

# Adam's Language and Raphael's "Process of Speech"

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Thou, O Milton, art a State about to be created  
—Blake, Milton 32:26

Warum kann der lebendige Geist dem  
Geist nicht erscheinen  
Spricht die Seele, so spricht ach!  
Schon die Seele nicht mehr.  
—Schiller, "Sprache"

This paper is to consider what meaning *Paradise Lost* has to add to our understanding of poetic process and to our meditation on human essence as a linguistic being as well as a spiritual being. It tries to ponder the meaning of the "unfallen language," or the language of Adam, and what we have to think about the "fall" of language. It does not, therefore, claim to be an "interpretation" of the poem, although it does claim that we will arrive at a better appreciation of the poem by that means. In other words, *Paradise Lost* will rather serve as a pre-text to our meditation on human language and speech. With regard to poetic creation, it tries to ponder over the mimetic stance, which has recently been relegated to the Romantic legacy, if not that of Western metaphysics assertedly well deserving to be deconstructed. For, metapoetically, the lost paradise would stand for the moment before creation, which the poet's "answerable" language has to bring into presense. In this sense, the reading of *Paradise Lost* will serve as a starting point for our observations on the "original" language of Adam and its disruption.

## I

*Paradise Lost* has continually raised questions about the degree to which Milton is implicated in the action of the poem. Sometimes the moral dilemmas facing the characters in the poem have been regarded as reflecting those facing Milton himself.<sup>1)</sup> For this reason and many others, Milton's treatment of Satan has very often been the starting point with which Milton criticism untiringly begins. To be sure, we feel a certain disparity between the effect and the intention of the poem. Satan is too overwhelming a character—perhaps "the" source of modern understanding of the sublime and sublimation—to be undercut by such narrative intervention as "thus they relate, / Erring" (1, 746-7), and yet Milton's intention "to justify the way of God to man" is all too apparent. Thus readers of *Paradise Lost* have often assumed either too protective or too offensive a position. Somehow one feels that the reading of the poem needs to be an antidote to such distresses.

Perhaps the best comment on this perplexing aspect of the poem is to be found in Coleridge, who thinks that *Paradise Lost* is marked everywhere by the impress of Milton's personality.<sup>2)</sup> Thus it would be fair to say that Milton's ubiquity in the

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1) See, for instance, David J. Gordon, *Literary Art and the Unconscious* (Baton Rouge, 1976), pp. 90-122. He sees in Milton's treatment of Satan the moral dilemma of Milton himself who was characteristically individualistic and authoritarian at the same time. "Man is burdened by freedom in *Paradise Lost* (p. 94); "God repeatedly asserts man's complete freedom of choice, but such freedom makes man utterly responsible for his own badness" (pp. 93-4); Satan is a character "who is allowed to make the most effort, however doomed, to be autonomous, to live in defiance of Outside Authority, to struggle directly with his sense of guilt" (p. 94); and Milton's task in *Paradise Lost* is "to fortify the conscience that had to take on the guilt incurred in toppling the older idea." (p. 95) One may add to this convincing argument the fact that Christianity, basically, confronts the existing evil by internalizing it in man himself, thus creating the penitent culture, and that in this sense Christianity is distinguished from Hellenism's interpretation of evil in terms of contradiction between freedom and necessity, creating "tragedy". See Paul Ricoeur, *Symbolism of Evil* (New York, 1967), pt. 1, ch. 3.

2) "In *Paradise Lost*—indeed in every one of his poems—it is Milton himself whom you see; his Satan, his Adam, his Raphael, almost his Eve—are all John Milton; and it is a

poem makes Satan take Milton's part without knowing it, rather than *vice versa*. In book 4, for instance, when Satan first sees the human pair, he says:

Ah gentle pair, ye little think how nigh  
 Your change approaches, when all these delights  
 Will vanish and deliver ye to woe,  
 More woe, the more your taste is now of joy. (4, 366-9)

This passage reads like a momentary interference of the narrator (Milton), but one finds immediately in the next lines that it is a part of Satan's speech. Perhaps the absence of quotation marks in the text may partly contribute to such an effect. But even with quotation marks, this passage would remain problematic, for to find Satan cynical in this passage would only be a *post factum* justification, erasing the double-talk of Milton and exchanging poetic effects for intellectual cleanliness. In thus justifying the way of Milton to his readers, critics often describe Satan as a self-defacing, self-deconstructing character, as a parody of himself. We err in thus relating. Satan does not deface himself; he is simply crushed by Milton's club. The result is that it is always *Milton's* psychology that we read. When Empson is infuriated by Milton's God, the emphasis should be on Milton, not God. Thus the presence of the poet in the traditionally anonymous genre would be among the most important achievements of Milton in *Paradise Lost*, and in this sense Milton is preparing the way for the "egotistical sublime" of the Wordsworthian epic.

I will first consider the specific way in which Milton is implicated in the poem: the problem of poetic creation. The "confessional mode" of *Paradise Lost*, to be seen most prominently in his invocations, shows that writing poetry is equivalent to spiritual salvation. Listening to his Muse, Milton feels unabandoned. But, then, how does Milton say that he is "delivered," that the word appears to him? How does Milton say words are born? Considerations on the problem of language will

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sense of his intense egotism that gives me the greatest pleasure in reading Milton's works. The egotism of such a man is a revelation of spirit." *Miscellaneous Criticism*, ed. T. M. Raysor (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1936) p. 426.

immediately lead us to considering the meaning of the Fall. What is the Fall? What is the Fall of language, particularly, and what is the "unfallen" language? Without involving ourselves at this stage in the whole question of Biblical hermeneutics, we may say that the "unfallen" language is something inaccessible.<sup>3)</sup> It is only posited: we can talk *about* it, but not *in* it, since we are by definition fallen beings. But if the "unfallen" language is the place where our experience and words meet, will it not be still open to us through *anamnesis*, the Platonic anamnesis, which, according to Benjamin, truly belongs to Adam?<sup>4)</sup> Rather than trying to tell and retell what the "unfallen" language might be—or even the possibility of telling it—we had better try to describe what meaning *Paradise Lost* might have to add to our understanding of poetic process.

In *Paradise Lost*, especially in the invocations to Book 1, 3, 7, and 9, Milton emphasizes the emotional and spiritual situation in which he was composing the poem. As in any poem in the tradition of what Louis Martz called "the poetry of

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3) cf. M. Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York, 1970), p. 330: "when (man) tries to define his essence as a speaking subject, prior to any effectively unconstituted language, all he ever finds is the previously unfolded possibility of language, and not the stumbling sound, the first word upon the basis of which all language and even language itself became possible. It is always against a background of the already begun that man is able to reflect on what may serve for him as origin... Origin for man is much more the way in which man in general, any man, articulates himself upon the already begun... of language." Whereas Foucault is engaged in what he calls the "archeology" of knowledge, what I will call the *Ursprache*, for lack of other expression, is not an object of archeological discovery. It is an heuristic or even operational term needed to think about the relation between thinking and speaking.

4) Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne (London: NLB, 1977), p. 36-7: "It is the task of the philosopher to restore, by representation, the primacy of the symbolic character of the word... Since philosophy may not presume to speak in the tones of revelation, this can only be achieved by recalling in memory the primordial form of perception. Platonic anamnesis is perhaps not far removed from this kind of remembering... in philosophical contemplation, the idea is released from the heart of reality as the word, reclaiming its name-giving rights. Ultimately, however, this is not the attitude of Plato, but the attitude of Adam, the father of human race and the father of philosophy."

meditation," the question of writing and inspiration signifies that of the poet's spiritual salvation as well. The autobiographical invocations dramatize the struggle to reconcile the vastness of the poet's aspiration to his condition as a fallen man—as is continuously evoked by reference to "rising," "soaring," and "falling," which every reader of the poem has recognized as a dominant motif in the poem. Through the omniscient voice of the "soaring" poet, we hear the voice of the limited, fallible, mortal man. Or rather the two voices are establishing a dialogue. Having posed a theme that ranges from eternity through human time to eternity, Milton admits of his fear of being "in wandering mazes lost." Like the blind protagonist of his Sophoclean drama "in double darkness bound," isolation and suffering are the authenticating token of the poet as the inheritor of the Original Sin. We may even say that the poet's preoccupation with himself and with poetic creation suggests the figure of the poet as *the* hero of the poem, well in accord with our sense of his ubiquity and egotism throughout the poem.

