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I quoted claims that "This necessitates a refutation of the question of the法律规定 of knowledge" (43). The refutation results in progress in knowledge being indicated by "...a new move (a new argument) within the established rules, the other, in the invention of rules, in other words, a change to a new narrative" (45). I thought Milton could illustrate these results. In Book Four Adam voices the unresolved concept of death, can the first man alive, can anyone alive know death? "We now grown death to life, where's death to? Some dreadful thing is no doubt, for well then know Sin God hath pronounced it death to man that touch me."
The only sign of our oblivion half" (4: 420-421). It is evident here that the notion of death is "dead" due to its prescription as a consequence. In the last quoted line, Adams constructs a system governed by an obedience to God, in which the internal limitation is the Tree of Knowledge. In his book "To undergo one such guilt, on crime! (If it be) of trusting this fair fruit" (4: 971-972). This is Eve’s uncertainty of the act resulting as an absolute, it becomes in fact a cause of a new game, to live outside Paradise with obedience.

The paradox scientific activity it issues over to respective options within which descriptive statements are able to be found true or false, and I quoted notes the question "...what the function of power consists of and if it can constitute a legitimation" (46). He distinguishes descriptive and prescriptive language games and adds the technical game to the list, ordering it exclusively with the term "here". I am excluding the case in which force operates by means of terror" (46). This notion already allows us to begin to unravel the Adam and Eve's system, their concept of death, as indicated by a consequence, a threat by God, each not the case. God's threat in Lytey's words, "...the efficacy of such a threat is based entirely on the threat to eliminate the opposing player, not on making a better "move" than he(40). Since such is not the case by the end of Milton's epic, God's threat becomes an empty one, one intended to eliminate the opposing player, however, Adam and Eve, "God's act with native honor chide" (40) become situated within the same system as God, God is not creator of the system, namely a player. Where is the technology in Milton's Dream? "The organs of her fancy and with them forge illusions on herelist, phantasms and dreams" (4: 882-883), in comparison to advances in warcraft, "As where a spark...Lights on a heap of Silicon powder laid! Fy for the man" (4: 814-816). This strain contributes to a notion of Eve's aid in knowledge, a metaphoric technological aid which will contribute to the force of a legitimation, allowing rules to be changed, or invented.

"Why thus then, Satan, breaks the bonds prescribed? To thy transgressions and disturbed the charge? Of others who approve not to transgress? By thy example but have power and right? To question the hold entrance on this place.

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Answering the Question: What Is Postmodernism? (71-82)

When Lytey poses the questions, "What is the postmodern?" He answers it in terms of modern. The postmodern is part of the modernity it describes the constant plurality of modernism. Postmodernism does not depart from modernism at any moment. Rather it calls into question that aspect of modernism, the unproblematic, by failing to the claims modern aesthetic and cognitive judgment. As an act of resistance, Lytey provides an underranging of the postmodern with respect to modernism finding a difference among the two with respect to the sublime sentiment. Lytey explicates the postmodern handling of the unproblematic by avoiding a description of the human subject as lacking. Rather, "The emphasis can be placed on the powerlessness of the faculty of presentation, the possibility for presence felt by the human subject, on the absence and flux which inhabit him in spite of everything" (79). In the case of writing, the faculty of presentation, words and language have incommensurable deficiencies when it comes to the human subject. It is why Lytey makes the following statement, which distinguishes the senses and imagination from the presentation. "The emphasis can be placed, rather, on the power of the faculty to sensate, to the "sensuality" so to speak...since it is not the business of our underranging whether or not human sensibility or imagination can match what is conceived" (80).

Lytey finds the difference between modernism and postmodernism and their respective ways of presenting the unproblematic through the sublime. Modern aesthetic is a reflection of the sublime sentiment, manifesting the pleasurable and joy, George Colewright in what provides the reader with a hope which is not part of the sublime sentiment, "modern aesthetics is an aesthetic of the sublime through a nostagic one. It allows the unproblematic to be put forward only as the missing content, but the form, because of its incommensurable consistency, continues to offer to the made of viewers matter for solace and pleasure." (85)
Research Materials
The description of the Tree of Life reaches a polytheistic narration, while the Tree of Knowledge reaches a monolithic narration. The presence of the two narrations affects the narrative to reflect the necessity of a hesitation when it comes to establishing meaning from the text. Both the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge, when stripped of their status as narrations, are purged, expelled, sent to hell from the garden of Eden.

This reading of Paradise Lost attempts to reach the Promised Land through an interpretation of the implications of Milton’s descriptions. The Tree of Polytheism is a narration of polytheism, while the Tree of Knowledge reaches a monolithic narration. The conflict found in the presence of two narratives is that they provide reference for one narrative rather than provide the influence for narrative elements that are portrayed as meaning. Since the narratives do not allow a unity amongst the narrative elements the opportunity for finding meaning in the text is halted.
...
O sole in whom my thoughts find all repose,
My glory, my perfection, glad I see.
Thy face and more retained, for I this night
(Till this I never passed) have devoted,
If dreamed, not as I was wont, of thee.
Works of the past or monarch's next regime
But of offence and trouble which my mind
Knew never till this innocent night. Mid-battle
Close at mine ear one called me forth to walk.
With gentle voice, I thought it thine. It said,
"Why dream'st thou, Eve? Now is the pleasant time,
The cord, the effort, now where silence yields
To the sight-watching kind that now awake
Turns round his love-haunted song. Now reigns
Fall when the moon and with more pleasing light
Shadows sets off the face of things in vain
If none regard? Here's weakness with all his eyes
Whom to behold but thou, Nature's choice,
In whose right all things joy with reverence,
Amazed by thy beauty still to gaze."
I rose as at thy call but found thee not.
To find thee I directed all my walk
And on methought alone I passed through ways
That brought me on a sudden to the Tree
Of intellectual Knowledge. Far it seemed,
Much nearer to my fancy than by day.
And as I was gazing, beseem it stood
One stunted and wretched like one of those from Ilua's
By us sent. His dewy looks distanced
Ambrosia. On that time he also gained
And "O fair plant," said he, "with fruit exchanged,
Delight me in same thy food and taste thy sweet,
Not god, nor man? Is knowledge so despised?
Or envy or what nature forbids to taste?
Fortune who will, none shall from me withhold
Longer thy-offered good; why not set here?"
This said, he paused not but with every knee
He plucked, he tasted. Me steep horror chilled
At such bold words vouchsafed with a dead so bold.
But he then overjoyed, "O fruit divine,
Sweet of thine!" but much more sweet than cropped,
Forbidden here, it seems, as only fit
For gods yet able to make gods of men.
And why not gods of men since good the more
Communicated more abundant groves.

The Author not impartial but honored more?
Here, happy creation, fair angelic Eve,
Partake thou also: Happy through the art,
Happier thou mayst be, wretched care not be.
Taste this and be beneficed among the gods
Thyself a goddess, not to earth confined
But sometimes in the air as we! Sometimes
Assist to fluer's, by such fine, and see
What life the gods live there and such live these."
So saying he drew nigh and to me held.
Eve in my mouth, of that same fruit held part
Which he had plucked. The pleasant savory smell
So quickened appetite that I methought,
Could not but taste. Forthwith up to the clouds
With him I flew and underwent behalf.
The earth unuttered immense, a prospect wide
And various, wond'ring at my flight and change
To this high-eminence. Suddenly
My guide was gone and I, methought, cast down
And fell asleep. But O how glad I walked,
To find this but a dream! (5.28-31).
Eve’s dream presents her first encounter with the Tree of Knowledge. After avoiding the
mansion her dreams to Adam, it is that account experiences the feelings of unbridled
thoughts, desire and terrible. In her dreams, Satan inquires about the nature of the Tree of Knowledge,
ultimately providing for a way of knowing who possesses God’s authority.

The Tree of Knowledge, planted by God, comes to pass in the minds of men, gods or men, who
come to it. But, Eve, the one who reflects God’s power, and man’s honor to it, but an ontology that
leads to the knowledge of good and evil. Satan tells Eve, “Did God say, ‘You shall not eat of
the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden?’” (6:25). Furthermore, Satan inquires about
the tree, “So why should we be Dietary? Or why not what we desire most?” (6:26). In the end,
Satan asks, “What is it about this tree, of whose fruits no man has eaten, that makes
people avoid it?” How has the tree come to possess a constructed ontology more successfully than an
ontology, which requires inquiry? By responding to this question with the question, “Forbid who
will, now shall thou not with?” (6:26), the constructed ontology is to know the tree as a forlorn
ontology. This ontology had once governed a way of knowing the Tree of Knowledge, but it
remains to the loss of the question, then why would God have it here? Through questioning Eve,
Satan makes the tree with the possibility of existing independent of God’s knowledge, independent of
the Tree of Knowledge as that is a freedom from the Tree, of whose fruit God has been
abandoned by the humans. This latter characterization of the tree Satan makes and makes explicit.

Satan’s formulation of “Would you have to know what is in the tree? Would you have to
know what is in the tree? Would you have to know what is in the tree?” (6:27). In
this case, Satan’s question reveals that God’s authority is what is at stake, and what is at
stake is the knowledge of God. To answer the question, Eve points out the interesting nature of the tree’s
twist when she states, “I passed through the tree that brought me to the Tree of Knowledge” (6:28). It is
the Tree of “Unknowledge,” by which Satan says, “you know the knowledge
that of the knowledge of its states as a privileged encounter. Only by God’s forbidding it to be
known does it become a thing, which possesses knowledge. Knowledge that Adam and Eve have
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Raw Material

This passage provides a particular reading of Eve's dreams in which the authority of God is put aside by side with the condemnation of the trees. Eve's sensitivity to two ways of knowing the tree provides Eve with an instrumented intention for seeing from the tree. The experience of the dream results in a feeling of clarity for waking up to Adam and a terror for having seen all that she saw in her dream. The experience of Eve's dreams upon awakening provides her experience in the dreams after she ate the apple, feeling the branchlessness of choice, and the terror of abandonment.
Christopher Hill

de Man Study


In his essay, The Structure of Romantic Nature Imagery (1970), William K. Wimsatt Jr. identifies the Romantic landscape as a literal, material landscape. Our ideas of the natural world enter us through our senses. The poet expresses these ideas of the natural world through language. Wimsatt argues that Romantic poetry is essential in its capacity to present an experience of nature through language in such a way that is not dissimilar from an experience of nature outside of language. “[We may see] romantic poetry as a step toward the directness of sensory presentation” (88). In Wimsatt’s view the “imitative powers of language” (87) enable the poet to recreate nature. Language is rendered a mimetic force. As such, Wimsatt continues to premise his argument on the claim that the imagination is a faculty capable of merging or “fusing” the material or the sensory and thought. This merger, according to Wimsatt, recreates a landscape, similar to a photograph.

