor that the 'sad event' is inevitable. Rather, by calling Eve 'too like' Pandora 'in sad event' he foretells the wrong choice to come but implies that Eve might have chosen better … The truth is that the first woman was gifted by God. The parody is that Jove sent Pandora for revenge. If we were to read the passage as a straightforward, rather than a parodic, prolepsis of the Fall, we would have to conclude that Eve was made by God to cause the Fall and punish Adam for falling. In other words, Milton elicits from us here any lurking suspicion we may have that God is the source of sin … The blasphemy of supposing God caused sin by making woman vain is implicit in most representations of Eve and indeed in most interpretations of *Paradise Lost*; but Milton so portrays Eve that she might have prevented Adam from becoming 'our true Epimetheus' if she had continued in her calling. (51)

Following this, one might argue that Eve ought to be understood as an analogue not of Pandora, but rather of *Elpis* – the figure of anticipation, fear, and hope that is mankind's sole recompense for the ills loosed from Pandora's jar. Eve acts as the mechanism through which mankind first encounters consciousness of death – but also places humanity into a relation *to the future as such*, a way of being beyond one's narrow limits that is not simply being-towards-death but also

being-towards-generation, creation, creativity; in short, towards the Other. And indeed, one of the starkest criticisms of Stiegler's thought is that by giving lifeless technics a privileged place at the heart of the human, he undervalues more vital figurations of the otherness integral to being: "By equating the relation to inorganic technical beings with the earliest relatedness of life to death, Stiegler can be seen to have overlooked the constitutive relation to alterity that figures all … life as *différance*" (Colony 85). By simultaneously inaugurating the existences of Dasein and of technics, Eve reconfigures the relation to technics as the relation to relationality as such, de-emphasizing the morbidity of the Stieglerian-Heideggerean account of Dasein's constitution in favor of something closer to the *ekstasis* of intimacy.

If, prior to the creation of Eve, there was *man* but not *mankind,* and the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil cannot properly be considered a technical object, insofar as it contains nothing but the fleshy pulp "[o]f man's first disobedience" (Milton I.1), this means Milton's account of the Fall of Man is not the story of "a fall into technicity" (96). Rather, Milton's vision of the genesis of mankind, like Stiegler's, depicts a human race that is always already technical; *Paradise Lost* thus presents an account of humanity's relationship to technicity that is exceedingly compatible with Stiegler's interpretation of the myth of Prometheus and Epimetheus. Indeed, Stiegler feels the need to dismiss an inconvenient detail in the Greek myths that brings his account closer still to that found in Milton's poem, but he does so in a way that only further reinforces the compatibility of the two reckonings with the dawn of mankind:

> If the myth in the *Theogony* evokes a golden age in which humans banqueted next to the gods, this means that humans had not yet occurred, since nothing had yet occurred, the golden age lying prior to the time in which something could occur … This golden age, as we have seen, is not, however, an origin. It is a limit, irredeemably lost, a condition both forgotten and unforgettable, since it is re-evoked and recalled antithetically by the conterimage of the Immortals, always present in their distance, a proximity nevertheless forever withdrawn, and thus, for mortals, an infinite regret in which the eternal melancholy of the *genos anthropos* is configured...(188-190)

If anything, this passage suggests that the account of the Fall found in *Paradise Lost* may be *better suited* to Stiegler's purposes than the myth of Prometheus and Epimetheus. The latter attempts to conflate Epimetheus's forgetting, Prometheus's theft, and the loss of the "golden age" into a single instant, in order to argue that in the Greek account, unlike the story of the Fall, "[e]verything will have taken place at the same time, in the same step." Milton's account of the creation of Eve, however, *actually does* contain all of these movements in a single stroke, constituting man as the bearer of an originary lack necessitating that he situate his being outside himself, in a way that instantiates mankind's foundational relation to both technics and time – and it does all of this *in* Eden, offering a vision of mankind that predicates our humanity on our technicity, even before the Fall.

Notes

i The versions of the myth of Prometheus and Epimetheus taken up by Stiegler are recounted in Plato's *Protagoras* and Hesiod's *Theogony* and *Works and Days*. In the *Protagoras*, Plato describes how the gods created the "mortal races" (320d), then charged the brothers Prometheus and Epimetheus with the task of distributing qualities among them. Epimetheus prevails upon his brother to allow him to discharge this obligation, Plato explains, "[b]ut Epimetheus was not very wise, and he absentmindedly used up all the powers and abilities on the nonreasoning animals; he was left with the human race, completely unequipped" (321c). Prometheus soon notices his brother's oversight:

> It was then that Prometheus, desperate to find some means of survival for the human race … did sneak into the building that Athena and Hephaestus shared to practice their arts, and he stole from Hephaestus the art of fire and from Athena her arts, and he gave them to the human race. And it is from this origin that the resources human beings needed to stay alive came into being. Later, the story goes, Prometheus was charged with theft, all on account of Epimetheus. It is because humans have a share of the divine dispensation that they alone worshipped the gods, with whom they had a kind of kinship...(321d-322b)

In short order, Zeus notices that humanity is in danger of being destroyed, because it lacks "the art of politics … so he sent Hermes to bring justice and a sense of shame to humans, so that there would be order within cities and bonds of friendship to unite them" (322c).

In the Hesiodic version of the myth, however, Zeus punishes mankind along with Prometheus for the theft of fire, telling the titan: "'Your schemes surpass all other schemes, son of Iapetos; / Now you rejoice at having stolen fire, outwitting me: / Much misery both for yourself, yourself and men to be. / To them in recompense for fire, I shall bequeath a woe, / Which they will cherish in their hearts, although it lays them low'" (54-58). Zeus thus instructs Hephaestus "to mix and knead / Water and earth" (60-61) into a figure who is "in aspect like a deathless goddess, but a woman, / A lovely maiden and in her form desirable to men" (62-63). Hermes names the woman "Pandora, because the divine / Olympians all gave her a gift and as a gift did give / Her as a woe to mortal men, who must earn their bread to live" (80-82), and takes her to Epimetheus, who "did not consider what his brother / Prometheus had warned concerning gifts from Zeus, that rather / Than keep what the Olympian gave, send them all back again, / Lest somehow they turn out to be a woe to mortal men: / Holding the woe he had received, he knew it – only then" (85- 89). And indeed, as soon as Epimetheus receives Pandora she opens her jar, which looses all of the hardships constitutive of the human condition as it is commonly understood into the world, until only *Elpis* – commonly translated as "hope" – remains:

> For previously the tribes of men lived happily on earth,
> Remote from suffering, from painful labor, and from dearth,
> And all the baleful maladies that bring life to an end –
> Before the woman lifted off the jar's lid with her hand
> And scattered out its contents, bringing humans grievous pain:
> And only hope in its unbroken dwelling did remain
> Inside the jar beneath its rim – away it never flew:
> She thrust the lid back on the jar before that could ensue,
> As Zeus the aegis-bearing god, gatherer of clouds, designed
> But troubles that are numberless wander among mankind. (90-100)

ii The previously-mentioned anti-allusion to Prometheus, in which Milton describes the primitive implements that Eve takes with her on the morning of the Fall as "... such gardening tools as Art yet rude, / Guiltless of fire, had formed, or angels brought" (IX.390-392), can be read as underscoring the fact that these objects should not be understood as technics, properly speaking; in addition to these lines, a single mention each of the "board" (V.343), "cups" (V.444), and "fit vessels pure" (V.348) that Eve uses to provide food and drink for Raphael and Adam when the former visits Earth constitute the only overt references to (quasi-)technical objects used by mankind prior to the Fall.

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