The figure of the poet repeatedly comes to our mind throughout the poem. Nowhere else in the poem is the existential meaning of writing poetry more clearly shown than in the scene where, right in the middle of the poem, the poet "stands" before the unfinished poem. In the invocation to Book 7, contemplating what remains yet unsung, standing between the world he has created and the world yet to be created, Milton pauses in the fear that he "falls / Erroneous there to wander and forlorn." (7, 20) But Milton is not the only threshold figure; so does Michael pause in the middle of his discourse:

As one who in his journey bates at noon  
Though bent on speed, so here the Arch-Angel paus'd  
Betwixt the world destroyed and the world restored,  
If Adam aught might interpose;  
Then with transition sweet new Speech resumes. (12, 1-5)

These lines provide an analogy between the experiential and narrative between-ness; there one looks back to the past and forward to the unknown future. We also

remember that it is the same pause that Adam and Eve make at the end of the poem where they look back toward paradise—"so late thir happy seat" conveys the vividness of their memory of the lost world—and face the *terra incognita* outside paradise lying before them. Satan, too, makes the same pause when in his journey from Hell he faces Chaos, the vast vacuity lying before him:

Into the wild Abyss the wary fiend  
Stood on the brink of Hell and look'd awhile,  
Pondering his voyage (2, 917-9)

In all these instances we feel a sense of anxiety—the anxiety that characterizes Milton as a poet of "threshold" experience, of actions almost but not yet done, with which such words as "stand" and "wait" always ring—less so in Adam and Eve than in Satan, for consolation is in them, and evidently least in Michael, for his "anxiety," if so can it be called, is but a caring sigh. Perhaps Milton's would be somewhere between Adam and Eve's and Satan's. The poem achieves its "interiority" mainly through verbal reverberations, but it also does so through such juxtaposition of images in our mind.

Milton is making the journey of writing as well as of life. The simile of a journey for epic narration is clearly seen in the invocation to light in Book 3, following the preceding Odyssey through the darkness of Hell. The juxtaposition of Satan and Milton in hailing Holy Light is as if to say that Milton is relieved from the heavy burden of exploring the dark underworld, which is also our mind, and that he finally comes to see in the bright light "the image of God." Though blind and cut off from seeing the glorious works of God, the poet in the darkness says, he makes his pilgrimage to paradise with the guide of the spirit and the inner eye. "Paradise" here has the double meaning of the deepest part of the human soul (he explored into it, piercing through the stony heart which is Books 1 and 2) and the bright world of visibility the blind poet can only see through remembrance (as a revocation of earthly images, Milton's is a journey of remembrance).

"Unpremeditated Verses" (9, 24) though Milton says the poem is, the existential

and narrative "between-ness" thus reveals that the poet is caught between words, waiting for the appearance of subsequent words. Just as human life is a "wandering" and a waiting for the appearance of the Word, so is poetic articulation a waiting for the appearance of the true words. Just as, until the Second Coming of the Word, human life is a wayfaring in the still unfinished speech of the Divine Allegory, so, for the poet, poetic articulation is a waiting for the return of the dead in the form of the words. Yet, all the more because language is fallen and inadequate, this purgatorial waiting means a human effort to prepare the way to salvation. Hence follow the metaphors of "paradise" for thoughts once present but now buried, of human life for writing, and the City of God or the "enclosed garden" for the poetic enclosure in which alone is the spiritual salvation for the Christian poet.

In so saying we are following the mimetic theory of art that "thoughts" precede "words" and "words" imitate "thoughts." Where is the source of human words? When Milton says in the invocations to Book 7 and 9 that his muse nightly visits him "unimplored," it seems that poetic creation is a listening to the dictation, or even the recitation, of his Heavenly Muse. This is a common enough trope, whose meaning, however, remains unsolved as yet. If Milton's Heavenly Muse resides in him, just as the true Paradise is in him and not outside, then the Muse is a metaphor for the "ur-text"—already "written," Derrida says—and Milton's listening to his muse is his "reading" of that "ur-text." Milton's mimetic gesture, then, may be understood as arising from the difficulty of translating the ur-text into human language.<sup>5)</sup> After all, invocation is calling in something that is not here.

There is an old Hebrew legend that two thousand years before God created

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5) Cf. J. Derrida, "Freud and the Scene of Writing," in *Writing and Difference* (Chicago, 1978), pp. 196–231. For Derrida, the Freudian concept of repression becomes an implicit resistance of a text to the mediation of writing. Hence "writing is unthinkable without repression." (p. 226) Since his primary argument is that without "writing", without the supplement of "writing", perception does not even appear to itself, the gap between the Ur-text belonging to the unconscious and its conscious "transcription" is less meaningful to Derrida than the already reproduced nature of the (unconscious) text.

heaven and earth he created a Voice that cries "Return!"<sup>6)</sup> As the voice that cries "Return!" antedates calling all creation into being, so maybe Platonic idea precedes reality, and thought words. Hebbel even refers to God's inability to conduct a monologue. It may be in this context that Milton makes God recede from the scene of creation, and the creation is performed by the Son through speech.<sup>(7, 163-73)</sup> Precedence of the idea to the word is described in terms of father-son hierarchy, although the Father needs the Son, and the Son is the word absolutely adequate to the idea.

Perhaps one way of reading *Paradise Lost* would be to read it as a poem about the loss, or the inevitable alteration of voice, in human language that takes place in what Raphael calls "process of speech":

Immediate are the acts of God, more swift  
Than time or motion, but to human ears  
Cannot without process of speech be told,  
So told as earthly notion can receive, (7, 176-9)

The "process of speech" constitutes a space between words where names are used searchingly and the Fall is constantly reactivated. It is a bridge, a passage, the syntactic gap, a jointure where thoughts run away. A temporal space intrudes (between desire and its accomplishment) which turns "immediate acts of God" into discontinuous acts of speaking. The process of speech thus supplements, even in the Garden of Eden, the full prelapsarian voice. Whether we conceive of the Fall as a real event that has befallen man in history or as an interpretation of some human

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6) Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia, 1937), vol. 1, p. 3: "In the beginning, two thousand years before the heaven and the earth, seven things were created: The Torah written with black fire on white fire, and lying in the lap of God; the Divine Throne, erected in the heaven which later was over the heads of the Hayyot; Paradise on the right side of God, Hell on the left side; the Celestial Sanctuary directly in front of God, having a jewel on its alter graven with the Name of the Messiah; and a Voice that cries aloud, "Return, ye children of men." cf. Leslie Brisman, *Romantic Origins* (Ithaca, 1978), p. 404, n. 13.



experience on the way to verbalization, the intensity of human wishes for the place where words and experience meet would remain the same. If we choose to regard it as already an interpretation, "paradise" will the more have some dream-like quality, as we will see later: awakened from the dream in which man spoke an uninterrupted "speech of the self," man speaks the "language of the other." Perhaps this will be one of the aspects shared by all "sentimental" poetry including *Paradise Lost*. It posits an original unity of thoughts and words—always with the risk of its false hypostatization. But the idea of the original unity lies at a place of inevitable loss. The posited original unity of thoughts and words is also the site of a fleeting articulation which the awakening discourse has obscured and finally lost. In this context, I will try to see what meaning *Paradise Lost* has to add to our meditation on human language and speech.