A photograph in its 5x7 frame serves Wimsatt’s idea of the merger between thought and sensory perception. Photography captures an image that serves as a testament to an experience. The figure in the image is not the figure of experience. The image is a representation of the figure of experience. However, since the difference lies merely in the form of representation, it can be said that a fountain in a photograph is still the
fountain in the park where the picture was taken— it still is. For Wimsatt
the gap between the figure and its representation can be bridged. The
presentation of the photograph can serve the viewer as actually having had
an experience of sitting in the park, looking at the fountain. Similarly, the
poetic image in its shift from experience to language, is fixed— that is, the
poetic images crosses over from nature to language unaltered. This
inconspicuous shift, as Wimsatt sees it, is conceivable because of
language’s system of signs: “But romantic nature poetry tends to achieve
iconicity by a more direct sensory imitation of something headlong and
impassioned, less ordered, nearer perhaps to the subrational” (87).
Wimsatt’s argument finds nature unordered, perhaps reckless, in need of
and possible of universal presentation through language. Similar to
Wimsatt’s view of language and with respect to the photograph, imagine
the process of the photographer. The photographer photographs the
fountain in the foreground where children are swimming. Their figures are
blurred because they are moving and splashing around. An ice cream cart
sits in the middle ground whilst rolling hills line the background. The
photographer composes this image, positioning the elements, the fountain,
the children, the ice cream cart, the rolling hills, intentionally so as to
convey to the viewer an experience of human life in the midst of quiet
nature. The photographer uses techniques, the rule of thirds, and slow
shutter speed to compose the image so that it is readable. Wimsatt sees the
poetic image being composed as intentionally and technically as the
photographic image. Wimsatt’s poetic image then becomes bound within
the system of language. The poetic image is framed by Wimsatt’s
conception of language. Thus, the reader is limited to an experience of
nature that lies inside a frame, an experience of nature that has been had
before. Wimsatt’s poetic image does not allow for original experience of
nature or use language.
Milton’s poem does not stand to construct a landscape according to
Wimsatt’s theory. In the opening lines of Book I of Paradise Lost, Milton
proposes a reading of the fall as variable. That is, instead of the poetic
image as a photograph, Milton creates a poetic image more akin to a collage. He calls on his muse to write a landscape that considers views from various heights.

Sing Heav’ny Muse, that on the secret top
Of Oreb or of Sinai didst inspire
That shepherd who first taught the chosen seed,
In the beginning, how the heav’ns and earth
Rose out of chaos (I; 6-10)

On the peak of Oreb is where Moses met God and God appeared as a burning bush. From this peak, from this view Milton isolates a piece of the landscape to construct his poetic image. In the same line Milton isolates a piece of the landscape as viewed from the peak of Sinai, a peak higher than Oreb and covered in darkness. Sinai, while part of the same mountain range as Oreb no doubt presents a view vastly different from the peak of Oreb. Milton requires both of these views to imagine and to represent the rise of heaven out of chaos. It is crucial that two views be positioned side by side, in order to testify to the variability of an experience and representation of nature.

Unlike Wimsatt, Milton uses language not as a universal system but as a mode of creating a landscape thick with tension. The two mountain peaks contrast light, the burning bush, and dark, tall and taller. Similar to Wimsatt though, the natural world seen from the two peaks is one of disorder, of chaos. Instead of using language as a universal system of signs to order the chaos, Milton uses language to create an original landscape, a landscape in which he may “justify the ways of God to men” (I; 10).

De Man’s theory of the poetic image allows the imagination to enter the text and replace a traditional mode of representation. The imagination’s view is a constructed view— one created to replace an existing view.

In the same way that Milton uses language to originate a landscape, Paul de Man theorizes language as essentially capable of origination in Intentional Structure of the Romantic Image (1970). For this reason
language is incapable of direct sensory presentation. Origination, says de Man, is the ontological distinction between language, more specifically the word and nature, specifically the natural object. De Man states: “For it is in the essence of language to be capable of origination, but of never achieving the absolute identity with itself that exists in the natural object” (69). If words are capable of origination, then two conclusions may follow: one, a word’s beginning or origin is determinable and two, this beginning constitutes its existence. Rather than the imagination fusing language with sensory perceptions, for de Man the imagination, in its dealings with language, will always create a poetic image essentially distinct from nature. Similar to Wimsatt, de Man finds nature to be disordered, chaotic insofar as its origin cannot be realized: “But the natural object, safe in its immediate being, seems to have no beginning and no end. Its permanence is carried by the stability of its being, whereas a beginning implies a negation of permanence…” (68). The natural object seems to have no beginning and no end because it is conceivable to think of that which came before it and that which will spring from it, forever. On the other hand, the word, whose origin is determinable, whose beginning constitutes its existence, is impermanent. That is, the word, its beginning, what it means, what it stands for, is fleeting, is momentary.

Milton identifies language as capable of origination. Thus his intent in creating a landscape is not to make it ‘readable’ but to make it conceivable. By drawing views from multiple heights, he constructs a landscape that is a collage of multiple perspectives.

The opening lines of Paradise Lost continues, for perhaps the view of Sion hill will help to appropriate the landscape Milton is creating in order to justify the ways of God to men. Of Sion hill:

Or if Sion hill
Delight thee more and Siloa’s brook that flowed
Fast by the oracle of God, I thence
Invoke thy aid to my advent’rous song
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above th’ Aonian mount while it pursues
Things unattmepted yet in prose or rhyme (I; 12-16).

The necessity to create a landscape in order to say what has not ever been said is, for Milton, an adventure. Through poetry, Milton embarks upon an adventure— an exploration— via language of the social state of seventeenth-century England. Using a conception of language as capable of origination Milton traverses the landscape of the imagination. Milton employs the innovative faculty of the imagination in search of justice in the name of God.

Similar to de Man’s critique of Wimsatt, de Man critiques a view of romanticism that prioritizes symbolic diction over allegorical diction. With respect to the relationship between language and the subject of language de Man states: “For this dialectic originates, it must be remembered, in the assumed predominance of the symbol as the outstanding characteristic of romantic diction, and this predominance must, in its turn, be put into question” (198). Putting the symbol into question will lead to an alternative interpretation of the romantic image, one that is consistent with de Man’s idea of the poetic image. With respect to the poetic image, de Man argues that the originating nature of the poetic image is characteristic of romantic poetry. This position requires that the relationship between experience and representation be examined according to the differences between an experience of nature and a representation of nature. Similarly, de Man discusses the relationship between subject and object with respect to its differences. This methodology allows him to remain consistent with a view of language as capable of origination. The subject’s disparity from language is similar to that of the experience from its representation. Through this disparity de Man finds a contradiction in the notion of the priority of nature or object (experience) over self or subject (representation). De Man states: “They are obliged, on the one hand, to assert the priority of object over subject that is implicit in an organic conception of language” (197). The
contradiction arises because it is not a conception of language as capable of origination that renders this hierarchy. Rather a conception of language as containing symbols capable of fusing the subject and the object gives weight to the symbol. The object is prioritized over the subject, the representation over the experience. However, that is inconsistent with an idea of the symbol as a unit of language. De Man’s critique is that this prioritizing of the object over the subject in turn prioritizes the symbol over allegory, a hierarchy that is arbitrary and inconsistent with its theoretical lineage.

Thinking about the photograph as a metaphor for Wimsatt’s view of the function of language, de Man’s observation of the symbol as a unit of language continues to critique a view of language as a unifying system:

There is the same stress on the analogical unity of nature and consciousness, the same priority given to the symbol as the unit of language in which the subject-object synthesis can take place, the same tendency to transfer in nature attributes of consciousness and to unify it organically with respect to a center that acts, for natural objects, as the identity of the self functions for a consciousness (200).

Thus, de Man’s critique of language viewed according to Wimsatt as well as other critics of romanticism leads de Man to investigate the role allegory plays, specifically in Rousseau’s novel La Nouvelle Héloïse. After careful analysis de Man shows the way in which Rousseau’s text actually prioritizes allegorical diction over symbolic diction. His argument finds evidence in the fact that the text admits to its ontological status as art and not nature: “From the beginning we are told that the natural aspect of the site is in fact the result of extreme artifice, that in this bower of bliss, contrary to the tradition of the topos, we are entirely in the realm of art and not that of nature”(202). Similarly, in the passage above, Milton tells us that the site of his poem is not akin to nature but to imagination by calling on his muse. Milton employs an ancient tradition, calling on the muse to tell what Milton cannot himself say. Above, I concluded that the
poetic image is a product of the imagination; similarly it is logical to conclude that the poetic image is also in the realm of art. This conclusion is not only consistent with a view of language as capable of origination, but it supports the contradiction de Man finds as a result of the prioritization of the symbol over allegory.

The view of language that de Man criticizes is consistent with Lyotard’s critique of metalanguage. Lyotard’s critique in Just Gaming (1985) is concerned with a distinction between statements of opinion and statements of fact with respect to the political. Lyotard clarifies a conception of the political: “Therefore, there is no science of the political. I would put it otherwise: There is no metalanguage, and by metalanguage, I mean the famous theoretical discourse that is supposed to ground political and ethical decisions that will be taken as the basis of its statements” (Lyotard, 28). This critique is analogous to de Man’s concern for the distinction between subject and object, nature and the experience of nature. By arguing the prioritization of allegory over symbol, de Man concludes that the language of allegory must be capable of origination, intended not to represent but to construct a way to “justify the ways of God to men”. De Man states: “The language is purely figural, not based on perception, less still on an experienced dialectic between nature and consciousness” (203). Therefore, my hypothesis is that if allegory does in fact use "purely figural" language then the effect will be a conflict between the work that allegorizes (Paradise Lost) and the work that is allegorized (the Bible).

Paradise Lost explicitly allegorizes the Bible. What constitutes this work as an allegory is not that the intent of Milton’s text is similar to the intent of the Bible but that it differs. This is seen in the final lines of Milton’s text when Adam and Eve are sent out of Eden for disobeying God. The Bible intends to justify the ways of God to men by showing Adam and Eve’s shame as the punishment for disobeying God. Milton’s text justifies the ways of God to men by showing that Adam and Eve’s failure to comply with God’s requests sends them to another landscape wherefore to seek
out other possible ways of loving God. In the final lines of Paradise Lost, Adam and Eve look upon the horizon outside of Eden as a plane of possibilities:

Some natural tears they dropped but wiped them soon.
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.
They hand in hand with wand’ring steps and slow
Through Eden took their solitary way (XII; 645-650).

According to de Man the allegory stands because there is a conflict between the mode the Bible uses to justify the ways of God to men and the mode Milton uses. The relationship between God and Man is not based on persistent repentance. Milton views the relationship between God and man as a practice of discovering God and a tolerance for the various means of knowing God that these discoveries produce.

