

■ From Passion to Affection: Milton's System of Emotion in *Paradise Lost*

Chien-wei Yang
National Chengchi University

Abstract

Does God have emotions? If so, how does one as a mortal gauge divine emotion? For what purpose(s) does God choose to be passible? These are the questions constantly pondered and debated by readers of the Bible in early modern England when emotion becomes a popular subject of treatises and pamphlets. While emotion, or passion, is almost unanimously considered by early moderns as one distinct negative capacity, the questions of divine passibility remain disputable. This debate naturally would not escape Milton, who holds absolute faith in his vocation as a prophetic bard. In *Paradise Lost* Milton explores divine emotion exclusive to the divine, angelic emotion shared by heavenly beings, corrupt passion unique to the fallen angels, and prelapsarian and postlapsarian emotion embodied by Adam and Eve. I argue Milton, consciously diverting from the theological convention and contemporary mainstream discourse on emotion, establishes a concept system of emotion. Distinguishing between affection and passion, Milton treats affection as pure sensation felt by the angelic hosts and God yet portrays passion as unruly disturbance of mind experienced by the satanic crew and the fallen mankind. Drawing upon the General System Theory, I argue Milton's versifications of affection, passion, and emotion can be read as his

Chien-wei Yang is a lecturer at the ETP program, National Chengchi University. Currently a PhD candidate in the English Department, National Taiwan Normal University, he is working on his dissertation on early modern emotions in John Milton's major poetry. His research interests include Milton's major poetry, Shakespeare, English Reformation literature, early modern emotionology, philosophy of emotion, Chinese translation and reception of Milton and Shakespeare, and posthumanism. Email: william@nccu.edu.tw.

(Received 10 June 2019; Accepted 28 March 2020)

poetic attempt at building an open system of emotion in which each subsystem constituted by distinct emotion exists in close interaction to sustain the harmony of the system.

Keywords: emotion, affection, passion, Milton, *Paradise Lost*, General System Theory

As one of the greatest literary achievements in English, *Paradise Lost* is an epic extraordinarily rich in its portraiture of emotion, which, however, has attracted little critical attention. Milton's readers are presented with a cosmos created by a fully passible God, in which Satanic passions stand in juxtaposition with angelic emotions and the first parents complete their painful emotive education. To fully appreciate Milton's contribution to the early modern emotionology, I believe, one must consider the ingenious but subtle distinctions Milton develops among affection, passion, and emotion displayed on three planes of existence: heavenly, hellish, and human, which sets him apart from his contemporaries writing on passions.¹ To further explore the dynamic relations between affections embodied by God and Angels, passions by Satan, and emotions later degenerating into passions by humans, I employ the General System Theory, the study of the structure and working principles of a system, to read Milton's endeavor to compose a sustainable and self-corrective systematic of emotion through poetry.

Affection, Passion, or Emotion?

Prior to the discussion of the emotions in *Paradise Lost*, one must take into account the fact that emotion is understood very differently by early moderns. A modern reader under the sway of psychology or related scientific discourses may view emotion as "multi-component responses to challenges or opportunities that are important to the individual's goals, particularly social ones" (Oatley et al. 29). But to investigate the early modern notion of emotion, one should begin by asking how emotion is understood differently in early modern England or before. One of the fundamental divergences lies in lexical choice; prior to and during early modern England, what a modern understands as emotion is termed as passion or affection, which take center stage in treatises exploring the human mind. The word passion in fact makes its first appearance in the works by ancient Greek philosophers. Aristotle in *Categories* posits ten categories to classify the world as we know it, and for the tenth and final category he proposes passions (*πάσχειν*), i.e. being acted up. Aristotle also designates passions as an essential element of the soul, and more importantly, he argues the mean can be utilized to measure virtue and evaluate human action (*Nicomachean Ethics* 32-36; book 2, chs. 5-6). Aristotelian mean anticipates the notion of temperance,

¹ The term "emotionology," which signifies the ways a society treats and expresses basic emotions, is proposed and elaborated by Peter N. Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns in "Emotionology."

key to the early modern discussion of passions. Raphael in *Paradise Lost* similarly advises Adam to practice the principle of temperance with his prelapsarian emotion. Plato contributes to the tradition by viewing the human soul in a new framework; he notices the impacts of emotions on humans as he constructs a tripartite model in describing the human soul, which is divided among rational, non-rational, and spirited parts; the non-rational soul consists of spirit and appetite, which are respectively capable of emotions varying in types and intensity.² Plato's tripartite model is tremendously influential as centuries later more than a few medieval theologians and early modern authors on passions would base their elaboration of the architecture of the human soul on his tripartite model.³

As a more systematic analysis of passion was developed in medieval theology, the distinction among types of emotion became necessary. Passion is generally considered imbued with passivity while affection, semantically complementary to passion, begins to be classified as a higher form of human feeling. This tradition is first established by Augustine and Aquinas and continues to be elaborated but rarely challenged in the early modern discourse on emotion. According to the two Church Fathers, affection or *affectus* in Latin is powered by the will, and thus is voluntary and active in nature; on the other hand, passion or *passiones* in Latin is considered an involuntary movement of the sensory appetites, the lowly perturbations of the soul (Dixon 39-40). Indebted to Aristotle for the notions of activity and passivity, Aquinas contributes to the debate on the nature of passions by elaborating the model of affection and passion (James 47-64). Aside from his ingenious taxonomy of passion, Aquinas proposes the distinction between affection and passion, a distinction long neglected by critics.⁴ Unlike passion, which is understood as a sensual perception essentially corporeal in nature, "a movement of the sense orexis," affection as manifest in acts of will aims at goodness and is exhibited by humans, saints, angels, and even God, though in varying degrees (James 65).⁵ God, in fact, as Aquinas reminds us,

² For Plato's discussion of this tripartite model of the human soul, see book 4 of the *Republic* in *Plato: Complete Works* 1071-72. For a brief introduction of the model of the human soul by Plato and Aristotle, see A. W. Price, "Emotions in Plato and Aristotle."