## II

We will first see the "process of speech" in terms of accommodation. Creation in *Paradise Lost* is creation by analogy and shadow, a movement from the invisible to the visible similitude. God, the unimaged maker of images, creates in his own image through the agency of the Son, who is "the Divine Similitude." (3, 384) In him "all his Father shone / Substantially express'd." (3, 139-40) Adam is created in God's image, and the earth and all its creatures are visible signs of God, in contemplation of which "by steps we may ascend to God." (5, 211-2) God is "to us invisible or dimly seen / in these...lowliest works." (5, 157-8) And we are taught by Michael that before the literal making of Godhead visible in the incarnation, history itself is a sequence of visible "types" of the truth to come: in the shadowy types of reality the truth is dimly seen (12, 232-5, 303). God, then, creates in visible images that are in some sense the "shadows" of his light; he sends his "overshadowing" spirit with Christ (7, 165) as he goes to create the world—"overshadowing" in both the Platonic sense and in Christian typology, for typology, with all the cautions of Madsen to distinguish it from Platonism,<sup>7)</sup> can still be understood as the classical

theory of accommodation converted into temporal dimension.

The "overshadowing" spirit is the same one that Milton implores to guide his own creation. In Book 1, Milton invokes his heavenly muse as the spirit who "from the first / Was present, and with mighty wings outspread / Dove-like satst brooding on the vast abyss / And Mad'st it pregnant." (1, 19-22) But the analogy between God's creation and Milton's own depends not only on the identity of the spirit presiding over both, but also on the way in which Milton creates in imitation of God: creation by similitude. Creation is the model for the process that the poet follows as he attempts to speak of "things invisible to mortal sight." (3, 55) Milton "accommodates" words for the otherwise inexpressible. It is also the same task that Raphael, the "divine interpreter" (7, 72), faces in attempting to relate the War in Heaven to Adam: "Sad task and hard," says Raphael, "for how shall I relate / To human sense th' invisible exploits?"

I shall delineate so

By likening spiritual to corporeal forms,

As may express them best. (5, 572-4)

Creation—God's, Raphael's, and Milton's—is then an incarnating descent into analogy, with the recognition that the analogous forms are mere shadows that cannot fully express the light, but are the only means to make it visible. Thus we find a peculiar attitude toward the visible signs, whether of man or of nature: all visible signs are devalued as such. They are of no importance in themselves; they point to something else. And yet, on the ground that they point to something else, they are saved.

Such an attitude toward images and words alike as shadows and similitudes will be at the heart of iconoclasm and "exodus." Images, being not real, have to be destroyed: words, being incomplete in themselves, have to be crossed out and replaced with other words of exegesis. This theme of escape from written words to

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7) William Madsen, *From Shadowy Types to Truth* (New Haven, 1968)

yet other words, from commentary to yet another commentary—corresponding to the "exodus" theme of the Jewish view of history—has brought in the proliferation of words that Foucault mentions in *The Order of Things*.

Will, then, our ideas not be reconstituted in words? Although the "killing letter" and the "enlivening spirit" are to be regarded as characterizing Christian thought in general, the ultimate meaning of *Paradise Lost*, even when looked upon as a poem about the loss of the original speech, is not simply to tell us about the human plight after Babel, in which words can only beget words and the expression of some preceding thoughts can only be an endless itinerary of approximation and accommodation.

The meaning of "paradise" is how we can keep the place where words and experience meet, no matter how the original thought relinquishes something on its way to language, i.e. when it "falls" into language. This is a view that regards the Fall as innate to the use of language, one that requires a reconsideration of the whole Adamic myth. Consider, for instance, the scene of Adam's naming. Here Adam's words simply participate in the "givenness" of ideas. When we talk about the primordial language (*Ursprache*) it is not any language that can be the object of philological archeology. It rather means "the primordial mode of apprehending words" (*ursprüngliche Vernehmen der Worte*),<sup>8)</sup> which is achieved by recalling in memory, by Platonic anamnesis that Benjamin defines as the attitude of Adam. This is what we may call revelation, or in Heideggerian expression, the original appearance of words in the openness of the light. Adam, then, "spoke" in Heideggerian sense, i.e. Language spoke in him: he did not have to "signify" but simply "say" what is revealed to him, what "spoke" to him.

Christianity is a "logocentric" world-view. Adam's naming of animals, the disruption of language after the Fall, the story of Babel—all these refer to the centrality of language in human spirituality. Most important of all, Creation is the Divine Utterance, and the Nativity is the Incarnation of the Word. To be sure, Christian myth, depending as it does on the idea of logos, is a profound teaching

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8) Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, p. 36.

on the power of breath, utterance, and language. Perhaps the reason why in *Genesis* of all creatures on earth only man is created by God's breath is that God wanted to give man the power of speech.

But any analogy of the Divine Word and human language is itself a mysterious paradox. The frequently asserted identity between the mental and linguistic beings of man constitutes a deep and incomprehensible paradox, the expression of which is the word *logos*. In the beginning, was the *logos*; but certainly not *lexis*. *Lexis*, as Aristotle says, is merely what makes *logos* appear as such and such. We will have to question whether the view that the mental essence of man consists precisely in his language is "the great abyss into which philosophy of language threatens to fall," and whether it is its task "to survive suspended precisely over that abyss."<sup>9)</sup>

It has been traditional in the Christian world that thought is regarded as "unuttered speech." Thus there are, anterior to uttered words, the intellect-word, the heart-word, and the memory-word.<sup>10)</sup> But then the whole question goes back to the identity of the mental and the linguistic beings of man. The distinction between thought and speech becomes the phenomenal distinction between the interior and the exterior. Just as, when the universe was uttered, i.e. created, the transcendental divinity became polarized into the duality of appearance and intelligence, so, when a word is spoken, the original unity of the inner word—what I am calling the *Ursprache*—is polarized into the duality of the outer and the inner, sound and meaning. *Ursprache* would be something else than a mute speech, although we simply do not have language to describe what it would be like. But, as I said, *Paradise Lost* may give us clues to thinking about this *Ursprache*.

The poet is one who subsists, like Samson, by breaking "the seal of silence," and pays for that. It is because the mental being of man will be translated into the linguistic dimension only with the pain of tearing apart. We remember Heidegger's reading of the "pain of tearing apart (*Zerrissen*)" in the poet's *Grundriss*, the first

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9) For this view, see Walter Benjamin, "On Language as Such and on the Language of Man", in *Reflections*, trans. Peter Demetz (New York, 1978), pp. 314-332.

10) Bernard J. Lonergan, S.J., *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas* (Notre Dame, 1967), ch. 1.

outburst of words.<sup>11)</sup> But in a poem like *Paradise Lost* that deals with the "original", "unfallen" language of Adam, will the gestures of the pain of speaking be nullified by reference to *lingua adamica*, the perfect mediation that feels like unmediation? Is the inadequacy of human language due to the Fall and the ensuing disruption of language, or is it the innate nature of language?

Milton's original language is an infinitely expressive medium. Muteness comes only after the Fall. Although unmediated communication is reserved for the angels and not for man, although Raphael admits of the difficulty of delivering heavenly meaning in human language, this does not mean the fallenness of human language but rather refers to the innate limitation of human understanding, whether discursive or intuitive (cf. 5, 188). Adam's language and understanding falter when faced with God. But to the extent of human understanding he knows all with "sudden apprehension" and names what he sees.

Muteness is the first experience of man after the Fall: "Silent and in face / Confounded long they sate, as struck'n mute." (9, 1063-4) In Book 10, Adam laments the loss of his previous voice:

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11) cf. Heidegger on the line "Schmerz versteinerte die Schwelle (Pain has turned the threshold to stone)" by G. Trakl: "But what is pain? Pain rends. It is the rift. But it does not tear apart into dispersive fragments. Pain indeed tears asunder, it separates, yet so that at the same time it draws everything to itself, gathers it to itself. Its rending...is at the same time that drawing which, like the pendrawing of a plan or sketch, draws and joins together what is held apart in separation. Pain is the joining agent in the rending that divides and gathers. Pain is the joining of the rift. The joining is the threshold. It settles the between, the middle of the two that are separated in it. Pain joins the rift of the difference. Pain is the difference itself." *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York, 1971), p. 204. Coleridge said the same thing about his love of Sara: "Words—what are they but a subtle *matter*? and the meanness of Matter must they have, and the Soul must pine in them, even as the Lover who can press kisses only on the garment of one indeed beloved... it is still at once the Link and the Wall of Separation." *The Notebook of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, in 3 vols., ed. Kathleen Coburn (Princeton, 1957-1973), II, 2998. To be abbreviated hereafter as CN.