The Bible uses nakedness as a symbol for shame; before Adam and Eve ate from the Tree of Knowledge they were unashamed. The Bible states: “And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed” (Genesis 2; 25). After their fall their nakedness causes them shame: “And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden” (3; 7-8). The Bible employs nakedness as a symbol of the difference between a prelapsarian mankind and postlapsarian mankind. This difference is indicated by the shame postlapsarian man feels as indicated by his need to cover his nakedness from his fellow man and from God. Contrary to the Bible, Milton’s text presents quite a different experience of our first parents after eating from the Tree of Knowledge. Nakedness is not employed as a symbol in Paradise Lost. Instead it marks the difference between the Bible and Paradise Lost. Nakedness as a symbol does not
carry over from the Bible to Paradise Lost. The effect of this difference is the undermining of the authority of the Bible as "truth," and on a less grand scale, the authority of the symbol as evidence of language as stable. Milton tells of our parents first experience after eating form the Tree of Knowledge:

Bad fruit of knowledge if this be to know
Which leaves us naked thus, of honor void,
Of innocence, of faith, of purity,
Our wonted ornaments now soiled and stained
And in our faces evident the signs
Of foul concupiscence, whence evil store,
Ev’n shame the last of evils—of the first
Be sure then! (IX; 1073-1080)

Nakedness is a descriptor. Nakedness describes Adam and Eve's human experience, it is a representation of the nature that belies experience. Nakedness is employed as a descriptor of experience. It is self-aware of itself as void of “honor,” “of innocence,” “of faith,” and “of purity” of nature. Thus, nature and experience (as represented through language) are distinct from one another. An experience of nature—that is a representation of nature through language—can never be nature itself. By interpreting nakedness as a description of experience, Paradise Lost is inconsistent with the Bible. The difference is between Adam and Eve's first experience according to the Bible and according to Paradise Lost. Instead of rushing to cover themselves, Paradise Lost recounts quite differently Adam and Eve's first experience:

Nor Eve to iterate
Her former trespass feared, the more to soothe
Him with her loved society that now
As with new wine intoxicated both
They swim in mirth and fancy that they feel
Divinity within them breeding wings
Wherewith to scorn the earth. But that false fruit
Far other operation first displayed,
Carnal desire inflaming (IX; 1005-1013)

Milton tells that although their sin will “scorn the earth,” their first experience is the discovery of each other as worthy to one another: “They swim in mirth and fancy that they feel.” Instead of immediate acknowledgment of their disobedience, “Far other operation first displayed.” Adam and Eve consummate their partnership as their first human experience:

Her hand he seized and to a shady bank
Thick overhead with verdant roof embow’red
He led her nothing loath. Flow’rs were the couch,
Pansies and violet and asphodel
And hyacinth, Earth’s freshest softest lap.
There they their fill of love and love’s disport
Took largely, of their mutual guilt the seal,
The solace of their sin (IX; 1037-1044)

Lovemaking for Adam and Eve is “the solace of their sin.” They lay together on “Earth’s freshest softest lap” in the midst of flowers, a scene Milton creates. Subsequent to this scene Milton uses “nakedness” to describe a more general postlapsarian conception of human experience.

These two passages draw attention to the variability of language, criticizing what Lyotard calls metalanguage, and what de Man calls the prioritization of the symbol. Both Lyotard and de Man criticize this view of language because it necessarily limits an interpretation of allegorical work by prioritizing the symbol. De Man states, “For, if the dialectic between subject and object does not designate the main romantic experience, but only one passing moment in a dialectic, and a negative moment at that, since it represents a temptation that has to be overcome, then the entire historical and philosophical pattern changes a great deal” (The Rhetoric of
De Man states that it is a temptation to take language as a stable system and to give the Bible authority. However, the defacement of the symbol leads to the authority of the allegory. The symbol of nakedness does not carry over into Milton's text. Therefore we must now look to the allegory to analyze the authority of the Bible with respect to Paradise Lost. In Paradise Lost the Fall serves to delegitimate the existing system by obstructing the authority of the symbol of nakedness.

The critical approach that de Man provides through a reading of romantic literature is consistent with a reading of Milton's Paradise Lost. It is evident in his essays, The Nature of Romantic Nature Imagery, and The Rhetoric of Temporality that a conception of language as capable of origination and the priority of allegorical diction over symbolic diction is a shared view of Milton's poetry and Romantic poetry. De Man's essays ask us to reconsider the relationship between experience and nature, between subject and object, but most importantly he provides a way of reading Paradise Lost that is radical and theoretically sound.

Posted by Research Materials at 8:39 AM

**Hill Study**


Christopher Hill, in Milton and the English Revolution, argues that John Milton's political views fell in line with the ideas that proliferated among a radical underground. English radicalism has hibernated as a culture that existed within discourse, unlike the republicans and the royalists, whose views were recorded, distributed and historized. “This third culture [radical underground] is difficult to identify, because its records are normally unwritten: our evidence comes from hostile accounts of church courts prosecuting heretics, of orthodox spokesmen denouncing them. What I say about it in this chapter is necessarily tentative” (Hill, 69).
Although he argues that his remarks on the ideas of this political group are tentative, it is apparent in John Milton’s epic poem, Paradise Lost, that these ideas not only existed, but were important to a form of representation that went beyond traditional structures. Hill outlines four ideas that surfaced in the 1640s; first, anticlericalism, second, the denunciation of sacred imagery, third, anti-Trinitarianism and fourth, mortalism. These ideas were heretical to the political and religious state of England in the mid-seventeenth century. Regardless, these ideas form a concept of radicalism as not merely oppositional to but fundamentally distinct from the current political and religious situation. As a text that reanimates the characters from the book of Genesis, Milton’s poem brings to the forefront these radical views. The first radical view that Hill outlines is anticlericalism, the idea that members of the clergy held no sovereignty over the common man. Anticlericalism, was an avenue toward equality, ...the view that a layman is as good as a parson. It may extend to seeing the whole ecclesiastical hierarchy as antichristian, to rejection of tithes and a state church, to hostility towards universities as training centres for the clergy, to advocacy of ‘mechanic preachers’ who enjoy the spirit of God, so much more important than academic education(71). The radical view of anticlericalism opposed an academic based production of preachers because they did not see Christ as a literal and objective figure to be learned. Specifically the Familists and the Grindletonians found aspects of Christianity to be closer to a philosophy, or a way of thinking, than to an instructional code. “Familists were said to believe that Christ and Antichrist were not real person, heaven and hell not real places: all were states of mind. The Grindletonians, like Thomas Munzer before them and Gerrard Winstanley after them, emphasized the spirit as against the letter of the Bible, a doctrine not unknown to Milton” (75). Book IV of Milton’s poem is evidence of his familiarity with these radical ideas. In Book IV, Milton presents a dual context; a narrative that references two
metanarratives, the polytheistic, of gods and the monotheistic, of God. The polytheistic and the monotheistic here have been referred to as metanarratives because they are consistent with their respective historical narratives. The concept of the metanarrative is one that Lyotard employs to describe myths or narratives that are read for the purpose of instruction or impartation of knowledge. The radical intolerance for the “letter of the Bible” or the word as truth, is consistent with a postmodern intolerance for the metanarrative, “Simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodern as incredulity toward metanarratives” (Lyotard, xxiv). Milton’s positioning of two metanarratives in his epic is testament to the radical idea of anticlericalism because it does not allow one metanarrative to take precedence over the other, in fact Milton sees these two metanarratives as necessary to one another, as necessary to the creation of a state of mind rather than an objective mode of being.

Milton alludes to a polytheistic metanarrative when he articulates a description of the Tree of Life. The text describes the Tree of Life with three qualities, all of which reference the polytheistic metanarrative of a classical literary tradition.

Out of the fertile ground He caus’d the grow
All trees of noblest kind for sight, smell, taste
And all amid them stood the Tree of Life
High eminent blooming ambrosial fruit
Of vegetable gold. (IV: 216-220)

In this passage three significant descriptors: “High,” “eminent,” and “blooming ambrosial fruit” allude to a polytheistic metanarrative. “High” characterizes the tree’s stature, directing our gaze above earth, into the heavens, into the realm of the world gods inhabit. “Eminent” characterizes the Tree of Life, as the grandest of its kind, god-like. The Tree of Life is, “blooming ambrosial fruit”; this final descriptor, points readily to the nature of the Tree of Life as vita, providing food for the immortal—fruit for the gods. That the Tree of Life bears immortal fruit fit for the gods, so
too the Tree of Life is itself immortal. The description of the Tree of Life in these terms explicitly references a polytheistic metanarrative, drawing into Paradise Lost the mythology of immortality, and element of polytheism. Just as the Tree of Life provides fruit for the gods, the text ambiguously suggest the Tree of Life to be the parent of the Tree of Knowledge in a passage spoken by Adam,

He who requires
From us no other service than to keep
This one, this easy charge, of all the trees
In Paradise that bear delicious fruit
So various, not to taste that only Tree
Of Knowledge planted by the Tree of Life. (IV: 419-424)

I dare to interpret “planted by” in the last line of this passage as an act performed by the Tree of Life in order to suggest the immortality of both of these trees. Given this relationship, how then does the Tree of Knowledge cross over from the polytheistic to a monotheistic metanarrative founded on the grounds of man’s mortality? (see Raw Materials)

Previously, I posited that the immortality of the fruit grown by the Tree of Life is an indication of the immortality of the tree itself; logically speaking then if I am to suggest as I just have, that the Tree of Knowledge planted by the Tree of Life, is also immortal, can we assume that the fruit of this immortal tree is also ambrosial, is also “Of vegetable gold?” This question is difficult, for it is not the gods who eat from the Tree of Knowledge, and it is not a description referencing a polytheistic metanarrative that the text provides for the Tree of Knowledge. Rather the text, subsequent to the description of the Tree of Life, describes the Tree of Knowledge. “And next to Life/ Our death, the Tree of Knowledge, grew fast by;/ Knowledge of good bought dear by knowing ill”(IV: 220-222). The Tree of Knowledge is characterized as “Our death,” as mortality directed by God in his commanding Adam and Eve not to eat from the tree. Similarly Adam says of the Tree of Knowledge, “So near grows death to life, whate’er death is,
Some dreadful thing no doubt, for well thou know’st: God hath pronounced it death to taste that Tree” (IV:425-427). God’s command over Adam and Eve, references a monotheistic metanarrative. By tasting the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, Adam and Eve are rendered mortal by God. However, the "vegetable gold" is a pivotal articulation of nourishment or knowledge that is provided, regardless of God's command, to both the gods and our first parents.

As a symbol, vegetable gold stands for a radical idea of anticlericalism, serving the idea that gods, or the clergy are no more privileged in their belief of God, than the common man, Adam and Eve. The symbol serves not only to level the sovereignty between priests and laymen it illustrates and idea of Christianity, belief in God as a state of mind, not a set of commands.

Another radical idea that Hill outlines is the denunciation of sacred imagery; radicals saw the imagery and glorification of the church as extreme blasphemy.

Secondly comes strong emphasis on study of the Bible, and use of its texts — as interpreted by the individual conscience— to criticize the ceremonies and sacraments of the church. Worship of images, for instance, was denounced as idolatry. Sacredness was denied to church buildings: worship and prayer could take place anywhere (71).

This viewpoint is one that has previously pinned Milton as an iconoclast, for his insistence on intellectual and religious freedom could be expressed by shattering those images and idols that served as a reminder of God’s command over man (Hill, 262).

The explicit denunciation of Biblical idols is found in Book I, where Milton calls upon his muse to figure images of the fallen angels, “Say, Muse, their names then known, who first, who last” (I: 376). Following this summoning, his muse proceeds to name the fallen angels; “First Moloch, horrid king, besmeared with blood” (I: 392), “Next Chemos, th’ obscene dread of Moab’s sons” (I: 406), “Him followed Rimmon whose delightful
seat/ Was fair Damascus on the fertile banks/ Of Abbana and Pharpar, lucid streams./ He also ‘gainst the house of God was bold” (I: 467) and the most demonishly figured,

“Came Astoreth whom the Phoenicians called Astarte, Queen of Heav’n, with crescent horns, To whose bright image nightly by the moon Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs, In Sion also not unsung where stood Her temple on th’ offensive mountain, built By that uxorious king whose heart, though large, Begiled by fair idolatresses, fell To idols foul. (I: 438-446)

This last description of Astoreth, makes Milton’s critical position, with respect to the Catholic church’s practice of idolatry, explicit. Astoreth is the idol for whom all Catholics are rendered ultimately submissive to God’s command, “uxorious king[s]” and supremely ignorant of deception “begiled by fair idolatresses”. As a satire, Milton’s figuring of the fallen angels after heretical characters, ridicules the hypocrisy of religious practices, specifically Catholicism, that glorified Christian imagery. Hill’s third outline of a radical idea is that of anti-Trinitarianism. The denial of Christ’s divinity and the Holy Ghost was a heretical view that had proved dangerous in the previous century, and no doubt remained underground for that reason.