³ For example, Augustine and Aquinas develop the tripartite model. Most of the treatises on passions adopt the model, too.

⁴ For taxonomy of emotions, see articles 2 and 3 in question 25, part II in Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*. For the distinction between affection and passion, see article 2 in question 26, part II in *Summa Theologiae* and Lombardo, chapters 1 and 2.

⁵ Article 1, question 26, part II in *Summa Theologiae*. It's worth our attention that Aquinas specifically categorizes "natural love," which describes how the four elements fall or rise according to their nature: see pp. 64-65b and Lombardo 82-83. Susan James also believes that Aquinas distinguishes between affects and passions (61-62).

stands as the ultimate objective of affection and does not experience affection in the manner as humans and angels do; in other words, God loves without actually experiencing passion.⁶ On the other hand, affection is sensed by humans, in either pursuit of union with God or fulfillment of desires. Moreover, the Thomist taxonomy of passion features a subtle distinction among the four words for love. Among the four, unlike *amor*, which is God-like in nature and draws humans toward God, *dilectio* is distinct since it incorporates *electio*, choice, and reveals the influence of will.⁷ So *amor* in the Thomist taxonomy stands in affinity to affection exclusive to the divine and angelic while *dilectio* resembles the prelapsarian love Adam and Eve experience, which are to be elaborated in later sections of this article.

Early modern English then continues adopting passion and affection in the discussion of emotion. Being a relatively rare lexical choice in the early modern period, the word emotion denotes negative sensations. Still nascent in the early seventeenth-century English language, emotion, as Randle Cotgrave defines, signifies disturbances of psychological equilibrium, shown as “commotion,” “agitation of spirit,” or “vehement inclination of the mind.”⁸ In another glossary, emotion is defined as “trouble of mind.”⁹ For clarity in the discussion in this article, affection and passion are used when referring to variegated emotions, and emotion is specifically used to describe the emotional state of the first parents following the Fall.

Whereas the patristic tradition pioneers in its distinction between affection and passion, affection and passion as lexical terms are sometimes employed interchangeably by authors in seventeenth-century England. William Fenner in his treatise on affection draws upon the conventional notion of passion, defining affection as “motions of the will” (4). More significantly, Fenner makes an initial attempt at contrasting affection with passion by stressing the activeness in affection, which can “make the soul to suffer, and the body to suffer,” thus inducing “passions” (6). In another popular book on passions, Edward Reynolds treats passions as a general category to include all types of passion as they are essentially “natural, perfective, and unstrained motions of the Creatures” (31). Reynolds further classifies passions into “mental,” “sensitive,” and “rational” types, which, I am afraid, confuses rather than enlightens the readers (36, 37, 38). Although Reynolds could have been one of the earliest English authors

⁶ Question 20, part II in *Summa Theologiae* and Lombardo 82-83.

⁷ The four words are *amor*, *dilectio*, *caritas*, and *amicitia*. For the differentiation between *amor* and *dilectio*, see article 3, question 26, part II in *Summa Theologiae*.

⁸ Randle Cotgrave, *A Dictionary of the French and English Tongues*.

⁹ Edward Philips, *The New World of English Words*.

distinguishing between affection and passion by specifically naming hope, boldness, and anger as affection rather than passion in the contents, he fails to develop such distinctions in the book. Similar to his contemporaries, Reynolds employs passion and affection interchangeably, which further impairs the clarity of his argument; for example, when describing a mind affected by melancholy, Reynolds uses “carnall and grosse affections” (37). In his explication of the sensitive passions, Reynolds replaces passions with “affections” (38). Such confusion on the lexical level can be inferred to spring from the semantic uncertainty about the fundamental difference between affection and passion among the early modern English. Thomas Wright in his popular study on passions treats affection as a synonym for passion, both of which are “perturbations of the mind” (7). Wright is aware that the term for what we call emotion is not unitary, and “affections,” “affects,” and “passions” are common choices when naming one’s feelings (8). In a definition corresponding to the mainstream understanding of passion in his time, Wright again mixes the two terms: “when these affections are stirring in our minds, they alter the humours of our body, causing some passion or alteration in them” (8). However, I posit Milton sets himself apart from his contemporaries in responding to the emotionology of his own time; he sees the need, intellectual and pedagogical, to differentiate between affection and passion, which is fundamental to his scheme of human salvation.

System Theory and Miltonic Emotions

Although General System Theory (GST) is first proposed as a holistic view in science, it soon inspires the rethinking of psychology, information technology, and management science. A system as defined in GST is “a structure that has organized components” (qtd. in Skyttner 57). Unlike an aggregate of components, a system is continuous in its identity and goal-directed. The components in the system, i.e. subsystems, are organized hierarchically, and they interact closely under the suprasystem, which is an emergent property formed along with the coexistence of all the subsystems and dictates the operation of the system. To survive, as Ludwig von Bertalanffy explicates, the system in a general case aims to achieve stability and order through equifinality, which means it reaches objectives through various means (157-59). A disrupting factor in the system, entropy, measures the degree of disorder in the system and can be counteracted by importing energy from the environment. The system can be open or closed, and in the former case, the system is susceptible to the input from the outside environment. The GST is also applied in concept build-

ing as an abstract system, especially in fields such as psychology and sociology (Skyttner 56-71). Inspired by the GST of Ludwig von Bertalanffy, I consider Milton's treatments of emotion in *Paradise Lost* an experiment to establish a system of emotion, in which the subsystems of various types of emotion depend on one another and co-exist in dynamic competition. To deepen our appreciation of the Miltonic systematic of emotion, I propose one should read the poet's rendering of affection, passion, and emotion as the construction of an abstract system. This system is composed of subsystems of angelic affection, diabolical passions, and human emotions, which are subsumed by the suprasystem of perfect stability, divine affection. Central to the system is the close interplay among the subsystems and the intrusion of entropy represented by the unruly passions. The system aims to achieve inner stability and evenly distributed emotive energy to sustain the universe in Milton's epic poem.