O Woods, O Fountains, Hillocks, Dales, and Bow'rs,  
 With other echo late I taught your Shades  
 To answer, and resound far other song. (10, 860-2)

Retrospecting his prelapsarian state, Adam is saying that the voice he hears echoed in the valley is different from the voice that once came through his mouth—when he names nature's creatures, for instance. This lamentation comes, of course, after eating from the Forbidden Tree. The echo as the repetition of fallen Adam's language is reminding him of his unfallen state. Therefore it is also the echo of Adam's unfallen language as if the echo of the fallen language carried in it the ghost of the unfallen language, as if the unfallen language were echoed much later and came to Adam's ear after the Fall in an altered voice, witnessing his Fallenness. What do we get when we juxtapose the temporal lag between voice and its resounding echo *and* the difference between Adam's language before and after the Fall? It is here that we see Milton's poetics, germane to all mimetic gesture, that would finally be related to the whole questions about retention and protention which Husserl said are the origin of our time-consciousness. If we are justified in so juxtaposing, then the Fall of language may refer to the ineluctable gap between the unheard voice and the phenomenal voice as its echo. If poetic inspiration is to be likened to "hearing" a voice—the Muse dictates a poem and Milton hears it—then the Fall would be something that takes place between hearing and its verbalization, on the way of the *Ursprache* to human language, of the language of the self to the language of the other.

What lyric Milton laments is of this kind. The "uncouth swain" of *Lycidas* says: "That strain I heard was of a higher mood, / But now my Oat proceeds." The inspired, "daemonic" voice is contrasted with the present "my" voice, muffled and mute. After all, the pastoral voice is a lower strain. Again he says: "Return, Alpheus... Return, Scilian muse..." The invocation of the previous voice is also a dirge of its loss. Indeed, writing poetry is associated in this poem with the plucking of berries and shattering of leaves: poetic creation is an "untimely" termination. Milton locates his text precisely within the space of the poet's "uncouthness", the

space of his "loss", his rudeness and estrangedness. It is at this liminal site, this "space" between the word as presence and the word as hollow signifier, that the sad music of lyricism occurs. The uncouth swain openly grieves over the loss of Lycidas, over the "uncouthness" or estrangedness of his verse from the drowned Lycidas. (The question is what, and not who, is Lycidas?) This very process of mourning, this ritual of sacrifice that he performs when he plucks the crude berries and shatters the leaves, constitutes the moment of poetic utterance, a moment that is founded upon death, breakage, loss.<sup>12)</sup> In pastoral elegy, invocation, which is a preparing of a place on which to put sorrows, is also an elegy mourning for the loss of the previous voice.

The sequential poems of "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" may also be viewed in this light. "L'Allegro" images the accumulation of what is going on before the poet, or the succession of "presencing." The poet indulges in the feast of beholding. But the poem ends with the allusion to the Orpheus myth, with the image of "half-gained Eurydice" that even the music of Orpheus could not bring into life. The poet, like Orpheus, is on the verge of regaining Eurydice from the underworld, but falls silent at the inability to actualize the vision. "L'Allegro," then, has to be followed by "Il Penseroso," a poem that purges the "paradise" of visual experience so as to replace it with the "inner paradise", the spiritual noesis, the "melancholy."<sup>13)</sup>

This, I think, is what may be called the sentimentalism of pastoral poetics. If the mortal taste of the fruit of the Forbidden Tree brought "death," and if the Fall introduced the pain of irrevocability, the awareness of the unbridgeable gap between the past and the present, then we may say that the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil—the tree of "knowing Good by means of Evil", as Milton says in *Areopagitica*—is the tree of the knowledge of "presence" by means of its "absence" and loss. To be is to be good, according to Coleridge.<sup>14)</sup> And to be good is to have

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12) Herman Rappaport, *Milton and the Post Modern* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), ch. 2, "The Uncouth Swain."

13) Leslie Brisman makes good suggestions on this point. See his *Milton's Poetry of Choice and Its Romantic Heirs* (Ithaca, 1973), ch. 1, "A Better Way".

14) *CN*, II, 2744. "...if (the Devil) were all evil, he would be nothing at all, which is a

arrived at and stay in presence. The tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, then, is the tree of language. And if the difference between the pastness of the past and presentness of the present generates time—the play of "trace" according to Derrida—then the interiority of the human soul—the awareness of irrevocability, temporality, and self-consciousness—is gained with the loss of the presentness eternal. Fallen man, like Satan in paradise, will be constantly interrupted by the sense of alteration and alienation. Comparing past and present, the banished man says the celebrated phrase of pastoralists: "I, too, was in Arcadia." Precisely the same may be said about the way man accommodates words for thoughts that "prevent" words in the Miltonic double sense. The "arcadia" of experience is at once reminisced and gently relinquished, when the poet is faced with words. That is why poetry of this order shimmers with the aura of the "arcadia" in which the poet once participated.

I do not think that this is because our language is "fallen"; it pertains rather to the process of verbalizing the *Ursprache*. In remembering, for an analogy, and most notably in recounting dreams, it is as if we were playing hide-and-seek with the "original" thought: when we have caught it, it is no longer in the original form. We know that it is not what we have dreamt. Somewhere in the speech, between words, there falls the "Fall". For me, *Paradise Lost* is an interpretation related to this kind of experience: the impalpability and irrevocability of some primordial forms of thought, yet the equally strong awareness of their presence in us, "forever losing its nature in fruition, as the Coral is said to blush in full beauty the moment it lifts itself above the Waters".<sup>15)</sup> Language metamorphoses Daphne (the object of desire, i.e. "paradise", i.e. *Ursprache*) into Laurel, since we have no language for Daphne. This is the meaning of the ironic lines of Marvell: "Apollo hunted so / Only that she might Laurl grow."<sup>16)</sup>

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contradiction in terms... But if we believe his Existence... if, I say, the Devil exists, he must have some good Qualities..."

15) *Marginalia*, ed. George Whalley (Princeton, 1980), p. 575.

16) Of my use of the term "language of the self" and "language of the other": basically it may be related to Lacan's use of the "Imaginary" and the "Symbolic", the self that he



Then the myth of the Adamic language will have to be regarded as a myth in which the experience of this kind gave itself form. This involves the whole question of how to interpret the Adamic myth of the primordial unfallen state and the original Fall.

According to Paul Ricoeur, the idea of the Fall as event represents the break in the two ontologically irreconcilable regimes of Good and Evil, of the evil nature of man and history and the *a priori* goodness of God's creation. The Fall has to be postulated to dissociate the historical starting point of evil from the starting point of creation. One is evil and the other is good. Adamic myth, therefore, is already a hermeneutic of primordial symbols in which the prior consciousness of sinfulness (i.e. man's accusation of himself to save the innate goodness of creation) gave itself form.<sup>17)</sup>

I would think the same about the original unfallen language. It is already a myth to which the experience of "aphasia", so to speak, is related. The nakedness of the innocent pair and the shame that follows the Fall express the human mutation of all communication marked by concealment. There is the sense of "veiling" in the "overshadowing," as if *phainein* itself were to wear a garment. Language is the "outness" of thought according to the emanationist theory. Milton's opinion on logic and rhetoric, that clear thought is seen in clear logic and directness of expression, would belong to this tradition. But the concept of "outness" is too close to that of "dress": language is the "dress of thought," and dress was the first symptom of the fall of man: "die erste Kleidung des Menschen war eine Rhapsodie von Feigenblättern."<sup>18)</sup>

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calls "moi" and "je." But I imply little of psychoanalytic meaning. The distinction here is between the mental being of man and the linguistic being of man. Such a distinction may be made, to a certain degree, independently from the psychoanalytic distinction of the unconscious/conscious. This is suggested in Irving Massey's *The Gaping Pig: Literature and Metamorphosis* (Berkeley, 1976). Perhaps my meaning could be better delivered by pointing out that his "public language" is meant by the "fallen language" in my reading of *Paradise Lost*, his "private language" by the "Ursprache", and his "metamorphosis" by the "Fall".

17) Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, pt. 2, ch. 3.

Coleridge was keenly aware of the sense of dress in *Paradise Lost*:

Dress natural to man—attempts of Milton even in Paradise to clothe the naked—Eve in the Rose bushes—and above all the divine Dress of Raphael.<sup>19)</sup>

And he also says:

Dress is the symbol of the Fall, but the mark of intellect; and the metaphysics of dress are, the hiding what is not symbolic and displaying by discrimination what is,<sup>20)</sup>

The act of hiding, rather than what is being hidden, symbolizes human fallenness. Adam and Eve after the Fall hid themselves behind the trees. And the tree by whose leaves they covered their generative parts is, as the Jewish legend has it,<sup>21)</sup> the tree that opened their eyes to *sapience*. If the Tree of Knowledge is to be conceived as a synecdoche for the world of nature to which the "fallen" imagination is bound—like Jesus' tree of Crucifixion, said to be of the same wood, thus converting the Tree of Knowledge into the Tree of Life<sup>22)</sup>—then isn't the tree itself

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18) Johann Georg Hamann, *Aesthetica in Nuce* (Stuttgart, 1968), p. 85.

19) *CN*, III, 3543. cf. *CN*, III, 4495.

20) J. A. Wittreich, Jr. (ed.), *The Romantics on Milton* (Cleveland, 1970), p. 245.

21) *The Legend of the Jews*, p. 75, shows an interesting addition to *Genesis*: "Adam tried to gather leaves from the trees to cover part of their bodies, but he heard one tree after the other say: 'There is the thief that deceived the Creator... Hence and take no leaves from me!' Only the fig-tree granted him permission to take of its leaves. That was because the fig was the forbidden fruit itself." So in this legend the two outcasts commiserate each other; somehow the Jews identified themselves with the forbidden tree, the Tree of Knowledge.

22) The tree that brought about man's Fall is also the source of his redemption, the Tree of the Cross. Roger Cook, in his *The Tree of Life* (New York, 1974), gives an illustration, among others, of Giovanni de Modena's "The Mystery of the Fall and Redemption of Man." (p. 121, illust. 76) Of course, Blake is full of examples of such transformations of the Tree of Knowledge, the Tree of Life, the Tree of Mystery, and the Tree of the Crucifixion.

a metaphor for language that "covers" man from the nakedness of immediacy? Language, the Tree of Knowledge, dress—of these there has to be made a triple equation. Pope says:

Words are like Leaves: and where they most abound,  
Much Fruit of Sense beneath is rarely found.<sup>23)</sup>

Very often in literary use of language *leaves* are the fruit. But the couplet suggests that language is a veil, an opacity, and by drawing the veil of language we can behold the fairest fruit of sense blushing! Can we "uncover"(unveil) the dress of language, and "recover" our nakedness? Language is not commanded for the impossible revocation of the original state; it rather intends the creation of some fictional original state. All arguments on natural language—especially abundant in regard to pastoral poetry, since it is the most self-conscious genre—are doomed to fall back on themselves. And every poetic language that assumes "innocence," that tries to cross or simply erase the barriers set up by consciousness between it and the state it would be united with, is itself another disguise of "experience." The extreme irony of Andrew Marvell or Blake in *Songs of Innocence* comes to mind here, and in a slightly different way, the Wordsworth-Coleridge debates on poetic diction and natural language. The language of Innocence attempts to recover the original unfallen state, but, on close observation, it can only "re-cover" the Experience. "Hee coverd, but his Robe / Uncover'd more"(9, 1058-9), says Milton about the fallen Adam. The reverse is also true: by uncovering we cover more. Perhaps man depends on covering and hiding behind the leaves, or taking a rest in the shadow of the trees, as Milton perfectly knew when he related the Tree of Knowledge with the Indian Banyan tree, that proliferating tree of which even the twigs take root:

There oft the Indian Herdsman shunning heat

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23) "An Essay on Criticism," 11. 309-10.

Shelters in cool, and tends his pasturing herds  
At Loopholes cut through thickest shade. (9, 1108-10)

Babel would mean such a proliferation of the tree of language.

The concept of the primordial unfallen language is, then, itself an interpretation of the experience of loss and absence inherent in the use of the untransparent language—itself a supreme fiction, an expression of human poesis. God planted many trees and one big metaphor in the Garden of Eden: human poesy. Or more precisely, two metaphors so close to each other—a metaphor of the eternal presentness, the Tree of Life, and a metaphor of metaphor-making, the Tree of Knowledge. These two Trees, so near and parallel to each other, are there to let man know "the jagged line of demarcation between *physis* and meaning"<sup>24)</sup>—a line, too, that tears apart and joins presence and absence, sense and non-sense. They are there to signify metaphor itself; to signify the "Fall", to signify man's banishment from Eden which is man's eternal home, to signify homelessness, the metaphoric expropriation from which alone "meaning" is born. What is at the heart of the Garden of Eden is one big tree of metaphor, the "supreme fiction", the "original genius." This tree God planted in the heart of man from the beginning, not after the Fall. "It is not so much that metaphor is in...the text, but rather these texts are in metaphor."<sup>25)</sup>

To point out the fictionality of this original fiction, however, is not to point out emptiness at the heart of the *Genesis* myth. On the contrary, it has to be the beginning of our appreciation of human poesy, or to use Coleridgean expression *hypopoiesis*.<sup>26)</sup> For, to say that the original state is lost is also to say something

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24) Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, p. 166. I restored the word *physis* used by Benjamin instead of the translator's "physical nature". Of "one big metaphor" planted in the Garden of Eden, cf. Brisman on Blake in *Romantic Origins*, p. 269.

25) Derrida, "The White Mythology," *NLH*, 6:1 (1974), p. 60.

26) cf. *CN*, III, 3587: "Hypothesis: the placing of one known fact under others as their *ground* or foundation. Not the fact itself but only its position in a certain relation is imagined. Where both the position and the fact are imagined, it is *Hypopoiesis* not *Hypothesis*, subfiction not supposition... Query therefore/whether the assumption of a

about it, and that's how the *Genesis* myth gives man and history their truth and depth. Although it posits the unfallen state and unfallen language only in order to cancel it immediately, although the unfallen language is something like the Kantian noumenon—thought of to the extent that it is posited, but not to be known—it nevertheless obtains truth. It makes fallen words contingent to unfallen thoughts, letter to spirit, and word to *Urwort*. It makes words the communicable part of the mental being of man, but thereby liberates the mental being of man from his linguistic essence. This regards language as limited, but it has nothing to do with looking upon writing with a "sad, nostalgic, guilty, Rousseauist" eye, as it is sometimes accused of doing by Derrideans. It simply wishes to acknowledge that "thought" is something more than "words".

This is no agnosticism. It is rather characterized by its intentional, teleological nature. The promise of millennium and the "inner paradise" does not tell us that language is so helplessly fallen that thought is unattainable or that words can at best point to other words. Language is fallen; but if, as Blake said, there is a limit to the "contraction"(=fall) of the Giant Albion, a limit that he significantly calls "Adam",<sup>27)</sup> we may be in possession of some inconceivable bond between our soul and our cold lips. "Unconsciously possess, so that consciously we miss it," to quote Coleridge freely.<sup>28)</sup> Blake's belief in the "limit of contraction" may be found in Coleridge when he talks about the "pre-existent Ghosts of feeling" and Idea as

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Deity as the Cause of the Universe by those who *deduce* the idea of God from the Universe, and deny that it is a fact of itself, *res posita*, *sive datum per se* (a thing laid down, whether or not given of itself), ever deserve the name of an *Hypothesis*. For what is the *res posita quae hic subponitur* (the thing posited, which is thus supposed)? *mens humana*."