The rapid spread of anit-Trinitarianism both in the liberty of Edward VI’s reign and in prisons under Mary gave rise to great alarm among the orthodox. In 1555 the divinity of Christ was the subject of discussions in an underground meeting in a Colchester tavern. Between 1548 and 1612 at least eight persons were burnt in England for heresies concerning the Trinity, including Marlowe’s friend Francis Kett, grandson of the leader of the Norfolk rebels of 1549 (73).

A rebel claim and a resurfacing radical claim, anti-Trinitarianism appears
consistent with the first view Hill brings up about the equality of the laymen with the clergy. If the radicals contended that knowledge of God lay in an individual mode of belief rather than a knowledge or truth oriented curriculum; it is consistent that they would reject the sovereignty of Christ’s presence on earth, and favor his humanity. “Another recurrent doctrine is anti-Trinitarianism, heretical emphasis on the humanity of Christ”(72). Milton address this view, highlighting the humanness of Jesus in Book III.

In Book III God tells of Satan’s entrance into the garden and his aim to deceive Adam and Eve, to bring them to the fall.

And now
Through all restraint broke loose he wings his way
Not far off Heav’n in the precincts of light
Directly towards the new created world
And Man there placed, with purpose to assay
If him by force he can destroy or worse
By some false guile pervert. And shall pervert,
For Man will hearken to his glozing lies
And easily transgress the sole command,
Sole pledge of his obedience. So will fall
He and his faithless progeny. (III: 86-96)

God’s foresight is limitless, he sees Satan enter into Eden, and he foretells the fall of Adam and Eve. However, his command is bound by Adam and Eve’s free will, “I made him just and right,/ Sufficient to have stood though free to fall” (III: 98-99). God continues, helpless to the force and power of their freewill, “They themselves decreed/ Their own revolt, not I. If I foreknew/ Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault/ Which had no less proved certain unforeknown”(III: 116-119). As God’s son listens to his fathers foretelling of the fall of man,

Milton describes Christ’s humanity.
Thus while God spake ambrosial fragrance filled
All Heav’n and in the blessed spirits elect
Sense of new joy ineffable diffused.
Beyond compare the Son of God was seen
Most glorious. In Him all His Father shone
Substantially expressed and in His face
Divine compassion visibly appeared:
Love without end and without measure grace, (III: 135-142).

In these lines Christ is given human qualities, his face is described as showing “divine compassion.” Christ’s compassion is “divine” not because he is the Son of God, but because the magnitude of his compassion is comparable to the might of God. Christ inquires as to the prospect of Adam and Eve ever finding grace. In response God proposes to deliver grace to Adam and Eve in exchange for one of his heavenly beings immortality. “Say, Heavn’ly Pow’rs, where shall we find such love?/ Which of ye will be mortal to redeem/ Man’s mortal crime and, just, th’ unjust to save?/ Dwells in all Heaven charity so dear?” (III; 213-216). God proposes immortal life in heaven in exchange for mortal life on earth to save man; “He asked, but all the Heavn’ly choir stood mute/ And silence was in Heav’n”(III; 217-218).

In John 3:16, the Bible tells us, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life”. In the Bible God chose his Son, he gave his Son, commanded his Son to be sent to earth to save man. Milton’s text does not give God this power, as God is powerless in the face of free will with respect to Adam and Eve, he is also powerless to choose a heavenly being, to take away their immortal presence in heaven for the sake of man. However, it is Christ who volunteers, Christ whose humanity calls him to ask God to send him to save man.

Behold Me then, Me for him, life for life
I offer. On Me let thine anger fall.
Account Me Man. I for his sake will leave
Thy bosom and this glory next to Thee
Freely put off and for him lastly die
Well pleased. On Me let Death wreck all his rage! (III:236-241)

Milton’s portrayal of Christ’s humanity, through his compassion and his volunteer effort to save man illustrates the concept of anti-Trinitarianism, a radical idea in the 1640s. Up to now, it is apparent that Milton’s political and religious views were legitimately radical. *Paradise Lost* articulates the radical ideas of anticlericalism, iconoclasm and anti-Trinitariansim, by presenting two metanarratives, figuring the fallen angels and illustrating Christ’s humanity.

Finally, Hill presents the doctrine of mortalism. Hill claims with respect to this doctrine; “If at death the body returns into its elements, as a drop of water taken out of the ocean returns to it again, mortalism can also lead to skepticism about the physical existence of heaven and hell” (75). It is important here to remember that Hill does not categorize Milton into any specific group of radicals; these groups varied from one extreme of radicalism to another. The spectrum reaches from a view that maintained a political charge only by objecting to the current political state of England, while other groups went so far as to oppose the political and religious doctrines that governed England. I maintain that it is Milton’s objective to present these views not as his own but as existent in the time and place he was writing. Therefore, with respect to this doctrine, I resist reaching into Milton’s poem for evidence to support Hill’s claim of this view of radicalism. While it may be argued that Milton’s poem can be theorized to support this view of radicalism, I do not think that the denial of the physical existence of heaven and hell was at the forefront of Milton’s goals for *Paradise Lost*. This view deals in a realm that does not seem relevant to the imaginative aspect of Milton’s work. “Mortalism could be accompanied by, or lead to, a species of materialism”(Hill, 74). I believe it is Milton’s priority to explore imaginatively the radical viewpoints that hovered in the air of mid-seventeenth century England, and an analysis of a viewpoint
that leads to a form of materialism feels to me to be irrelevant.

Posted by Research Materials at 7:13 AM

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Poetic Image-\textit{n.} an image essentially distinct from nature.

\textit{From Paul de Man's essay, "Intentional Structure of the Romantic Image"}

\textit{i.e.} Tierney Gearon's photograph uses multiple exposures to envision imagined landscapes.

Consider this image alongside Mary Smith's reading of Milton's \textit{Paradise Lost}:

"That is, instead of the poetic image as a photograph, Milton creates a poetic image more akin to a collage. He calls on his muse to write a landscape that considers views from various heights.

Sing Heav'nly Muse, that on the secret top
Of Oreb or of Sinai didst inspire
That shepherd who first taught the chosen seed,
In the beginning, how the heav’ns and earth
Rose out of chaos (I; 6-10)

On the peak of Oreb is where Moses met God and God appeared as a burning bush. From this peak, from this view Milton isolates a piece of the landscape to construct his poetic image. In the same line Milton isolates a piece of the landscape as viewed from the peak of Sinai, a peak higher than Oreb and covered in darkness. Sinai, while part of the same mountain range as Oreb no doubt presents a view vastly different from the peak of Oreb. Milton requires both of these views to imagine and to represent the rise of heaven out of chaos. It is crucial that two views be positioned side by side, in order to testify to the variability of an experience and figuring of nature” (Postmodernism & Paradise Lost, 23).
Research Materials

Glossary

- Poetic Image

Raw Materials

- Final Outline
- First Study: Eve's Dream
- Concept Map
- Pollen’s facts about Apples
- Milton’s Use of "Purpose"

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O sole in quem my thoughts find all rest, my glory, my perfection, glad I see Thy face and more entranced, for this night (Such night till this I never passed) have dreamed, if dreamed, not as I oft am wont, of thee, Works of day past or morrow's next design But of offence and trouble which my mind Knew never till this inclement night. Methought Chose at mine ear one called me forth to walk With gentle voice. I thought it thine. It said, "Why sleep'rt thou, Eve? Now is the pleasant time, The cool, the silent, noon where silence yields To the right-marking light that now doth awake Time seems not his love-harrowed song, Now reigns Full o'er the moon and with more pleasing light Shadowy sets off the face of things in vain If none regard, Eve's walk's with all his eye Where to behold bare thou. Nature's desire, In whose sight all things joy with noviciate, Ameled by thy beauty still to gaze." I rose as at thy call but found thee not. To find thee I delayed thee my walk. And on methought alone I passed through ways That brought me to a sudden to the Tree Of untainted Knowledge. For it seemed, Much later to my fancy than by day. And as I would'rt look'rd instead, because it smelt One shaped and winged like one of those from Ithun's By so oft seen. His dewy locks distil At first he also gazed And "O fair plant," said he, "with fruit unharmed, Delight one to cause thy soul and taste thy most, Not god, nor man! Is knowledge so displeased? Or envy or what essence forsaith to taste? Forbidden who will, some shall from me withhold Longer thy stallment good: why does not love?" This said, he paused not but with vent'rous arm He plucked it, he tasted. Me dumbly horror chilled As much with words sowned with a dead so bold. But he thus overreplied: "I said divine, Sweet of thyself but much more sweet than cropp'd, Forbidden hence, it seems, as only fit For gods that are able to make gods of man And why not gods of men since good the more Communicated more abundant goods.
The Author not impoised but honored more?
Here, happy creation, Let angels Fly,
Partake thou also! Happy through this art,
Happy thou may'st be, worthier came not he.
Taste this and be henceforth among the gods
Thyself a godhead, not to earth confined
But sometimes is the air so fair! Sometimes
Ascend to Heav'n, by much divine, and see
What life the gods live there- and such live thou?
No saying he draw sigh and to me held,
E'en to my mouth, of that same fruit held part
Which he had procured. The pleasant savoy smell
So quickened appetite that I mirthfulness,
Could not but taste. Forthwith up to the clouds
With him I flew and underneath behold!
The earth unsoughted immortal, a prospect wide
And various, wonder'ning at my flight and change
To this high æmolatia. Suddenly
My guide was gone and I, mirthfulness, sank down
And fell asleep. But O how glad I walked
To find this but a dream. (5.28-85).
that of the knowledge of his states as a preluded encounter. Only by God’s forbidding it to be known does it become a thing which possesses knowledge. Knowledge that Adam and Eve have been commanded against encountering. This latter characterization of the true Satan relation and makes explicit, 15. 20-25.

“O fruit divine, which of myself hath made thee? Forbidden thou, it seems, so only fit for gods yet able to make gods of man. And why not gods of man since good the more? Communion with more abundant grace? The Author not imposed by his persons more?” (5:71-73).

Satan’s allusion of “fruit divine” means a reflection, meaning the fruit of the tree as from God and God-like. Interpreting the performance of Satan’s election presents as a preventative and a characteristic expression of the first, with implications that place the authority of God over man at stake. Satan points out man’s capacity to “crop” or cultivate the fruit to make it receive, as well as “communion”, by acting the fruit. Satan points out God’s authority over man, in that his creates an opportunity for humans: the two men proceeds in the command to eat from the Tree of Knowledge. In this passage Satan beautifully explores man’s temptation and his own desire to mediate God’s desire and his own desire. From the height Eve experiences a mode of

 unhappier, literally than that which she saw exist from the earth. From then the exploration of other modes of some entities are identified by the existence of the earth from this height as

“compliance”, “compliance”, “in compliance with the various”. How then does this provide evidence for God’s authority being compromised? The evidence is the tension between the eavesdropping, the eavesdropping, and reenter into the darkness, which accompanies it. Suddenly, God’s guidance was gone and it, unthought, such/devices fell asleep. (5:91-92).

This passage provides a particular meaning of Eve’s dreams in which the authority of God is put aside with the exception of the tree. Satan’s sensitivity to two ways of knowing the tree provides Eve with no limited intentions for eating from the tree. The experience of the dreams results in a feeling of divinity for waking up to Adam and a terror for having seen all of that she saw in her dreams. The experience of Eve’s dreams upon awakening provokes her experience in the dreams after she ate the apple, finding the blindness of divinity, and the terror of abandonment.
Footnote: to conversation about the ambrosial fruit, part of a larger discussion concerning the overlap of metanarratives.