Divine Passibility and Divine Affection

The consideration of divine affection is predicated upon a question: does God feel emotion? Informed by the theological tradition initiated by the Fathers of the Church, who affirm that God is static, impersonal, and thus impassible, Christian readers tend to assume the deity is devoid of human feelings or stays above them.¹⁰ The millennium-long concept of divine impassibility is mainly influenced by the Hellenistic notion of *apatheia*, which conceives of God as a self-sufficient being in full activity *affectus* which is incompatible with passivity *paschein* (Bauckham 7-8). However, the insistence on divine impassibility begins to wane as the notion of divine passibility begins to draw scholarly attention since around 1900 with an increasing number of theologians defending the view that God can suffer and is capable of feeling emotions.¹¹ The renewed theological debate over divine passibility is instrumental in my reading of Milton's God since it enables readers to reconsider the commonly held concept

¹⁰ For a recent defense of divine passibility, see Thomas G. Weinandy, "Does God Suffer?" The patristic tradition is firm on the impassibility of God. For example, Aquinas explicitly states that Christ's impassibility remains even during the distribution of the sacrament at the Last Supper. See article 3, question 81, part IV in *Summa Theologiae*. Bernard of Clairvaux clearly denies divine passibility by rejecting the notion that Christ suffers with his physical body in chapter 3 in *The Twelve Steps of Humility and Pride*. Most of the early modern authors on passions attribute passions to the Son rather than God.

¹¹ For the representative theologians supporting divine passibility, see Bauckham; Kitamori; Lee; Moltmann; DeYoung. Weinandy, however, argues that a suffering God is destructive to the Christian theology.

of divine impassibility and admits the possibility of divine emotions. In fact, God in the Scriptures is frequently presented as a deity displaying varied emotions. One representative case can be found in the Book of Exodus in which God at the summit of Mount Sinai solemnly admonishes Moses to abide by the holy command, saying, “And my *wrath* shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless” (Exod. 22.24; emphasis mine).¹² Later when the Israelites become corrupt and turn to pagan gods, they fall under the Philistine yoke because “the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel” (Judg. 10.7). God also expresses his compassion for the Israelites even when scolding them for their ingratitude: “[M]ine heart is turned within mee, my repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger” (Hos. 11.8-9). The readers of the Bible find a God inspecting his shifts in emotions. Yet, divine emotion may not be fully compatible with human emotion. The biblical God, according to Heschel, is capable of the type of emotion which is beyond the grasp of mortals; he renders the original passage as “my pathos is not your *pathos* . . . For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my *pathos* than your *pathos*.”¹³ Replacing “thoughts” and “wayes” with “pathos,” Heschel highlights the significant discrepancy between mortal passibility and divine passibility. Aligning with the biblical precedents, early moderns also turned their attention to the divine passibility in expositions of passions. One representative example is Jean Senault’s *The Use of Passions*, in which he explicitly acknowledges Christ’s capability to feel and “receive such Passions” and “motions of our soul” (a3). Christ, who demonstrates to Christians how to “regulate all the passions,” stands as a perfect example of successful management of emotions, inspiring Senault’s readers to achieve “triumph over their Passions” (a9).

Milton in *Christian Doctrine* seems to support divine passibility. He advises readers to approach the question about divine nature “after the manner of Scripture” (Hughes 906). God, as Milton admits, does reveal a myriad of emotions, including the moments when man’s disobedience “grieved him [God] at his heart” and when “his [God’s] soule was grieved for the misery of Israel” (Gen. 6.6; Judg. 10.16). However, readers are reminded by Milton that divine feelings differ from human ones in degree and nature since the former are “com-

¹² *The Holy Bible*, Authorized King James Version. All the following quotations from the Bible are from this edition and retain the original spelling.

¹³ The adaptation by Heschel is shown in italics. The original biblical text is as follows: “my thoughts are not your thoughts . . . For as the heauens [heavens] are higher than the earth, so are my wayes higher than your wayes, and my thoughts than your thouhts [thoughts]” (Isa. 55.8-9). Quoted in Bauckham 9-10.

plete and excellent" (Hughes 906). Milton then employs induction to infer that since man created in the likeness of God is endowed with a set of capabilities, the Creator must own such attributes in the state of perfection (Hughes 906). Milton's treatment of divine passibility, however, diverts from the medieval theology epitomized by Aquinas, who views the emotions of God recounted in the Bible as elusive phenomena, "metaphor drawn from their effects" (article 2, question 3, part II). In the chapter on Holy Spirit, the bard specifically mentions "ineffable affections" the Holy Father exhibits in sending a dove to bless the Son (Hughes 966). The phrase typifies Milton's favorable stance on divine passibility; he acknowledges its existence yet at the same time recognizes our limitation in our perception of it.

Central to my discussion of divine passibility and affection is to ask a different question. Instead of asking if God feels emotion, I propose to rephrase the question as "Does Milton's God display emotion/affection?" Indeed, God in *Paradise Lost* is depicted as a perfect being, whose ineffable presence, however, gives signs of emotion. When conversing with the Son as a loving father, God is said to be bathed in "new joy ineffable" (3.137).¹⁴ God's eminence "shone full" and "full expressed ineffably" when appointing the Son to lead the angelic army (6.720, 721). Apart from being ineffable in nature, Milton's God, in compliance with the Christian tradition, is invisible. In Adam and Eve's prayer, God "sit'st above these heavens / To us [Adam and Eve] invisible or dimly seen" (5.156-57). So is the heavenly affair kept away from human visual perception. Raphael admits to Adam when recounting the battle in heaven the difficulty of describing "invisible exploits," beyond human perception (5.565). Yet Milton in *Paradise Lost* revises the view on divine passibility. His major objective is not to prove the divine possession of emotion/affection as it is out of the reach of human understanding, but to investigate the perfect manner through which God displays emotion/affection to guide humans to attain proper management of their passions.

