Paradise Lost & Postmodernism

Bibliography

- · Davis, J.C.
- · de Man, Paul
- · Harold Bloom, ed.
- · Hill, Christopher
- · Hutcheon, Linda
- · Liu. Alan
- · Lyotard, Jean-Francois
- . Milton, John
- · Norbrook, David
- · Wimsatt, William K.

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Tierney Gearon

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Monday, April 13, 2009

Honors Department Senior Project

"Postmodernism & Paradise Lost: Reconsidering Knowledge,

Politics and Literature"

Mary Smith

Faculty Sponsor: J. Jennifer Jones, English Literature

"Postmodernism & Paradise Lost: Reconsidering Knowledge, Politics and Literature" is an interdisciplinary approach to interpreting John Milton's epic poem, Paradise Lost, one that magnetizes literary, historical, and philosophical discourse as a means ultimately to redefine the concept of radicalism. Christopher Hill's historical text, Milton and the English Revolution draws parallels between Milton's poem and the radical ideas that flecked England's political landscape in the 17th century. These parallels provide a sound basis to argue in the poetic realm that Milton's poem is primarily a political text, more specifically a radical one. Such a claim poses a metaphysical question: what is radicalism? To answer this question, J.C. Davis, a political historian, argues radicalism to be a theoretical entity. This argument serves as the foundation for finding similar metaphysical elements—theoretical entities—in Paradise Lost. The claims that Davis makes concerning the mode of evaluating theoretical entities can be considered alongside Milton's work. A close reading of Paul de Man's essays on the poetic image and allegory enrich the understanding of a theoretical entity, calling attention to the specificity of language elements with respect to radicalism. This paper supports a definition of radicalism, both within and without Milton's poem, as a theoretical entity. However, it is not without the work of Jean-Francoise Lyotard that this paper is capable of enriching this definition of radicalism by characterizing

radicalism as discourse.
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