27) *Milton*, 13: 20–21.

28) *CN*, III, 4438: "Ideas as anticipations are intellectual Instincts—the Future is their Object, even as Sound to Ear—the Distant is necessary to give the Direction, the Missing, the Desiderium, the Impulse,—Cause contains effect—and the effect must be *eiusdem generis*—yet the Cause goes before in order and in time/when we understand this, we shall understand the intellectual and moral Instincts as they must in part possess...i.e. they must possess unconsciously, and consciously miss (*pothein*)—The former, the *materia*—the feeling—the latter the form, the *Idea*./"

Hope:

[Our soul] feels for ever as a blind man with his protended Staff dimly thro'  
the medium of the instrument by which it pushes off....<sup>29)</sup>

Perhaps language is the blind man's staff, which is no longer a tool but an extension of the sense of touch. With such sensitive tentacles, we, the blind man, go forward with a feeling of being thrust into a more tenuous element in which there are no other supports. We go forward holding on to ourselves in suspension, by our own effort, within the dim horizon reflected in the blank eye. At the slightest hesitation on our part, all the world might collapse, and we with it. But the blind man, like some heliotropic creature, will probably grope his way. The idea of *nunc stans*, exactly what the Romantics called by the name of eternity, is a way of thinking that somewhere, right here, there might be a place where we speak the language of ourselves—an acknowledgement that poetic creation is not an empty exertion. Doesn't God, too, appear among the trees, waiting and calling Adam to come—the trees that symbolize, as I said, the opacity of language? Hence *mimesis* is again affirmed, with its arche and telos, or in Coleridge's terms, feelings that haunt us and the hope of their expression to be beheld as Idea.

### III

I have said that my concern in reading *Paradise Lost* is to consider the meaning it might add to our meditation on human language, that, seen from this point of view, *Paradise Lost* is a poem about the loss of *Ursprache* in the "process of speech," and that "paradise" has some dream-like quality man tries to recollect. We will see more about this through the experience of Adam. We will also see how, despite the flattened literalism of Milton defying any allegorization of the poem,

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29) *CN*, II, 3215.

*Paradise Lost* retains dream-like quality in several vital scenes.

There are a few memorable moments of dreaming / waking in *Paradise Lost*. The inaugural moment of human consciousness in the creation of Adam is described as a waking from sleep: "as new wak'd from soundest sleep / Soft on the flow'ry herb I found me laid." (8, 253-4) The sense of selfhood and the interiority of the human soul are to be found from the moment of his creation. Sight moves instinctively to voice, and he names what he sees. But what immerses this scene—indeed, the whole poem—in an overall mood of longing is his sense of the loneliness and separateness of human existence. "Blissful solitude" pertains more to the *penseroso* than the *allegro*. Yet nothing is more ennobling than a certain weakness, an imperfection through which infinity wounds the finite being. Adam does not lack this kind of weakness. Through his quest to know his origin as well as his wish for a fellow creature to partake of his life, Adam shows that he was given that sacred weakness he later calls "unity defective" (8, 425). "Tell me," he asks Nature, "how came I thus, how here? / Not of myself; by some great Maker then, / Tell me, how may I know him, how adore..." (277-80) But Nature is mute, and the muteness of nature enhances the first man's privateness and separateness. Even though nature is a sign of the divine presence, even though Adam understands nature's language, man and nature are each other's witness to their inability to utter the "ultimate signified." His quest is of a kind that has to be answered by a meditative brooding: "Pensive I sat me down" (287).

Then follows Adam's first sleep and dreaming, and this scene seems best to represent Milton's figurative discourse of "foreshadowing" or "overshadowing" his meaning that will be made clear only later in the poem. In his dream Adam is led into the Garden of Eden. (This has to be emphasized, because it suggests that the literal paradise is something like a dream-vision from which we are destined to be awakened and which is to be replaced by a metaphorical garden which is in our memory. The fact that this starkly contradicts Milton's treatment of human existence in Eden as a literal and historical fact will be discussed later. As of now it will only be noted that Milton's mind was one that separates the literal and the

metaphorical and has to discard one of them, a possibility that his own poetry contradicts.) In his dream he sees fruit trees:

Each tree  
 Load'n with fairest Fruit, that hung to the Eye  
 Tempting, stirr'd in me sudden appetite  
 To pluck and eat; whereat I wak't, and found  
 Before mine Eyes all real, as the dream  
 Had Lively shadow'd; Here had new begun  
 My wand'ring, had not hee who was my guide  
 Up hither, from among the Trees appear'd  
 Presence Divine (8, 306-14)

It may not be going too far to say that the whole of *Paradise Lost* is an expanded description of this condensed dream-experience of Adam. Here is the pattern of dream-eating-waking-wandering, which we know is the whole story about human wayfaring in *Paradise Lost*, intimately linked each to each and inseparably condensed to a single experience. The extreme contraction of the story into an instantaneous action seems to say: "The next moment after I fell asleep, I woke. And I resumed my wandering, seeking the Maker as I did before. But before I woke, I think I saw a fair fruit and felt a sudden appetite." Since his wandering "new begun" is one that unavoidably suggests to our mind the ending of the poem, what we have is, in effect, the telescoped vision of his dream-initiation to Eden and his waking-banishment from it. If Adam's life in Eden fills up the space between the two moments, paradise would be something like a dream, indeed.

The dream-like life in Eden—isn't the Garden of Eden a "condensation" of "Eternal Spring" (4, 268) and "All Autumn pil'd" (5, 394)?—is emphasized in the final dream-eating-waking in the Fall. And here the imagery of cover / uncover and veil / nakedness appears heavily. When Adam and Eve are awakened into fallen sexuality, "dewy sleep oppresses them." But "with conscious dream / Encumber'd," they finally wake up to find "their eyes opened and their mind



darkened." The "veil of Innocence" that "shadow'd them from knowing ill" is gone, and leaves them "naked to guilty shame." Adam "cover'd, but his Robe uncover'd more." (9, 1050-9) The wheel has come full circle. Adam, who was first created outside paradise and was dream-led into it, is driven back "to the ground where he was tak'n, fitter soil." (11, 262) Adam, who was awakened (=created) into a dream, is re-awakened into the encumbered dream of reality in which man sleeps. By Book 12, the Edenic state would appear to Adam but a dream beside the historical world, and the glimpses of all the world to come that Michael shows would seem to him a rude awakening. Indeed, Michael comes to Adam to pluck and shatter the memory of the past, and plant instead the hope of the Divine Presence in him.

Or, it may be more correct to say that God planted the "inner paradise" in the form of a primordial dream that man will forever try to remember. We know that in Adam's end is his beginning. Just as he begins his life in Eden with wandering, so, too, his life in Eden ends with wandering. But the foregoing world being so irreconcilable with the world newly begun, there has to be a sleep-waking between them—just as between the utter void of nothingness and his existence (in the creation scene), so between the innocent state of creation and the actual existence in the world (in the Fall). Waking inaugurates action, but by definition sleep precedes waking. That's why creation is preceded by a Voice that cries "Return!"