God in *Paradise Lost* echoes God in the Scripture in terms of affective capability. The Creator presents himself as an "incensed Deity" imbued with "wrath" (3.187, 275). While Carey claims Milton's God is cast in an unfavorable light due to his "vindictiveness, anger, and a passion for self-aggrandizement," the divine indignation in the poem is reserved only for the wicked (82-83). So later in book 6, the meek Christ undergoes an emotional transformation, wearing his "countenance too severe to be beheld / And full of wrath" as he readies himself

¹⁴ The following quotations from *Paradise Lost* are from Alastair Fowler ed., *John Milton: Paradise Lost*.

to punish the rebellious angels (6.825-26). While Satan does experience rage, an emotion similar to wrath, God in *Paradise Lost* displays rage without reservation when driving the rebels out of heaven. Unlike Satan's selfish rage, the divine display of rage highlights divine justice. Belial in the demonic conference recalls their utter defeat by the raging Son of God (2.144). Raphael then clearly recounts the emotional transformation the Son initiates in face of the "disordered rage" exerted by Lucifer's crew (6.696); the Son wills his emotion and chooses to feel "full of wrath" and his facial expression turns "too severe to be beheld" (6.826, 825). Here Milton seems to follow the medieval tradition in depicting the Son's emotional change as a voluntary act, so the Son exemplifies how rage or wrath should be mastered for holy ends.

Another emotional facet Milton's God displays is the opposite of anger, joy. Seeing the rebellious crew gathering, God, "smiling to his only Son," comments on the fallen angels' attempted revolt in an overstatement: "Lest unaware we lose / This our high place, our sanctuary, our hill" (5.718, 731-32). Responding to Adam's request for a "partaker" of his happy state, God replies with "a smile more brightened" (8.364, 368). Unlike the smile in book 5, God's smile here radiates with parental affection. Readers might suspect how God's smile can be perceived if God is conventionally deemed as incorporeal and immutable by theologians.¹⁵ Without the body and form, how can God show emotions through facial expression? Milton's seemingly bold poetic rendition of divine affections can be justified by his meditation on the nature of God in *Christian Doctrine*. Severely limited in understanding and capability, humans, as Milton admits, can never comprehend the divine nature; instead, God reveals himself to humans in the form and scope discernable for humans, "condescending to accommodate himself [God] to our [humans'] capacities" (Hughes 905). So Milton's God displays emotions in ways comprehensible to humans. The Miltonic God asserts divine affection as a higher holon, an all-inclusive category, in the system of emotion Milton establishes in *Paradise Lost*. The suprasystem composed of divine affection holds dominion over the other subsystems and maintains the delicate power relations among them.

¹⁵ For example, Aquinas plainly explains God is spirit and does not exist in corporeal form in articles 1 and 2, question 3, part I, in *Summa Theologiae*. Augustine also characterizes God as "being infinite in every dimension" and "incorruptible" in chapters 4 and 5, book 7 in *The Confessions* 292-93.

Angelic Affections

Another major component in the Miltonic systematics of emotion is angelic emotion. Traditionally, angelic emotion is made obscure or treated as a subcategory of divine emotions.¹⁶ Milton once again modifies that tradition by envisioning angels sharing emotions compatible with human perceptions. Milton seems to recalibrate the angelic emotive range, enabling angels to interact with humans more directly, so angels in *Paradise Lost* are endowed with the ability to resonate with the human couple at both spiritual and emotional levels.

To demonstrate how Milton reinvents angelic emotions, I will start by examining the creation and nature of angels in the theological tradition. One of the major obstacles faced by early Church Fathers is the mysterious silence about the creation of angels in the Bible. Despite numerous references to angels in the Bible, “two Angels to Sodome at euen” for instance (Gen. 19.1), Richard Sowerby points out the creation of angels is not recorded in the Scripture and raises “troubling implications” for early medieval theologians (20). The mysterious silence is first noted by Church Fathers, who attempt various kinds of explanation. Augustine determines the creation of angels take place on the first day of Creation when angels were formed along with heaven (*The City of God* 379; book 11, ch. 9). Aquinas sides with the conventional view in his delineation of the nature of angels in *Summa Theologiae*, in which he explicitly declares angels to be made of “incorporeal substance,” lying midway between God and corporeal beings (articles 1, 2, question 50, part I).

Milton seems to comply with the tradition in his major poetry and treatises on Christianity. Situating the creation of angels in the chapter on the Creation in *Christian Doctrine*, Milton first chooses to reiterate the mainstream definitions, stating angels are “created at the same time with the visible universe,” and more specifically “on the first [day]” with references to the Book of Genesis, yet a few lines below he revises the observation, using the quote from Job to affirm angels “were then already in existence” before the Creation (Hughes 978). This explains why Milton passes over the creation of angels in Raphael’s

¹⁶ Most of the works on angels choose to focus on their creation and distinct nature and pay little attention to their emotive power. For example, Augustine elucidates the creation of angels and their exact nature in chapters 4, 5 and 22, book 9, and chapters 4, 9, 13, 32, and 33, book 11, and chapters 1 to 6, book 12. In chapter 5, book 9, Augustine specifically states angels do not exhibit passions such as anger and fear. See Augustine, *The City of God* 338. Although Aquinas provides more comprehensive analysis of angels in questions 50-64, part I, he only briefly sketches angelic emotive power. Aquinas denies they feel passions yet seems to admit they are inclined to “respond” to good in the form of affection because of their nature. See Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, articles 4 and 5, question 60, part I and article 3, question 64, part I.