Michael Pollan writes of apple seeds in *The Botany of Desire*, 

"Slice an apple through at its equator, and you will find five small chambers arrayed in a perfectly symmetrical starburst- a pentagram. Each of the chambers holds a seed ... The second, more important fact about those seeds concerns their genetic contents, which are likewise full of surprises. Every seed in that apple, not to mention every seed riding down the Ohio alongside John Chapman [aka Jonny Appleseed], contains the genetic instructions for a completely new and different apple tree, one that, if planted would bear only the most glancing resemblance to its parents" (10).

Could the theoretical disparity - that is the fact that the Tree of Life belongs to the polytheistic metanarrative and the Tree of Knowledge to the monotheistic metanarrative- yet the Tree of Life planted the Tree of Knowledge, find biological support?

Does biological support for a theoretical ambiguity suffice?

It cannot hurt. Plus it is very interesting, this bit about apples. Not to mention that the first fact Pollen points out is that these seeds contain a small quantity of cyanide, what he asserts to be an evolutionary defense mechanism. Cyanide indicates mortality.
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I stated that "This necessitates a reformulation of the question of the legitimacy of knowledge" (45). The reformulation results in progress in knowledge being indicated by "...a new move (a new argument) within the established rules; the other, in the invention of new rules, in other words, a change to a new game" (45). I thoughtMillion could illustrate these results. In Book Four, Adam voices the unresolved concept of death, the first man alive, or can anyone alive know death? "The nongrowth of death, life, what’s death to? Some dreadful thing no doubt, for well then we know God hasn’t pronounced it to be true that two? The only sign of our obedience half" (4.425-429). It is evident here that the notion of death is "dreadful" due to its prescription as a consequence. In the last quoted line, Adam constructs a system governed by an obedience to God, in which the internal limitation is the Tree of Knowledge. In book nine "To some God with our one goal, on crime (if it be) of turning this fair field" (9.971-972). This is Eve’s uncertainty of the act resulting as an absolute, it becomes in fact a creature of a new game, to live outside Paradise with obedience.

The paradox scientific activity by loses power to prospective system within which descriptive statements are able to be found true or false, and I pointed again the question "... what the discourse of power consists of and if it can constitute a legitimization" (46). He distinguishes descriptive and prescriptive language games and adds the technical game to the list, endorsing it exclusively with the term "force". I am excluding the case in which force operates by means of terror" (46). This notion already allows us to begin to understand the Adam and Eve’s system, their concept of death, as indicated by a consequence, a threat by God, each is not the case. God’s threat was in Lynden’s words, "... the efficacy of such force is based entirely on the threat to eliminate the opposing player, not on making a better move than he" (46). Since such is not the case by the end of Million’s epic, God’s threat becomes an empty one, one intended to eliminate the opposing player, however, Adam and Eve’s, "violated with native honor clad" (46) become situated within the same system as God. God is not creator of the system, merely a player. Where is the technology in Million’s Dream? "The organs of her fancy and will then forget illusions as she list, phantasms and dreams" (4.802-803), is compared to advances in warfare, "As when a spark, Lights see a lump of silver powder laid fit for the air" (4.814-816). This simile contributes to a notion of Eve’s aid in knowledge, a metaphorical technological aid which will contribute to the force of a legitimization, allowing rules to be changed, or invented.

"Why just then, Satan, breaks the bounds prescribed? To fly transgressions and disturb the charge? Of others who approve not to transgress? By thy example but have promise and right? To question the holy entrance on this place.

(1) Arthabe: Lynden’s central point
- locate
define term
- interpret meaning

(2) Million: choose 12 passages
- Eve/satan
- Satan’s first emergence into Garden

Answering the Question: What Is Postmodernism? (71-85)
When Lynden poses the question, “What is postmodernism?”, he answers it in terms of the modern. The postmodern is part of the modern; it describes the constant possibility of modernism. Postmodernism does not exist from modernism at any moment; it identifies that aspect of modernism, the unapproachable, by fixing it of the changes within the aesthetic and cognitive judgment. The arts and sciences. Lynden provides an understanding of the postmodern with respect to modernism finding a difference among the two with respect to the sublime sentiment.

Lynden explores the postmodern handling of the unapproachable by avoiding a description of the human subject as lacking. Rather, “The emphasis can be placed on the powerlessness of the faculty of representation, on the condition for presence felt by the human subject, on the absence and fate will which inhabit him in spirit of everything” (71). In the case of writing, the faculty of presentation, words and language have incompatible deficits when it comes to the human subject, that is why Lynden makes the following statement, which distinguishes the names and imagination from the presentable. “The emphasis can be placed, rather, on the power of the faculty to sense, on the ‘sensibility’ so to speak...since it is not the business of our understanding whether or not human sensibility or imagination can match what it conceived” (70).

Lynden finds the difference between modernism and postmodernism and their respective ways of presenting the unapproachable through the sublime. Modern aesthetics is a testament of the sublime sentiment; focusing the pleasure and pain, the effect resulting in what provides the reader with a hope which is not part of the sublime sentiment. Modern aesthetics is an aesthetic of the sublime through a nostalgics, one. It allows the unapproachable to be put forward only as the missing content, but the form, because of its recognizable commodity, continues to offer the made of viewer matter for sale and pleasure. (83)
The sublime sentiment, Lyttelton articulates, is "an intricate combination of pleasure and pain; the pleasure that reason should exceed all presentation, the pain that imagination or sensibility should not be equal to the concept"(78). In this definition reason is incapable of communicating with its sensible, imaginative counterparts. The sublime results in a palpable, tangible dissonance, a pain, an untranslatable element, intrinsic alongside pleasure; this is the sublime sentiment. Where the modern holds back, results from resisting hope, the postmodern manages to present the unrepresentable in sensible media, resisting rules, categories, and historical judgments. "A postmodern artist or writer is in the position of a philosopher: the text he writes, the work he produces are not in principle governed by preestablished rules, and they cannot be judged according to a determining judgment, by applying familiar categories to the text or to the world"(80).

After finding the difference between modern aesthetics and postmodern aesthetics in the sublime, the postmodern is realized beyond experimental or historical invention. Finally, it must be clear that it is our business not to supply ready-made street affections to the conceivable which cannot be presented"(81). Modern aesthetics provided us with a way of presenting the unrepresentable, which differs through the sentiment of the sublime from postmodern aesthetics. Postmodernism retains the pain, the terror that modern aesthetics relegated to nostalgic position. Postmodernism maintains a presentation of the unrepresentable through existence, which preserves the terror of sublimity.
The description of the Tree of Life references a polytheistic narrative, while the Tree of Knowledge references a monotheistic narrative. The presence of the two narratives affects the narrative to reflect the universality of a limitation when it comes to understanding meaning from the text. Both the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge, when understood as their status as narratives, are purged, exiled, lost to that from the garden of Eden.

This reading of Paradise Lost attempts to reach the Promised Land through an interpretation of the implications of Milton’s descriptions. The Tree of Opposites is a narrative of polytheism, while the Tree of Knowledge alludes to a monotheistic narrative. The conflict found in the presence of two narratives is that they provide reference for one narrating gathers than provide the references for narrative elements without any predetermined meaning. Since the narratives do not allow a unity amongst the narrative elements the opportunity for finding meaning in the text is halted.

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Christopher Hill
With this in mind we see the ruler slide from a polyphonyic metanarrative with respect to the Tree of Life, toward an ambiguous area of characterization of the fruit the Tree of Knowledge may have given the interpretation of the Tree of Knowledge having been planted by the Tree of Life. The ruler continues to slide toward a monolithic metanarrative with respect to the description of Tree of Knowledge. Such a sliding role, while referencing two distinct metanarratives through a grey area, where order and classification cannot be pinned down, however, these metanarratives, situated side by side, do not negate each other, or challenge each other. Indeed, the metanarratives become incommensurate in terms of prescriptive statements, as they demarcate a scene that could not otherwise be seen. I would like to suggest that this incommensurability is terms of classification creates a new view. The work of these metanarratives is consistent with the heterodox political views that Hill found to be common among the radicals in England during the mid 17th century. [last sentence should be in a new paragraph]

In his historical text, Milton and the English Revolution, Hill positions Milton as a master of political radicals, the likes of Levellers, Diggers and Roundheads. While Hill specifies that Milton did not aspire to any of these active groups, he does find many of Milton's political views to be in common with these groups. At the same time, Milton's political theories were expressed with finesse and eloquence, but they were for the most part not original. The theory of which this paper is particularly interested is the view of resistance: "[...] that wherever there are not binding" and "[...] that resistance to tyranny was not only a right but a duty" (100) [work sentence, which is incommensurate]. These views were particularly concerned with the political and religious situation in England at the time. Resistance is reflected in Paradise Lost: the role of a polyphonyic to monolithic metanarrative across over uncharted territory. My reader will remember a question earlier that I found difficult to answer, and which indeed did not require an answer at the time for the completion of my interpretation of Milton's text. Now again, that question is, logically speaking then, if I am to suggest as I just have, that the Tree of Knowledge, planted by the Tree of Life, is also immortal, can we assume that the fruit of this immortal tree is also immortal? I would like at this time to add to this, how are we to answer that question, are we to know the fruit to be unembellished by the subject, Adam and Eve, or the object the Tree of Knowledge? Does a parent always have all fruit characterized within the same metanarrative? In the case of Paradise Lost the state of the monarchy in 17th century England, the answer according to Milton and other radicals was no. The [Milton] agreed with Levellers and Diggers in their opposition to Calvinism, their rejection of monachism and the House of Lords, their belief that magistrates should be elected. [...] (Ill, 100). Just because England had always been a monarchy should not keep new forms of governments from developing. [last sentence should be in a new paragraph]

In this paper I have drawn a parallel between the way in which the text of Paradise Lost shifts from one metanarrative to another and the radical political views of Milton's time. By doing so, it has been found that the metanarratives are described side by side but remain incommensurate. In their incommensurability, the metanarratives create a new way before viewed some Eden, "it was a place/Cherub's by the sun's origin planter when it fearing All things to man's delightfull saw (IV. 696-697). The Garden of Eden, "barren" implies a view, which is not complete but is continued. Similarly, political views that Milton shared with groups such as the Levellers, the Diggers and the Roundheads indicate, in so far as they asked for a political structure in England that had previously never existed because the views at the present moment demanded it. These radicals saw new issues arising side by side an antiquarian government, and demanded a new political structure, a new view for which to address their issues (lines here at the end).
In his essay, The Structure of Romantic Nature Imagery (1970), William K. Wimsatt Jr. identifies the Romantic landscape as a literal, material landscape. Our ideas of the natural world enter us through our senses. The poet expresses these ideas of the natural world through language. Wimsatt argues that Romantic poetry is essential in its capacity to present an experience of nature through language in such a way that is not dissimilar from an experience of nature outside of language. “[We may see] romantic poetry as a step toward the directness of sensory presentation” (88). In Wimsatt’s view the “imitative powers of language” (87) enable the poet to recreate nature. Language is rendered a mimetic force. As such, Wimsatt continues to premise his argument on the claim that the imagination is a faculty capable of merging or “fusing” the material or the sensory and thought. This merger, according to Wimsatt, recreates a landscape, similar to a photograph.