Having said so, this reading has to account for the fact that Milton's treatment of human existence in Eden is seen as a historical fact and the Fall as an event that has befallen in human history. In any case Adam will not question his actual existence in Eden, nor does he ask himself, with Keats, "Do I wake, or sleep?" For Adam, both are real with equal force. In other words, the two sleep-waking experiences are not superimposed, as I am tempted to read them, but one follows the other in *Paradise Lost*. But, then, so it is in *Genesis*. How can it be otherwise? The *Genesis* myth, which is already an interpretation of some human experience and its written record, has to follow rules of human language. The nature of human language is that we cannot but say one thing at a time in a chain, and the syntagmatic flow of human discourse—exactly what Raphael calls

"process of speech"—temporalizes that experience of creation / fall and sleep / waking. One goes before the other, embedded in time, and the state between these moments is man's existence in Eden. Surely divine plot itself is spacing.

But what makes *Paradise Lost* different from *Genesis* is that there is nothing mythical in it. In *Paradise Lost* myth becomes a part of history. One finds in the poem a constant conversion of myth into history, and the *Welthistorischen* into the *Heilsgeschichtlichen*; the former finds its meaning in the latter, and the latter finds its words in the former. Milton could believe in every letter of the Bible, because to him the sacred and secular history always intersect each other. This is the dire force of Milton's literalism.

In *Paradise Lost*, *potentia* is constantly raised into *actus*. This does not only refer to Milton's "typological" use of language—for instance, Adam's dream "foreshadowing" the fall, or the ominousness of the "wandering" river in Eden. It also defines the Garden of Eden as well as the Christian interpretation of the world. Michael teaches Adam that the discourse of history is, like a dumb show, a discourse of shadows and images, which will finally be realized in the Incarnation of the Word. Twice Michael actually shows Adam the future of mankind by means of vision first, projected onto thin air, and then its explanation in words. In Nature, too, the actualization of the potential constantly happens. Every creature actualizes not its own existence but the being of God. Therefore *actus* precedes *potentia*, although, in temporality, *potentia* is raised into *actus*. Paradise is a place of potential, of appetite, of desire, represented by one big fair fruit, an object of desire as well as the symbol of the fallen world. This fruit, as *potentia*, is impregnated to bear a seed, i.e. plucked and eaten, so as to be raised to *actus*. But as I have said, *actus* precedes *potentia*. That is the meaning of God's foreknowledge of man's Fall. On his first meeting with Eve, Raphael addresses her: "Hail Mother of Mankind, whose fruitful Womb / Shall fill the World more numerous with thy Sons / Than with these various Fruits the Trees of God / Have heap'd this Table." (5. 388-91) Is he announcing the imminent Fall of man? But there is nothing ominous in his words. Eve's body and the Garden of Eden are both the "womb", the *potentia*, to

be realized in the seed of man and by eating the fruit, both of which are already in Eve and Eden. The prelapsarian state is always on the brink of "fruition" still denied. Doesn't Adam awake at that very moment? (8, 309)

I quote here a passage from Coleridge which best expresses what I have said about the Edenic state, though this passage bears no apparent relation with the poem:

Sometimes when I earnestly look at a beautiful Object or Landscape, it seems as if I were on the brink of Fruition still denied—as if Vision were an appetite: even as a man would feel, who having put forth all his muscular strength in an act of prosilience, is at the very moment held back—he leaps & yet moves not from his place.<sup>30)</sup>

This passage reads almost like a re-writing of Adam's experience in the passage that I quoted earlier (8, 306-14). The prelapsarian Edenic state is a frozen moment like this. It is not yet "articulated": it is only wistfully beheld before our eyes. But the articulation of the vision into human language accompanies, or demands, a loss of something for which we look back upon the vision. Only the "spacing" enables the "process of speech." And what extends that frozen moment into the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden is the spacing of the narrative. Therefore we have a "fall", but a necessary fall, even a "fortunate" fall.

That the Edenic state is the *durée* of this moment on the brink of fruition may be seen in the way the moment of the actual Fall escapes our grasp: in an instant man finds himself already fallen. In *Paradise Lost* the actual Fall is not so important as either the warning not to trespass or the awareness of already having gone wrong. For Eve at the moment of enacting the Original Sin, the Fall means little. Its implication is known belatedly, when Adam hears from her that the fatal trespass has already been committed. "How art thou lost, how on a sudden lost, / Defac'd, deflow'rd, and now to Death devote?" Adam moans for Eve (9, 900-1).

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30) *CN*, III, 3767.

About the event itself there is nothing more to say; one can only tell and retell it—that "it" happened, that the instant put an end to innocence and initiated experience. One could go so far as to say that the knowledge contained in the forbidden fruit is exactly the knowledge *of* the Fall, the transformation of the unreflective experience of falling into the act of knowing and interpreting it. The knowledge, then, is a means by which to act upon the destiny of man, the destiny in which, the knowledge reveals, man always already has been. This is the very moment at which the ontological difference of Good and Evil is constituted in man, the moment, too, at which the "suffixed"<sup>31)</sup> idea of the Fall is abandoned for Biblical historicism and literalism. Hence we are no longer bothered by the stark contrast between the intangibility of the moment of the Fall and the posited palpable moment of the Original trespass on which we put our finger and say, "This is the moment of the Fall."

The moment that divides dreaming and waking always escapes our grasp, but we think afterwards, when we are awake, that there has to be a break, however hypothetical it may be. Eve's dream in Book 5 seems best to show the characteristically intangible moment of the Fall. In her dream she also sees the fruit tree (this time, it is clearly identified as the Tree of the Forbidden Fruit):

the pleasant savory smell  
So quick'n'd appetite, that I, methought,  
Could not but taste. Forthwith up to the clouds  
With him I flew, and underneath beheld  
The Earth outstretched immense, a prospect wide  
And various: wond'ring at my flight and change  
To this high exaltation: suddenly  
My guide was gone, and I, methought, sunk down,  
And fell asleep; but O how glad I wak'd  
To find this but a Dream! (5, 84-93)

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31) cf. *CN*, III, 3587 (n. 26, above) for the chain of words "supposition-subposition-subfiction-suffixion. "whence "suffixed". Also cf. *CN*, III, 3886, "Fichte-fixed-fictive".

In Eve's dream the actual moment of eating the fruit is not there. As Stanley Fish pointed out,<sup>32)</sup> when we reach the word "forthwith", we momentarily expect "I reached" or "I plucked" and the like. But what follows is the deed not in doing but imagined as done, the effect of having eaten the fruit. Is it done, then, in the phrase "Could not but taste"? But this phrase, strictly speaking, only refers to the sudden appetite: "the savory smell so quickened my appetite that I could not resist tasting it (therefore I now think I must have tasted it)." The act of doing is only in the brackets. Is this because this is Eve's recollection of a dream, or because this is not an actual trespass, but, as a presentiment, an imagined Fall? I would rather think the reverse of cause and effect. I would think that this verbal recollection of Eve is the model on which to think about the difference between the intangibility of the Fall and the Fall as an actual and historical event.

In her recollection of her dream, Eve is trying to get through the opacity of time and the opacity of language to capture the past dream-experience. Language blocks and represses. In the passage quoted she twice pauses: "I, methought..." Something escapes in the course of speech. Is "eating" so unbearable to Eve's consciousness in her awakened state that it is "repressed"? And when something is said, the "crossing" (from "appetite" to its fulfillment) is not felt; "crossing" is always found as already having been done. Perhaps this may be related to the Wordsworthian experience of crossing the Alps in *The Prelude*, a scene where he ascertains how human imagination works from his experience of having crossed the Alps without knowing it. Eve falls asleep, in her dream, after tasting the fruit. Sleep in sleep! Why does she have to fall asleep? Is it not provided there in the same way that Adam falls asleep so as to be led into the Garden of Eden, and again falls asleep so as to see Eve face to face, and finally in the same way that Adam and Eve fall asleep so as to wake and find their eyes opened and mind darkened? Falling asleep is necessary in order for there to be a waking. And, besides, "we are nigh to waking when we dream (that) we dream."<sup>33)</sup> One can feel an especial irony in

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32) Stanley E. Fish, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost* (Berkeley, 1971), pp. 222ff.

33) *CN*, III, 4410.

Eve's words: "O how glad I wak'd / To find this but a Dream!" for soon enough she is going to say the opposite.