recount of the Creation because Milton seems to hold that angels are in heaven before the Creation and, more significantly, before Satan's revolt. Unlike his detailed explication of the nature of God and man, Milton offers a rather brief description of the nature of angels and, like Raphael in *Paradise Lost*, admonishes the readers not to pursue the topic above their intellectual reach since pursuing the topic will "incur apostle's reprehension" (Hughes 979). Milton does follow the theological tradition in describing angels as "spirits" of "ethereal nature" in the treatise, and the readers of *Paradise Lost* find angels are similarly defined as "spirits" (Hughes 979; *PL* 8.626). Explicating the ministry of angels, Milton declares angels are not neutral in nature; rather, they are classified as good or bad (*Christin Doctrine* 217; book 1, ch. 9).¹⁷ As a result, Milton's angels, as humans, are prone to corruption and disobedience. His description of Raphael's appearance is also orthodox: Raphael alights Eden with three pairs of plumed wings in "heavenly fragrance" (5.286). One thing to note is that Milton offers a uniquely Christian definition of spirit, the substance which angels are composed of. Instead of "incorporeal and immaterial beings" as spirit may be commonly understood, spirit in Milton denotes activation of the "breath of life," which causes human faculty to function, and, more significantly, it is the universal substance from which angels were engendered (Hughes 979).¹⁸ Milton's emphasis on the neutral nature of angels and the essence they share with humans prepares readers to appreciate his depiction of angels as almost tangible beings capable of emotions and sexual intercourse.

Milton digresses from the traditional notion of angels by conferring a sophisticated perception of emotions on his angels. Joad Raymond in a study on Milton's angels also discovers that "Milton attributes organs, sense, and emotions to angels" (300-01). Like the Creator who exhibits affection, Miltonic angels perform affection by assuming a quasi-physical form to guide Adam to maintain his emotive equilibrium. Milton's heavenly messengers are indeed capable of varied emotions. So, as Adam inquires Raphael of the angelic sexual intercourse, the heavenly messenger's face shows "Celestial rosy red" (8.619). Although critics tend to interpret the rosy hue as blushing, Alastair Fowler corrects the view, reminding us that red is the typical color of angelic ardor.¹⁹ To judge from the context, I agree with Fowler since in the following lines Raphael tackles the question directly, asserting angels "enjoy" their coitus "in eminence, and obstacles find none" (8.623-24). Lines 622 and 623 from the same pas-

¹⁷ Milton, *Christian Doctrine*, CD hereafter.

¹⁸ For the first definition of spirit, see "Spirit" n. 1a, 1d., *OED*.

¹⁹ For Fowler's annotation to 8.619, see *John Milton: Paradise Lost* 430.

sage end with “enjoy’st” and “enjoy” and the former agrees with thou, human, while the latter agrees with “we,” angels. The certainty in Raphael’s tone and the syntactical arrangement implies the parallel between human intercourse and angelic intercourse. Raphael also indicates to Adam their primal emotional state is pure happiness infused with love for God: “thou [Adam] know’st / Us happy, and without love no happiness” (8.620-21). Before departing, Raphael names the dominant affection to summarize the divine message for the first parents: “Be strong, live *happy*, and love” (8.633; emphasis mine). It is true that “happy” here refers to the state of being, but I believe it also highlights the ideal emotion God expects of man. In the heavenly panegyric glorifying the creation of Eden and humans, angels wish “sons of men” to be “thrice happy if they know / Their happiness” (7.626, 631-32). This is indeed Adam’s primal emotive state since his creation, as he confesses to Raphael his wholesome and innocent happiness: “I move and live, / And feel that I am happier than I know” (8.281-82). Angels certainly are partakers of this happiness as Raphael expressly tells Adam they live in “happiness,” too (8.621). Even the fallen angel echoes Raphael’s advice to Adam; Beelzebub mourns over the loss of divine residence and happiness as the affection they once partook of as heavenly beings upon finding Satan has degenerated from his glorious form: “how changed / From him, who in the happy realms of light / Clothed with transcendent brightness . . .” (1.84-86; emphasis mine). Raphael’s instruction to Adam highlights the fact that angels embody happiness and Godly loving, the supreme and legitimate emotions for the first human parents to place before the other sentiments.

Aside from happiness, Milton’s angels also show signs of other emotions. They are susceptible to sadness as mortals; being ordered to withdraw from Eden following the disobedience by Adam and Eve, angels ascend to heaven, “mute and sad / For man” (10.18-19). It is noteworthy besides joy and sadness, Milton’s angels are capable of anger, as evidenced respectively by the angelic band headed by Gabriel and Abdiel. Milton’s angels can be moved by anger, yet their anger is not the irascible sensation identified by Aquinas; rather, their justifiable anger is founded upon divine justice. The angelic response to the discovery of Satan squatting close to Eve exemplifies justifiable anger: “the angelic squadron bright / Turned fiery red” (4.977-78). Their anger derives from the enmity against the apostate, who plots to spoil the innocence of God’s creations. When Abdiel scorns Satan’s intent to wage a war against God, he shows no reservation in expressing his anger, being the only angel among the rebellious legion who “[s]tood up, and in a flame of zeal severe / The current of his fury thus opposed” (5.807-08). On the other hand, “rage” is applied in depicting Satan’s anger, a word with negative connotations in Milton’s time, which point

I will return to later. By attributing anger to angels, Milton again challenges the orthodox view that angels as purely intellectual beings feel no emotions.²⁰

Pseudopassions and Affections

Faced by the dauntingly complex Thomist model of emotions, students of Aquinas are sometimes tempted to distinguish the superficially confusing pair of the affections God and angels display and the passions caused by the sensitive appetites in humans or animals. Peter King terms the passions felt by God and angels as “pseudopassions,” to be distinguished from passions (105). However, I deem such distinction as superfluous since Aquinas introduces affection (*affectione*) and passion (*passione*) and states how affection overlaps with passion but, in contrast to passion, affection is not characterized by passivity.²¹ Robert Miner in his book-length study on the Thomist passions reveals a different theoretical approach pioneered by Aquinas: distinguishing between affections and passions in his groundbreaking system of passions (35-38). In response to King’s proposition of pseudopassions in the Thomist system of passion, Miner observes that Aquinas does set passions (*passiones*), acts of sensitive appetite, apart from affections (*affectiones*), acts belonging to sensitive appetites or others, and later in the same chapter he points out “Aquinas explicitly argues that a range of volitions belonging to God, angels, and humans are affections, but *not passions*” (emphasis mine).²² Therefore, I still choose to categorize the emotions God and angels perform as affections in opposition to passions.