A photograph in its 5x7 frame serves Wimsatt’s idea of the merger between thought and sensory perception. Photography captures an image that serves as a testament to an experience. The figure in the image is not the figure of experience. The image is a representation of the figure of experience. However, since the difference lies merely in the form of representation, it can be said that a fountain in a photograph is still the fountain in the park where the picture was taken— it still is. For Wimsatt the gap between the figure and its representation can be bridged.
presentation of the photograph can serve the viewer as actually having had an experience of sitting in the park, looking at the fountain. Similarly, the poetic image in its shift from experience to language, is fixed—that is, the poetic image crosses over from nature to language unaltered. This inconspicuous shift, as Wimsatt sees it, is conceivable because of language’s system of signs: “But romantic nature poetry tends to achieve iconicity by a more direct sensory imitation of something headlong and impassioned, less ordered, nearer perhaps to the subrational” (87).

Wimsatt’s argument finds nature unordered, perhaps reckless, in need of and possible of universal presentation through language. Similar to Wimsatt’s view of language and with respect to the photograph, imagine the process of the photographer. The photographer photographs the fountain in the foreground where children are swimming. Their figures are blurred because they are moving and splashing around. An ice cream cart sits in the middle ground whilst rolling hills line the background. The photographer composes this image, positioning the elements, the fountain, the children, the ice cream cart, the rolling hills, intentionally so as to convey to the viewer an experience of human life in the midst of quiet nature. The photographer uses techniques, the rule of thirds, and slow shutter speed to compose the image so that it is readable. Wimsatt sees the poetic image being composed as intentionally and technically as the photographic image. Wimsatt’s poetic image then becomes bound within the system of language. The poetic image is framed by Wimsatt’s conception of language. Thus, the reader is limited to an experience of nature that lies inside a frame, an experience of nature that has been had before. Wimsatt’s poetic image does not allow for original experience of nature or use language.

Milton’s poem does not stand to construct a landscape according to Wimsatt’s theory. In the opening lines of Book I of Paradise Lost, Milton proposes a reading of the fall as variable. That is, instead of the poetic image as a photograph, Milton creates a poetic image more akin to a collage. He calls on his muse to write a landscape that considers views
from various heights.

Sing Heav’nly Muse, that on the secret top
Of Oreb or of Sinai didst inspire
That shepherd who first taught the chosen seed,
In the beginning, how the heav’ns and earth
Rose out of chaos (I; 6-10)

On the peak of Oreb is where Moses met God and God appeared as a burning bush. From this peak, from this view Milton isolates a piece of the landscape to construct his poetic image. In the same line Milton isolates a piece of the landscape as viewed from the peak of Sinai, a peak higher than Oreb and covered in darkness. Sinai, while part of the same mountain range as Oreb no doubt presents a view vastly different from the peak of Oreb. Milton requires both of these views to imagine and to represent the rise of heaven out of chaos. It is crucial that two views be positioned side by side, in order to testify to the variability of an experience and representation of nature.

Unlike Wimsatt, Milton uses language not as a universal system but as a mode of creating a landscape thick with tension. The two mountain peaks contrast light, the burning bush, and dark, tall and taller. Similar to Wimsatt though, the natural world seen from the two peaks is one of disorder, of chaos. Instead of using language as a universal system of signs to order the chaos, Milton uses language to create an original landscape, a landscape in which he may “justify the ways of God to men” (I; 10).

De Man’s theory of the poetic image allows the imagination to enter the text and replace a traditional mode of representation. The imagination’s view is a constructed view— one created to replace an existing view.

In the same way that Milton uses language to originate a landscape, Paul de Man theorizes language as essentially capable of origination in Intentional Structure of the Romantic Image (1970). For this reason language is incapable of direct sensory presentation. Origination, says de Man, is the ontological distinction between language, more specifically the
word and nature, specifically the natural object. De Man states: “For it is in the essence of language to be capable of origination, but of never achieving the absolute identity with itself that exists in the natural object”(69). If words are capable of origination, then two conclusions may follow: one, a word’s beginning or origin is determinable and two, this beginning constitutes its existence. Rather than the imagination fusing language with sensory perceptions, for de Man the imagination, in its dealings with language, will always create a poetic image essentially distinct from nature. Similar to Wimsatt, de Man finds nature to be disordered, chaotic insofar as its origin cannot be realized: “But the natural object, safe in its immediate being, seems to have no beginning and no end. Its permanence is carried by the stability of its being, whereas a beginning implies a negation of permanence...”(68). The natural object seems to have no beginning and no end because it is conceivable to think of that which came before it and that which will spring from it, forever. On the other hand, the word, whose origin is determinable, whose beginning constitutes its existence, is impermanent. That is, the word, its beginning, what it means, what it stands for, is fleeting, is momentary. Milton identifies language as capable of origination. Thus his intent in creating a landscape is not to make it ‘readable’ but to make it conceivable. By drawing views from multiple heights, he constructs a landscape that is a collage of multiple perspectives. The opening lines of Paradise Lost continues, for perhaps the view of Sion hill will help to appropriate the landscape Milton is creating in order to justify the ways of God to men. Of Sion hill:

Or if Sion hill
Delight thee more and Siloa’s brook that flowed
Fast by the oracle of God, I thence
Invoke thy aid to my advent’rous song
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above th’ Aonian mount while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme (I; 12-16).

The necessity to create a landscape in order to say what has not ever been said is, for Milton, an adventure. Through poetry, Milton embarks upon an adventure—an exploration—via language of the social state of seventeenth-century England. Using a conception of language as capable of origination Milton traverses the landscape of the imagination. Milton employs the innovative faculty of the imagination in search of justice in the name of God.

Similar to de Man’s critique of Wimsatt, de Man critiques a view of romanticism that prioritizes symbolic diction over allegorical diction. With respect to the relationship between language and the subject of language de Man states: “For this dialectic originates, it must be remembered, in the assumed predominance of the symbol as the outstanding characteristic of romantic diction, and this predominance must, in its turn, be put into question” (198). Putting the symbol into question will lead to an alternative interpretation of the romantic image, one that is consistent with de Man’s idea of the poetic image. With respect to the poetic image, de Man argues that the originating nature of the poetic image is characteristic of romantic poetry. This position requires that the relationship between experience and representation be examined according to the differences between an experience of nature and a representation of nature. Similarly, de Man discusses the relationship between subject and object with respect to its differences. This methodology allows him to remain consistent with a view of language as capable of origination. The subject’s disparity from language is similar to that of the experience from its representation. Through this disparity de Man finds a contradiction in the notion of the priority of nature or object (experience) over self or subject (representation). De Man states: “They are obliged, on the one hand, to assert the priority of object over subject that is implicit in an organic conception of language” (197). The contradiction arises because it is not a conception of language as capable
as containing symbols capable of fusing the subject and the object gives weight to the symbol. The object is prioritized over the subject, the representation over the experience. However, that is inconsistent with an idea of the symbol as a unit of language. De Man’s critique is that this prioritizing of the object over the subject in turn prioritizes the symbol over allegory, a hierarchy that is arbitrary and inconsistent with its theoretical lineage. Thinking about the photograph as a metaphor for Wimsatt’s view of the function of language, de Man’s observation of the symbol as a unit of language continues to critique a view of language as a unifying system:

There is the same stress on the analogical unity of nature and consciousness, the same priority given to the symbol as the unit of language in which the subject-object synthesis can take place, the same tendency to transfer in nature attributes of consciousness and to unify it organically with respect to a center that acts, for natural objects, as the identity of the self functions for a consciousness (200).

Thus, de Man’s critique of language viewed according to Wimsatt as well as other critics of romanticism leads de Man to investigate the role allegory plays, specifically in Rousseau’s novel La Nouvelle Heloise. After careful analysis de Man shows the way in which Rousseau’s text actually prioritizes allegorical diction over symbolic diction. His argument finds evidence in the fact that the text admits to its ontological status as art and not nature: “From the beginning we are told that the natural aspect of the site is in fact the result of extreme artifice, that in this bower of bliss, contrary to the tradition of the topos, we are entirely in the realm of art and not that of nature” (202). Similarly, in the passage above, Milton tells us that the site of his poem is not akin to nature but to imagination by calling on his muse. Milton employs an ancient tradition, calling on the muse to tell what Milton cannot himself say. Above, I concluded that the poetic image is a product of the imagination; similarly it is logical to conclude that the poetic image is also in the realm of art. This conclusion is
not only consistent with a view of language as capable of origination, but it supports the contradiction de Man finds as a result of the prioritization of the symbol over allegory.

The view of language that de Man criticizes is consistent with Lyotard’s critique of metalanguage. Lyotard’s critique in Just Gaming (1985) is concerned with a distinction between statements of opinion and statements of fact with respect to the political. Lyotard clarifies a conception of the political: “Therefore, there is no science of the political. I would put it otherwise: There is no metalanguage, and by metalanguage, I mean the famous theoretical discourse that is supposed to ground political and ethical decisions that will be taken as the basis of its statements” (Lyotard, 28). This critique is analogous to de Man’s concern for the distinction between subject and object, nature and the experience of nature. By arguing the prioritization of allegory over symbol, de Man concludes that the language of allegory must be capable of origination, intended not to represent but to construct a way to “justify the ways of God to men”. De Man states: “The language is purely figural, not based on perception, less still on an experienced dialectic between nature and consciousness” (203). Therefore, my hypothesis is that if allegory does in fact use "purely figural" language then the effect will be a conflict between the work that allegorizes (Paradise Lost) and the work that is allegorized (the Bible).

Paradise Lost explicitly allegorizes the Bible. What constitutes this work as an allegory is not that the intent of Milton’s text is similar to the intent of the Bible but that it differs. This is seen in the final lines of Milton’s text when Adam and Eve are sent out of Eden for disobeying God. The Bible intends to justify the ways of God to men by showing Adam and Eve’s shame as the punishment for disobeying God. Milton’s text justifies the ways of God to men by showing that Adam and Eve’s failure to comply with God’s requests sends them to another landscape wherefore to seek out other possible ways of loving God. In the final lines of Paradise Lost, Adam and Eve look upon the horizon outside of Eden as a plane of
Some natural tears they dropped but wiped them soon.
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.
They hand in hand with wand’ring steps and slow
Through Eden took their solitary way (XII; 645-650).

According to de Man the allegory stands because there is a conflict between the mode the Bible uses to justify the ways of God to men and the mode Milton uses. The relationship between God and Man is not based on persistent repentance. Milton views the relationship between God and man as a practice of discovering God and a tolerance for the various means of knowing God that these discoveries produce.

The Bible uses nakedness as a symbol for shame; before Adam and Eve ate from the Tree of Knowledge they were unashamed. The Bible states: “And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed” (Genesis 2; 25). After their fall their nakedness causes them shame: “And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden” (3; 7-8). The Bible employs nakedness as a symbol of the difference between a prelapsarian mankind and postlapsarian mankind. This difference is indicated by the shame postlapsarian man feels as indicated by his need to cover his nakedness from his fellow man and from God. Contrary to the Bible, Milton’s text presents quite a different experience of our first parents after eating from the Tree of Knowledge. Nakedness is not employed as a symbol in Paradise Lost. Instead it marks the difference between the Bible and Paradise Lost. Nakedness as a symbol does not carry over from the Bible to Paradise Lost. The effect of this difference is the undermining of the authority of the Bible as "truth," and on a less
grand scale, the authority of the symbol as evidence of language as stable.