Milton's treatment of the Fall is a temporalization of this experience, which we have come to see as inherent in our use of language. Repeated experience of the Fall enacted in our speech—to this I tried to make an analogy with regard to pre- and post-lapsarian human existence, with the awareness, of course, that it would be a gross reduction of the Adamic myth to try to understand it wholly in terms of linguistic acts. Human mind postulates the moment of origination. In order to preserve the fundamental goodness of the origin, man also postulates the moment of the Fall, although the only thing we miss is the "lapse" itself. As Coleridge says, there is no before and after; all are but allegories.<sup>34)</sup>

#### IV

But the important question that remains is why man had to allegorize that way in the first place. For this question of why, there cannot be a satisfactory answer. Deconstruction cannot give an answer to it either; all it does is to show us how an interpretive schema, formed in man as a response to "meaning" (or to the "inscrutable", hence not yet "meaning" but its suggestion only) that first lets itself be known, can pervade what it meets, selectively find therein what in turn fortifies the interpretation, and finally turn out a hypostatized system. Although we do not have an answer to the question why man *had to* allegorize in such a way, we can be sure that man lives not only in the "fallen" world but also in "paradise," the paradise that lets itself be known by not letting us into it. Then, we may say that "paradise" is constituted as the haunting sense that beckons us before our eyes.

Of its own beauty is the mind diseased,  
And fevers into false creation:—where,

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34) Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection* (Burlington, Vermont, 1829), p. 45.

Where are the forms the sculptor's soul hath seized?  
 In him alone. Can Nature show more fair?  
 Where are the charms and Virtues which we dare  
 Conceive in boyhood and pursue as men,  
 The unreached Paradise of our despair,  
 Which o'er-informs the pencil and the pen  
 And overpowers the page where it would bloom again?<sup>35)</sup>

So writes Byron who, in his self-mocking cynicism and simultaneously vulgar and immensely civilized language, usually makes us feel that he is rehearsing, as it were, the myth of the Fall in the syntax of almost every stanza. But here the paradise of a "before" is gathered up even in what he says about the "false creation" of the poet. It is not only that the despair about the unfulfillable paradise "overpowers" the poet; the paradise "overinforms," and perhaps "overshadows" (in the Miltonic sense), the page where it blooms. Although the syntax says the opposite, what we see in the final line is the "blooming". The movement of the pen leaves not only the black marks on the paper but also the memory of the *Ursprache* with which it rings.

Can we then say with Derrida that the auras of paradise are the creation, or even a metaphysical illusion, of the arch-trace? I would accept it with one qualification or modification: that "paradise" is not the ghost created by *différance* in the process of getting written, but that it cannot but exist in its ghostly form due to the irreducible difference between the mental and linguistic beings of man. The former view, which has been asserted in the process of the reception of Derridean ideas, suggests paradise as the ripples in the rear of a ship; the latter regards paradise as something that precedes writing, but which cannot be fully represented. In other words, I am engaged in the task of combining the idea of *différance* and that of *mimesis* on equal basis. Mimesis in Derrida is but another name for *physis*, and as such is a concept absolutely subjugated to *différance*; in

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35) Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, IV, cxxii.

Derrida it can be dispensed with.<sup>36)</sup> What I have tried, then, is to follow Derridean thinking in order to reconsider the meaning of *mimesis*. Viewed in this way, Derrida comes to the Romantic poets as Michael did to Adam. To the Romantic agony about the inability of language to fully represent the idea, Derrida seems to give a bitter consolation, saying what poets have known all the time: "Such is the nature of language."

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36) Mimesis is understood by Derrida as *physis* itself, the "appearing" in which nature "mimes" itself so that it can appear. (cf "White Mythology") Although this view of mimesis works very well in deconstructing such a statement of Coleridge as "One must not imitate Nature, but what is within, the Naturgeist", as Derrida does, indeed, in "Economimesis" [translated in *Diacritics*, 11:2 (Summer 1981)], it deflects the question of mimesis as the representation of the idea, or as the expression of precedent *Vorstellung*. Even if our *Vorstellung* is impossible without "writing," even if our *Vorstellung* is therefore already subject to *différance*, this hardly changes the situation because what we know is our *Vorstellung*, and not the inscription that makes it possible. When Derrida confronts mimesis most directly ("Double Session" in *Dissemination*), what he suggests amounts to saying that a painter who is by profession a carpenter as well can try to paint a chair without having ever made a single chair, which seemingly turns Plato's idea upside down. This will hardly dispel our question about mimesis. Although he makes various points on what gets involved when a text gets written, he seems to avoid this specific question of our mimetic posture when we say that we try to "re-present" what we have held in our view.



## 〈아담의 언어〉와 시인의 과제

밀튼의 『잃어버린 낙원』은 인간이 어떻게 하여 <타락>하게 되었으며 어떤 방식으로 그 구원이 이루어지는가를 성서를 토대로 하여 씌여진 작품이다. 창세기 신화를 대하는 밀튼의 입장은 철저하게 근본주의자의 시각을 견지하는 것이어서, 아담과 이브가 누렸던 에덴의 동산에서의 삶은 타락 이후의 인류가 처해 있는 시간성과 동일한 시간성 속에, 어느까마득한 과거에 있었던 삶이요, 타락이란 그 시간의 어느 한 시점에 일어난 사건인 것이다. 밀튼 자신이 의식적으로 견지하고자 했던 이러한 태도는 그러나 이 서사시의 몇몇 핵심적인 장면들이 함축하는 가능성과는 배치된다. 이 가능성은 말하자면 창세기 신화 자체가 단순히 있었던 <사실>의 기록이 아니라 그 자체로서 이미 인류의 원초적 체험에 대한 해석의 산물이요 그러한 해석의 언표에 내재하는 것임을 우리에게 일깨워주고 있는 가능성이라 할 수 있다.

마찬가지의 해석을 에덴의 동산에서 아담이 사용했다는 언어에 대하여서도 해 볼 수 있다. 에덴의 동산에서 아담이 사용했다는 언어는 타락 이후의 언어와는 질적으로 구분되는 것으로 상정되어 왔다. 그 언어는 어떠한 종류의 언어일까? 이는 과연 고고학적으로 접근가능한 언어일까? 한때는 인류에게 열려졌던 언어이었으며 타락한 인간에게는 영원히 닫혀진 그러한 언어인가? 그런 것이 아니라면 언어의 타락에 관한 이야기를 우리는 어떻게 보아야 하는 것일까?

이 글에서는 이를 사유라는 범주와 언어라는 범주의 불일치의 체험이 배태한 신화로 해석하고자 한다. 그리고 이것이 『잃어버린 낙원』을 통해서 어떻게 나타나고 있는가를 고찰해 보고자 한다. 언어화된 것은 사유된 것이다. 그러나 언어화된 것만이 사유된 것은 아니고 사유는 언어보다 더 넓은 범주일지도 모른다. 물론 언어에 대한 이러한 태도는 다분히 전통적 형이상학에서 비롯한 것이고 이는 데리다의 해체철학이 무엇보다도 비판하고자 하는 언어관이라 할 수 있다. 그러나 데리다가 말하는 <차이>의 개념이 <미메시스> 개념의 전부를 설명해 주지는 못하리라는 것이 이글의 입장이다.

시인 밀튼에게 구원의 문제는 기독교인으로서의 구원의 문제일반에서 더 나아가 적절한 언어의 회복이요 말씀의 현현에의 기다림이다. 시인이 그에게 말해 준 것, 이것을 인간의 언어에 어떻게 다시 담아 이를 <재현>하는가가 시인 밀튼에게는 곧 실존적 과제였다. 이러한 관점에서 이 서사시를 읽는 일은 통상적 의미에서의 작품 해석이라고는 말할 수 없을지 모르나, 이 시의 독특한 그러나 매우 본질적인 어느 측면을 잘 드러내 보여주는 작업이 될 것이다.