Satanic Passions

Angels, as Milton explains, can tend toward good or evil, so they are free to choose to sustain or pervert their nature. Once angels rebel against God, they are fully corrupt in their mind and appearance, and their emotive state reflects their state of being in *Paradise Lost*. The corrupt state of Satan and his crew is clearly illustrated by their perverted emotions. Interestingly, Lucifer’s initial response to the Son’s appointment, envy, is emotional. Envy, according to *Christian Doctrine*, is the opposite of love, which is “exemplified in the envy

²⁰ For angels’ incapability to sense emotions, see article 4, question 59, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 9.

²¹ Aquinas, article 2, question 22, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 19.

²² Miner also identifies where in *Summa Theologiae* Aquinas makes references to such affections (36n).

with which Satan regards the salvation of the human race" (CD 644; book 2, ch. 11). In contrast to envy, love is the sole emotional responsibility Raphael asks of the first parent. Pride, another emotion Satan has been developing since before the Fall, is a perversion of holy grace and the opposite of humility according to *Christian Doctrine*, as Milton states: "To this [humility] is opposed, first, pride towards God" (CD 553; book 2, ch. 4). Once condemned to hell, Satan and his crew are characterized by one type of passion, rage, the vehement and undisciplined surge of emotion. According to the *OED*, "rage," apart from fury, could signify a "violent feeling, passion, or appetite," and it can be read as wild passions in the context (*OED Online* "rage, n"). The emotional surge enables Satan, "now first inflamed with rage," to navigate in the universe (4.9). Observing Earth, the new world God creates for man, Satan hardens his heart and his wild passions, or "perturbation," rage so that his disguise fails; he exposes his true, corrupt form tainted with "ire, envy, and despair" (4.120, 115). Satan's pretense of grandeur is then stripped away by an outburst of passions as he chooses not to conceal his "gestures fierce" and "marked and mad demeanour" (4.128, 129). Confronted by the angelic squadron, Satan immediately becomes agitated, "waxing more in rage replied" (4.969). Even his crew is infected with such violent feelings, entertaining themselves while "[o]thers [fallen angels] with vast Typhoean rage more fell / Rend up both rocks and hills" (2.539-40). Satanic passion essentially runs counter to divine and angelic affection and threatens the harmony of the Miltonic system of emotion as it devolves from the subsystem of affection and intends to incorporate the subsystem of near-affection embodied by the first parents.

From Near-Affection to Emotion

Now we turn to human emotions exhibited by Adam and Eve. It is not too bold to claim that Milton attributes the very first fall in history mainly to the unruly passions, a far inferior competitor of affection. To seduce humans, Satan will naturally aim at emotive balance which he had lost before he fell. So Raphael, dispatched by God and the bard, descends to guide Adam and the readers to master their passion in preparation for emulating affection. Yet as foreknowledge of Adam and Eve's Fall has been imparted with readers, the didactic speech on emotion serves to educate readers more than Adam to perfect their emotive state. Milton's elaborate account of Adam's failure to harness his passions and preserve the integrity of his affection illuminates the preeminence and the unfortunate loss of happiness, which can be interpreted as a poetic ped-

agogy through which Milton's readers will be inspired to reassess their emotional well-being.

It should be noted that prelapsarian Adam is created with an emotive state close to affection, signifying a subsystem of near-affection, which is later perverted and degenerates into passions as he chooses to disobey out of selfish love. In the chapter on the Creation in *Christian Doctrine*, Milton explains since Creation Adam is endowed with near-affection through the "breath of life" from God, an emotive state in closer affinity to divine affection than his offspring (Hughes 979). The intrusion of the subsystem of satanic passion, concretized by the Tempter's persuasion to taste the fruit and Adam's surrender to Eve's inducement, then results in the perversion of the subsystem of near-affection and thus its replacement by postlapsarian passibility, emotion.

Milton's Raphael stands as a model of temperance in lecturing on the importance of restraint in sensational relish. Before sitting down to dine, Raphael reminds Adam to abstain from being "nice," or over-refined, with his taste, i.e. not to indulge in sensual perception (5.433). Depicted as a visible being, Raphael's physical mechanism allows no excessive accumulation of nourishment and will release the surplus in intake from its corporeal body: "what redounds, transpire / Through spirits with ease" (5.438-39). While most editors including Hughes and Fowler interpret these lines as a description of the angelic and divine nature, I believe they bear greater significance in Milton's emotional pedagogy. As Milton notes in *Christian Doctrine*, among all virtues, temperance is a special kind one must cultivate in the fact that it regulates physical gratification, and in temperance one finds "sobriety, chastity, modesty, and decency" (CD 621; book 2, ch. 9). The heightened notion of temperance reminds the readers of the mean proposed by Aristotle in characterizing virtue (*Nicomachean Ethics* book 2, ch. 5). So Raphael exemplifies temperance in a bodily manner to initiate the emotional education. Milton in *Of Education* also requires the diet for students to be nutritious and "moderate" (Hughes 639). Richard Durocher holds a similar view in his essay, arguing Milton understands passions as affections to be tempered (30-31). Similarly, Christopher Tilmouth claims the prelapsarian couple enjoys love "validated in moral terms and sanctified as a form of piety" (192). When recounting the heavenly banquet, Raphael, however, portrays the extravagance in feasting: "They [the angelic crew] eat, they drink, and in communion sweet / Quaff immortality and joy" (5.637-38; emphasis mine). Raphael's depiction of seemingly excessive sensational enjoyment does not contradict his exaltation of temperance, for divine affection, however exuberant, never appears inordinate as it springs from the ultimate source of infinite goodness and joy; it is "secure / Of surfeit" in perfection (5.638-39).