Milton tells of our parents first experience after eating form the Tree of Knowledge:

Bad fruit of knowledge if this be to know
Which leaves us naked thus, of honor void,
Of innocence, of faith, of purity,
Our wonted ornaments now soiled and stained
And in our faces evident the signs
Of foul concupiscence, whence evil store,
Ev’n shame the last of evils—of the first
Be sure then! (IX; 1073-1080)

Nakedness is a descriptor. Nakedness describes Adam and Eve's human experience, it is a representation of the nature that belies experience. Nakedness is employed as a descriptor of experience. It is self-aware of itself as void of “honor,” “of innocence,” “of faith,” and “of purity” of nature. Thus, nature and experience (as represented through language) are distinct from one another. An experience of nature—that is a representation of nature through language—can never be nature itself. By interpreting nakedness as a description of experience, Paradise Lost is inconsistent with the Bible. The difference is between Adam and Eve's first experience according to the Bible and according to Paradise Lost. Instead of rushing to cover themselves, Paradise Lost recounts quite differently Adam and Eve's first experience:

Nor Eve to iterate
Her former trespass feared, the more to soothe
Him with her loved society that now
As with new wine intoxicated both
They swim in mirth and fancy that they feel
Divinity within them breeding wings
Wherewith to scorn the earth. But that false fruit
Far other operation first displayed,
Carnal desire inflaming (IX; 1005-1013)

Milton tells that although their sin will “scorn the earth,” their first experience is the discovery of each other as worthy to one another: “They swim in mirth and fancy that they feel.” Instead of immediate acknowledgment of their disobedience, “Far other operation first displayed.” Adam and Eve consummate their partnership as their first human experience:

Her hand he seized and to a shady bank
Thick overhead with verdant roof embow’red
He led her nothing loath. Flow’rs were the couch,
Pansies and violet and asphodel
And hyacinth, Earth’s freshest softest lap.
There they their fill of love and love’s disport
Took largely, of their mutual guilt the seal,
The solace of their sin (IX; 1037-1044)

Lovemaking for Adam and Eve is “the solace of their sin.” They lay together on “Earth’s freshest softest lap” in the midst of flowers, a scene Milton creates. Subsequent to this scene Milton uses “nakedness” to describe a more general postlapsarian conception of human experience.

These two passages draw attention to the variability of language, criticizing what Lyotard calls metalanguage, and what de Man calls the prioritization of the symbol. Both Lyotard and de Man criticize this view of language because it necessarily limits an interpretation of allegorical work by prioritizing the symbol. De Man states, “For, if the dialectic between subject and object does not designate the main romantic experience, but only one passing moment in a dialectic, and a negative moment at that, since it represents a temptation that has to be overcome, then the entire historical and philosophical pattern changes a great deal” (The Rhetoric of Temporality, 205).

De Man states that it is a temptation to take language as a stable system
and to give the Bible authority. However, the defacement of the symbol leads to the authority of the allegory. The symbol of nakedness does not carry over into Milton's text. Therefore we must now look to the allegory to analyze the authority of the Bible with respect to Paradise Lost. In Paradise Lost the Fall serves to delegitimate the existing system by obstructing the authority of the symbol of nakedness.

The critical approach that de Man provides through a reading of romantic literature is consistent with a reading of Milton’s Paradise Lost. It is evident in his essays, The Nature of Romantic Nature Imagery, and The Rhetoric of Temporality that a conception of language as capable of origination and the priority of allegorical diction over symbolic diction is a shared view of Milton’s poetry and Romantic poetry. De Man’s essays ask us to reconsider the relationship between experience and nature, between subject and object, but most importantly he provides a way of reading Paradise Lost that is radical and theoretically sound.
Christopher Hill, in Milton and the English Revolution, argues that John Milton’s political views fell in line with the ideas that proliferated among a radical underground. English radicalism has hibernated as a culture that existed within discourse, unlike the republicans and the royalists, whose views were recorded, distributed and historized. “This third culture [radical underground] is difficult to identify, because its records are normally unwritten: our evidence comes from hostile accounts of church courts prosecuting heretics, of orthodox spokesmen denouncing them.

What I say about it in this chapter is necessarily tentative” (Hill, 69).

Although he argues that his remarks on the ideas of this political group are tentative, it is apparent in John Milton’s epic poem, Paradise Lost, that these ideas not only existed, but were important to a form of representation that went beyond traditional structures.

Hill outlines four ideas that surfaced in the 1640s; first, anticlericalism, second, the denunciation of sacred imagery, third, anti-Trinitarianism and fourth, mortalism. These ideas were heretical to the political and religious state of England in the mid-seventeenth century. Regardless, these ideas form a concept of radicalism as not merely oppositional to but fundamentally distinct from the current political and religious situation.

As a text that reanimates the characters from the book of Genesis, Milton’s poem brings to the forefront these radical views.

The first radical view that Hill outlines is anticlericalism, the idea that members of the clergy held no sovereignty over the common man.
Anticlericalism, was an avenue toward equality, ...the view that a layman is as good as a parson. It may extend to seeing the whole ecclesiastical hierarchy as antichristian, to rejection of tithes and a state church, to hostility towards universities as training centres for the clergy, to advocacy of ‘mechanic preachers’ who enjoy the spirit of God, so much more important than academic education(71).

The radical view of anticlericalism opposed an academic based production of preachers because they did not see Christ as a literal and objective figure to be learned. Specifically the Familists and the Grindletonians found aspects of Christianity to be closer to a philosophy, or a way of thinking, than to an instructional code. “Familists were said to believe that Christ and Antichrist were not real persons, heaven and hell not real places: all were states of mind. The Grindletonians, like Thomas Munzer before them and Gerrard Winstanley after them, emphasized the spirit as against the letter of the Bible, a doctrine not unknown to Milton” (75). Book IV of Milton’s poem is evidence of his familiarity with these radical ideas.

In Book IV, Milton presents a dual context; a narrative that references two metanarratives, the polytheistic, of gods and the monotheistic, of God. The polytheistic and the monotheistic here have been referred to as metanarratives because they are consistent with their respective historical narratives. The concept of the metanarrative is one that Lyotard employs to describe myths or narratives that are read for the purpose of instruction or impartation of knowledge. The radical intolerance for the “letter of the Bible” or the word as truth, is consistent with a postmodern intolerance for the metanarrative, “Simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodern as incredulity toward metanarratives” (Lyotard, xxiv). Milton’s positioning of two metanarratives in his epic is testament to the radical idea of anticlericalism because it does not allow one metanarrative to take precedence over the other, in fact Milton sees these two metanarratives as necessary to one another, as necessary to the creation of a state of mind rather than an objective mode of being.
Milton alludes to a polytheistic metanarrative when he articulates a description of the Tree of Life. The text describes the Tree of Life with three qualities, all of which reference the polytheistic metanarrative of a classical literary tradition.

Out of the fertile ground He caus’d the grow
All trees of noblest kind for sight, smell, taste
And all amid them stood the Tree of Life
High eminent blooming ambrosial fruit
Of vegetable gold. (IV: 216-220)

In this passage three significant descriptors: “High,” “eminent,” and “blooming ambrosial fruit” allude to a polytheistic metanarrative. “High” characterizes the tree’s stature, directing our gaze above earth, into the heavens, into the realm of the world gods inhabit. “Eminent” characterizes the Tree of Life, as the grandest of its kind, god-like. The Tree of Life is, “blooming ambrosial fruit”; this final descriptor, points readily to the nature of the Tree of Life as vita, providing food for the immortal—fruit for the gods. That the Tree of Life bears immortal fruit fit for the gods, so too the Tree of Life is itself immortal. The description of the Tree of Life in these terms explicitly references a polytheistic metanarrative, drawing into Paradise Lost the mythology of immortality, and element of polytheism. Just as the Tree of Life provides fruit for the gods, the text ambiguously suggest the Tree of Life to be the parent of the Tree of Knowledge in a passage spoken by Adam,

He who requires
From us no other service than to keep
This one, this easy charge, of all the trees
In Paradise that bear delicious fruit
So various, not to taste that only Tree
Of Knowledge planted by the Tree of Life. (IV: 419-424)

I dare to interpret “planted by” in the last line of this passage as an act
performed by the Tree of Life in order to suggest the immortality of both of these trees. Given this relationship, how then does the Tree of Knowledge cross over from the polytheistic to a monotheistic metanarrative founded on the grounds of man’s mortality? (see Raw Materials)

Previously, I posited that the immortality of the fruit grown by the Tree of Life is an indication of the immortality of the tree itself; logically speaking then if I am to suggest as I just have, that the Tree of Knowledge planted by the Tree of Life, is also immortal, can we assume that the fruit of this immortal tree is also ambrosial, is also “Of vegetable gold?” This question is difficult, for it is not the gods who eat from the Tree of Knowledge, and it is not a description referencing a polytheistic metanarrative that the text provides for the Tree of Knowledge. Rather the text, subsequent to the description of the Tree of Life, describes the Tree of Knowledge. “And next to Life/ Our death, the Tree of Knowledge, grew fast by;/ Knowledge of good bought dear by knowing ill”(IV: 220-222). The Tree of Knowledge is characterized as “Our death,” as mortality directed by God in his commanding Adam and Eve not to eat from the tree. Similarly Adam says of the Tree of Knowledge, “So near grows death to life, whate’er death is,/ Some dreadful thing no doubt, for well thou know’st/ God hath pronounced it death to taste that Tree”(IV:425-427). God’s command over Adam and Eve, references a monotheistic metanarrative. By tasting the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, Adam and Eve are rendered mortal by God. However, the "vegetable gold" is a pivotal articulation of nourishment or knowledge that is provided, regardless of God’s command, to both the gods and our first parents.

As a symbol, vegetable gold stands for a radical idea of anticlericalism, serving the idea that gods, or the clergy are no more privileged in their belief of God, than the common man, Adam and Eve. The symbol serves not only to level the sovereignty between priests and laymen it illustrates and idea of Christianity, belief in God as a state of mind, not a set of commands.

Another radical idea that Hill outlines is the denunciation of sacred
imagery; radicals saw the imagery and glorification of the church as extreme blasphemy.

Secondly comes strong emphasis on study of the Bible, and use of its texts — as interpreted by the individual conscience— to criticize the ceremonies and sacraments of the church. Worship of images, for instance, was denounced as idolatry. Sacredness was denied to church buildings: worship and prayer could take place anywhere (71).

This viewpoint is one that has previously pinned Milton as an iconoclast, for his insistence on intellectual and religious freedom could be expressed by shattering those images and idols that served as a reminder of God's command over man (Hill, 262).

The explicit denunciation of Biblical idols is found in Book I, where Milton calls upon his muse to figure images of the fallen angels, “Say, Muse, their names then known, who first, who last” (I: 376). Following this summoning, his muse proceeds to name the fallen angels; “First Moloch, horrid king, besmeared with blood” (I: 392), “Next Chemos, th’ obscene dread of Moab’s sons” (I: 406), “Him followed Rimmon whose delightful seat/ Was fair Damascus on the fertile banks/ Of Abbana and Pharphar, lucid streams./ He also ‘gainst the house of God was bold” (I: 467) and the most demonishly figured,

“This last description of Astoreth, makes Milton’s critical position, with
respect to the Catholic church’s practice of idolatry, explicit. Astoreth is the idol for whom all Catholics are rendered ultimately submissive to God’s command, “uxorious king[s]” and supremely ignorant of deception “begiled by fair idolatresses”. As a satire, Milton’s figuring of the fallen angels after heretical characters, ridicules the hypocrisy of religious practices, specifically Catholicism, that glorified Christian imagery. Hill’s third outline of a radical idea is that of anti-Trinitarianism. The denial of Christ’s divinity and the Holy Ghost was a heretical view that had proved dangerous in the previous century, and no doubt remained underground for that reason.