Being near-perfect in the emotive state, Adam must stay vigilant in exercising his affection and observes moderation when satisfying his desires. Milton stresses the moral imperative of temperance once again as both the human host and the angelic guest have “sufficed, / Not burdened nature” (5.451-52). Before the Fall, temperance is a natural virtue shared by humans and angels, a perfect state for humans to feel affection.

Raphael's mission is to guide Adam to keep his near-affection, love for God, intact and to further elevate it, which is what Dante experiences as he ascends to the empyrean by degrees in the *Divine Comedy*. To do so requires a keen awareness of the polluting power of passions, yet Adam bears no hesitation to confess his vehement passion for Eve, rather than love for the Creator when recollecting his creation. Adam strives to phrase such “commotion strange” and, ironically, his self-analysis already crystalizes and at the same time intensifies his passion for Eve (8.531). Here “strange” is a crucial double entendre; it denotes a feeling alien to Adam prior to Eve's creation and also a sensation so intense that he can barely control it (*OED Online* “strange, *adj* 8, 9a”). The other word “commotion” signifies more than physical perturbation and political resurgence as Michael Schoenfeldt explains; in fact, it also denotes “mental perturbation, agitation, and excitement,” which presents itself as a disruptive force in Adam's emotive microcosm (43-45).²³ Raphael, sensing Adam's intemperate affection for Eve, exhorts Adam to distinguish between affection and passion: “What higher in her society thou find'st / Attractive, human, *rational*, love still” (8.586-87; emphasis mine). The advice rings more true vice versa; if what Adam senses is irrational love, it should be avoided. Here the adjective *rational* is employed to describe the movement of the will, so the affection Raphael recommends is the intellectual affection (*intellectiva affectione*), which is propelled by the will. As Nicholas Lombardo points out in his analysis of Aquinas's system of passions, the will has a basic inclination to form “complete, unrestricted goodness,” which is exhibited by God and angels according to Aquinas (78-79). Raphael continues to elaborate the ideal working of love: “love refines / The thoughts, and heart enlarges, hath his seat / In reason” (8.589-91). Raphael's instruction echoes a common thesis presented in early modern treatises on passions, which stress the importance of reason. In another line, the heavenly messenger sums up his message as “In loving thou dost well, in *passion not*” (8.588; emphasis mine). The juxtaposition of “loving” and “passion” further highlights the opposition between “heavenly love” and “carnal pleasure” (8.592, 593). Here the

²³ Also see “Commotion” in *John Milton: Paradise Lost* 531n. Fowler also defines “commotion” as such.

pronoun “thou” may be interpreted as Raphael’s exhortation to Adam as well as the fallen reader. Readers join Adam in learning the most efficacious defense against the Satanic lure lies in keeping one’s primal emotion intact.

Failing to note the angel’s admonition, Adam even seems to blur the distinction between love and passion, regarding his inordinate passion for Eve as authentic love: “To love thou blames me not” (8.612). At the end of the colloquy, the angel sums up the purpose for the emotional lesson by plainly asking Adam to guard himself against the ambush of passion, and the heavenly messenger’s reminder is tinted with anxiety: “take heed lest passion sway / Thy judgment to do aught, which else free will / Would not admit” (8.635-37). Readers, however, will be saddened by the scene following the angel’s ascent “up to heaven” when Adam returns “to his bower,” where he takes delight in sensual pleasure along with Eve and yields to passionate love (8.652, 653).

Milton’s readers can easily perceive the dramatic irony in Raphael’s admonition because they foresee Adam’s inevitable Fall only hundreds of lines away. Yet, Raphael’s instruction can be intended for Milton’s fallen readers. Milton, as Stanley Fish argues, mainly presents to readers two interpretive choices when assessing the first parents’ decision to taste the forbidden fruit, but I argue Milton aims at recreating the emotive education which the first parents fail to complete.²⁴ Milton’s readers, unlike the prelapsarian Adam, are beset by the recurring assault of passions due to their sinful nature, so they can reclaim the lost Eden through reliving the first temptation and embracing the highest form of emotion. So the question for readers to entertain is “What did I *not* do so I fall?” instead of “What did I do so I fall?” Milton offers the answer through Raphael: affection, rather than passion disguised as or mistaken for affection, “[l]eads up to heaven” (8.613). Adam has to choose to love and obey his Creator without the slightest coercion: “to stand or fall / Free in thine own arbitrament it lies” (9.640-41). Such love demonstrated by Adam is what Aquinas defines as *dilectio*, but Aquinas seems to believe it is beyond human grasp. Milton, however, instructs the readers through Raphael it is the key affection through which man earns his reunion with God.

The emotive subsystem represented by Adam and Eve has its first and fatal contact with the subsystem of satanic passion. Near-affection, synonymous with love for God, is replaced by passion in book 9 of *Paradise Lost*. The word love is used as a floating signifier by both Satan and the first parents for their

²⁴ Stanley Fish identifies the two choices as (1) working through the seeming contradiction between foreknowledge and freedom to choose and (2) excusing the first parents’ Fall (215-16).

turbulent passions for varied objects.²⁵ Tempting Eve to taste the forbidden fruit, Satan puts on the pretense of “zeal” and “love” (9.665). Love is the central affection in the poem as we discussed, and zeal is another crucial sentiment prized by Protestants. William Fenner in his widely circulated treatise on affection directly associates zeal with one’s burning love for God, urging the readers to “love him [God] zealously” and defines zeal as a type of affection since it stems directly from the heart and concentrates on the desired object: “When the heart affects a thing, and puts forth all its affections upon it, reserving no part of its affections for anything else” (120). Elsewhere in the treatise, Fenner warns the readers if they invest their zeal in earthly objects, they cultivate “inordinate affection” rather than authentic affection (173). Alec Ryrie’s study of Protestant psychology also points out zeal and fervor play a key role in the spiritual life of a Protestant (70-76). In Protestant tradition, zeal must be projected at the correct object, God or infinite goodness, and Milton also sides with such a stance when discussing zeal; zeal, for Milton, is “an ardent desire” to glorify the Creator and stands in sharp contrast to lukewarmness (*CD* 593; book 2, ch. 6). Satan, however, treats Eve and then the tree as the aim of his zeal, glorifying the former as “Goddess humane” adorned with “celestial beauty” and the latter as “Mother of Science” (9.732, 540, 680), and his pretend zeal is a blind passion to idolize and blaspheme. Another textual clue in the poem supports such a reading. Satan’s real purpose of his rhetoric, according to the narrator, is to stir up Eve’s passion as he is already “to passion moved” (9.667). Satan soon commences his most eloquent speech to justify the disobedient taste, and right before the “impassioned” speech he is depicted as an Aristotelian orator ready to move the sole audience member to high passion (9.670-78), yet such an Aristotelian oratorical strategy only serves to arouse passions instead of stimulating worthy affections since it targets an improper object.²⁶ With the tasted fruit in her hand, Eve then acts as another Aristotelian orator and persuades her superior partner to try the fruit as proof of his “exceeding love” (9.961). “Love” frequents this particular speech, occurring four times (9.961, 970, 975, 983); nevertheless, the love urged by Eve is a fallible passion only generating “[c]arnal desire” (9.1013).

It is tempting to infer that the fruit causes passions and desires in Adam and Eve, yet it is quite the contrary. Milton indeed applies “operation” to describe the effect of the forbidden taste, but “operation” should be considered semantically neutral, meaning the influence of the act.²⁷ So the forbidden fruit

²⁵ It is noteworthy that “love” occurs more frequently in book 9 than in other books.

²⁶ For rhetoric’s use in swaying emotions, see book 2, chapter 2 in Aristotle, *Rhetoric*.

²⁷ *Paradise Lost* 9.1012n. I agree with the editor on interpreting the word as “influence.”

does not give rise to passions in the first parents; instead, the first parents abandon their affection and yield to passion willingly right before the fatal taste. Raphael has asked the couple to beware of the sway of passion, implying passion, the “contagious fire” they share, springs from within rather than without (9.1036). The act of tasting symbolizes rather than causes the couple’s subversion of their original affective state.

Pedagogical System of Emotion

Milton concludes his emotive education for fallen readers by creating an open system of emotion, in which key components, affection and passion, exist in competition and dictate the subsystems of divine affection, angelic affection, satanic passion, and human emotion. The subsystems move in a concentric manner in the Miltonic universe, with the subsystem of divine affection functioning simultaneously as the suprasystem, enclosing and dominating angelic affection, human emotion, and satanic passion, and the relation between the suprasystem and the subsystems are determined by the gap between each of the subsystems and the perfect emotion, affection. An open system responds to input from the environment, and here the cosmos in the epic poem, including Night and Chaos, constitutes its interacting environment though it overlaps with the suprasystem of divinity since the cosmos can be figured as the flesh of God in the poem, showing its divine “material potency” (Rumrich 257n). What distinguishes the Miltonic system from the conventional system model is that the subsystems coexist in hierarchical relations and constitute a self-contained environment, which is only possible theologically.

Milton’s readers now follow Adam and Eve to pass the gate of Eden near the end of book 12. After the taste of the bitter consequences of yielding to the vehement passions of self-love, lust, envy, anger, and despair, Adam completes his emotive education with a more severe mentor, Michael, but clearly, his mind is cleansed of all those wild passions as he, “replete with joy and wonder” returns to Eve after learning to acquire a “paradise within” (12.468, 587). He recovers his joy through hope in future salvation of his offspring and listens to Eve’s dream “Well pleased” (12.625). Milton concludes his message to his readers with Adam and Eve’s examples: through passions angels and man fall, yet through love and regaining affection man shall be saved.

情感三階立：論米爾頓《失樂園》中之情感系統

摘要

基督教的上帝有情感嗎？基於何因上帝會選擇有情感？天使能感受情緒嗎？倘若能，凡人如何能忖度神聖超俗的情感 (divine emotions)？以上問題正是前現代時期聖經的讀者經常思考與爭辯的焦點，同個時期情感 (emotion) 亦是多本專著與簡冊探討的主題。由於前現代人士普遍視情感為負面知能，並以源自希臘語與拉丁語的另一字 *passion* 稱之，神聖超俗的情感與凡俗情感 (human passions) 的存在引起當時知識界長期辯論。米爾頓既自認為背負先知使命的詩人，亦加入這場辯論。事實上，作者認為米爾頓在《失樂園》中建構了一完整的情感系統，當中包含了三個子系統，各處於三重位階但又處於互相密切作用的關係，三個子系統分別代表由天界中上帝與天使體現的完美、全主動性的情感，以當時論述慣用的 *affection* 一字表示。第二為地獄中撒旦與惡魔所展現的激越情感 (*passion*)，充斥心神紊亂 (*disturbances*) 與全被動性。第三子系統則在地球凡界上由亞當與夏娃所演繹的情感衰變，由於墮落，其近超俗情感 (*near-affection*) 產生負面質變。米爾頓在天使與人類的墮落時刻，強化情感知覺之剖析，以其對情感的獨到見解，重新詮釋了基督教中最受關注的題材。借用一般系統理論，筆者認為米爾頓悖於當時主流論述，對於上帝、天使與亞當、夏娃的情感面向深入描繪，其詩中建構之多元情感可詮釋為米爾頓建立一開放式的情感體系的嘗試，當中各情感子系統密切互動以維繫整個系統之和諧運作。

關鍵字：情感 (emotion)、超凡情感 (affection)、激越情感 (*passion*)、米爾頓 (Milton)、《失樂園》 (*Paradise Lost*)、一般系統理論 (General System Theory)