The rapid spread of anti-Trinitarianism both in the liberty of Edward VI’s reign and in prisons under Mary gave rise to great alarm among the orthodox. In 1555 the divinity of Christ was the subject of discussions in an underground meeting in a Colchester tavern. Between 1548 and 1612 at least eight persons were burnt in England for heresies concerning the Trinity, including Marlowe’s friend Francis Kett, grandson of the leader of the Norfolk rebels of 1549 (73).

A rebel claim and a resurfacing radical claim, anti-Trinitarianism appears consistent with the first view Hill brings up about the equality of the laymen with the clergy. If the radicals contended that knowledge of God lay in an individual mode of belief rather than a knowledge or truth oriented curriculum; it is consistent that they would reject the sovereignty of Christ’s presence on earth, and favor his humanity. “Another recurrent doctrine is anti-Trinitarianism, heretical emphasis on the humanity of Christ” (72). Milton address this view, highlighting the humanness of Jesus in Book III.

In Book III God tells of Satan’s entrance into the garden and his aim to deceive Adam and Eve, to bring them to the fall.

And now

Through all restraint broke loose he wings his way
Not far off Heav’n in the precincts of light
And Man there placed, with purpose to assay
If him by force he can destroy or worse
By some false guile pervert. And shall pervert,
For Man will hearken to his glozing lies
And easily transgress the sole command,
Sole pledge of his obedience. So will fall
He and his faithless progeny. (III: 86-96)

God’s foresight is limitless, he sees Satan enter into Eden, and he foretells the fall of Adam and Eve. However, his command is bound by Adam and Eve’s free will, “I made him just and right,/ Sufficient to have stood though free to fall” (III: 98-99). God continues, helpless to the force and power of their freewill, “They themselves decreed/ Their own revolt, not I. If I foreknew/ Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault/ Which had no less proved certain unforeknown”(III: 116-119). As God’s son listens to his fathers foretelling of the fall of man,

Milton describes Christ’s humanity.
Thus while God spake ambrosial fragrance filled
All Heav’n and in the blessed spirits elect
Sense of new joy ineffable diffused.
Beyond compare the Son of God was seen
Most glorious. In Him all His Father shone
Substantially expressed and in His face
Divine compassion visibly appeared:
Love without end and without measure grace, (III: 135-142).

In these lines Christ is given human qualities, his face is described as showing “divine compassion.” Christ’s compassion is “divine” not because he is the Son of God, but because the magnitude of his compassion is comparable to the might of God. Christ inquires as to the prospect of Adam and Eve ever finding grace. In response God proposes to deliver grace to Adam and Eve in exchange for one of his heavenly beings
immortality. “Say, Heavn’ly Pow’rs, where shall we find such love?/ Which of ye will be mortal to redeem/ Man’s mortal crime and, just, th’ unjust to save?/ Dwells in all Heaven charity so dear?” (III; 213-216). God proposes immortal life in heaven in exchange for mortal life on earth to save man; “He asked, but all the Heavn’ly choir stood mute/ And silence was in Heav’n”(III; 217-218).

In John 3:16, the Bible tells us, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life”. In the Bible God chose his Son, he gave his Son, commanded his Son to be sent to earth to save man. Milton’s text does not give God this power, as God is powerless in the face of free will with respect to Adam and Eve, he is also powerless to choose a heavenly being, to take away their immortal presence in heaven for the sake of man. However, it is Christ who volunteers, Christ whose humanity calls him to ask God to send him to save man.

Behold Me then, Me for him, life for life
I offer. On Me let thine anger fall.
Account Me Man. I for his sake will leave
Thy bosom and this glory next to Thee
Freely put off and for himLastly die
Well pleased. On Me let Death wreck all his rage! (III:236-241)

Milton’s portrayal of Christ’s humanity, through his compassion and his volunteer effort to save man illustrates the concept of anti-Trinitarianism, a radical idea in the 1640s. Up to now, it is apparent that Milton’s political and religious views were legitimately radical. *Paradise Lost* articulates the radical ideas of anticlericalism, iconoclasm and anti-Trinitariansim, by presenting two metanarratives, figuring the fallen angels and illustrating Christ’s humanity.

Finally, Hill presents the doctrine of mortalism. Hill claims with respect to this doctrine; “If at death the body returns into its elements, as a drop of water taken out of the ocean returns to it again, mortalism can also lead to
skepticism about the physical existence of heaven and hell” (75). It is important here to remember that Hill does not categorize Milton into any specific group of radicals; these groups varied from one extreme of radicalism to another. The spectrum reaches from a view that maintained a political charge only by objecting to the current political state of England, while other groups went so far as to oppose the political and religious doctrines that governed England. I maintain that it is Milton’s objective to present these views not as his own but as existent in the time and place he was writing. Therefore, with respect to this doctrine, I resist reaching into Milton’s poem for evidence to support Hill’s claim of this view of radicalism. While it may be argued that Milton’s poem can be theorized to support this view of radicalism, I do not think that the denial of the physical existence of heaven and hell was at the forefront of Milton’s goals for Paradise Lost. This view deals in a realm that does not seem relevant to the imaginative aspect of Milton’s work. “Mortalism could be accompanied by, or lead to, a species of materialism”(Hill, 74). I believe it is Milton’s priority to explore imaginatively the radical viewpoints that hovered in the air of mid-seventeenth century England, and an analysis of a viewpoint that leads to a form of materialism feels to me to be irrelevant.
Raw Material

Footnote: to conversation about the ambrosial fruit, part of a larger discussion concerning the overlap of metanarratives.

Michael Pollan writes of apple seeds in The Botany of Desire, "Slice an apple through at its equator, and you will find five small chambers arrayed in a perfectly symmetrical starburst- a pentagram. Each of the chambers holds a seed ... The second, more important fact about those seeds concerns their genetic contents, which are likewise full of surprises. Every seed in that apple, not to mention every seed riding down the Ohio alongside John Chapman [aka Jonny Appleseed], contains the genetic instructions for a completely new and different apple tree, one that, if planted would bear only the most glancing resemblance to its parents" (10).

Could the theoretical disparity - that is the fact that the Tree of Life belongs to the polytheistic metanarrative and the Tree of Knowledge to the monotheistic metanarrative- yet the Tree of Life planted the Tree of Knowledge, find biological support?

Does biological support for a theoretical ambiguity suffice?

It cannot hurt. Plus it is very interesting, this bit about apples. Not to mention that the first fact Pollen points out is that these seeds contain a small quantity of cyanide, what he asserts to be an evolutionary defense mechanism. Cyanide indicates mortality.
Poetic Image  

Poetic Image—n. an image essentially distinct from nature.

*From Paul de Man’s essay, "Intentional Structure of the Romantic Image”*

i.e. Tierney Gearon’s photograph uses multiple exposures to envision imagined landscapes.

Consider this image alongside Mary Smith’s reading of Milton’s *Paradise Lost*:

"That is, instead of the poetic image as a photograph, Milton creates a poetic image more akin to a collage. He calls on his muse to write a landscape that considers views from various heights.

Sing Heav’nly Muse, that on the secret top
Of Oreb or of Sinai didst inspire
That shepherd who first taught the chosen seed,
In the beginning, how the heav’ns and earth
Rose out of chaos (I; 6-10)

On the peak of Oreb is where Moses met God and God appeared as a burning bush. From this peak, from this view Milton isolates a piece of the landscape to construct his poetic image. In the same line Milton isolates a
Research Materials

piece of the landscape as viewed from the peak of Sinai, a peak higher than Oreb and covered in darkness. Sinai, while part of the same mountain range as Oreb, no doubt presents a view vastly different from the peak of Oreb. Milton requires both of these views to imagine and to represent the rise of heaven out of chaos. It is crucial that two views be positioned side by side, in order to testify to the variability of an experience and figuring of nature" (Postmodernism & Paradise Lost, 23).

Posted by Research Materials at 9:59 PM

Paul de Man & William K. Wimsatt
"The paradox, in this instance, is that radicals who rejects the status quo constituent of reality are brought to book in terms of it" (Davis)

Political historian, J.C. Davis resists an established view of radicalism that judges the
status of the theoretical according to the criteria of the literal, or the real. This view characterizes radicalism as a static moment in a historical narrative, furthermore, it allows for radicalism to be categorized in ways that provide limited, if any, epistemological value. For example the association of radicalism within a historical narrative allows historians to argue that seventeenth century radicalism failed. Davis provides a postmodern analysis of radicalism by suggesting the historical narrative as over-determined, reductive and incommensurable. We acknowledge the implications of encapsulating radicalism inside the historical narrative by understanding Lyotard’s assertions about the character of metanarrative. By asserting the character of radicalism as theoretical, it is shown to be in direct conflict with the character of metanarrative. This assertion involves refining a perspective of the theoretical, setting aside rationalism for the prospect of possibility (see Raw Materials). If radicalism continues to be associated within a historical narrative, it is subject to a reductive authority, repressing its theoretically unique quality.

With this conflict in mind, I pose the following questions: What are the implications of convicting the theoretical of failure? What knowledge do we gain by categorizing radicalism in mid-seventeenth-century England as a failed event in the history of English politics and society? The implications are many and the knowledge is meager, therefore a historical narrative provides insufficient ground for an analysis of radicalism. In fact, Lyotard would agree that evaluating radicalism from the perspective of the narrative is both irresponsible and slighting of a particular social bond. Radicalism as a theory is a particular social bond, and the demands put on it by the historical narrative render its legitimacy, not its success or failure, in question. "Where, after the metanarratives, can legitimacy reside?" (Lyotard, xxv). It is my contention that we learn nothing about radicalism by looking at its' associations with “traditional” accounts of history. Instead we attach names and documents to this failed event, thus categorizing those as failed figures. Looking at radicalism in this way articulates the status of radicalism as it measures up to tradition, not radicalism itself. Davis aims to deconstruct all of the theoretical elements of radicalism and evaluate them in terms of legitimacy. The theory of radicalism in mid-seventeenth century England is specific to the traditional society that it aimed to uproot. Davis points out that 17th century radical
figures are slighted by their association with events of the age. Furthermore, their assumed participation in a historical narrative serves only for a reading of their status in a traditional society, that is their success or failure.

“We can - and do - enhance the status of these ‘thinkers ahead of their time’ in two ways. In the one they become ‘philosophers of a revolution that failed’ and Samuel Hartlib, William Sprigge, Gerrard Winstanley and James Harrington, amongst others, have all been auditioned for that role. Secondly, we can hook them on to some long-term ‘success’ story. We depict them as visionaries, dreamers, utopians and talk about their undefined- often unexamined- contribution to a radical, liberal, socialist, (if your lucky) feminist tradition” (Davis 194).

In order to avoid a “reading” of radicalism as an event in an arbitrary historical narrative, Davis suggests reading radicalism as theoretical. By reading radicalism as theoretical Davis applies a “process” that analyzes radicalism with respect to its ideological, theoretical, and imaginative elements. The “process” inherent in a theoretical reading of radicalism according to Davis entails delegitimation, legitimation, and the involvement of a transfer mechanism. This “process” is the means by which the theoretical comes into existence. Delegitimation, legitimation and the involvement of a transfer mechanism are the primary functions of radicalism, and an evaluation of radicalism requires an assessment of these functions and their ability to resolve the problems posed to radicals.

To begin with, Davis loosely defines radicalism in contrast to reform. Where reform aims to augment an existing situation, radicalism aims to completely destroy the existing situation (203). With that in mind I would like to highlight what Davis identifies as the primary functions of radicalism, and pose some questions about the epistemological value of seventeenth-century-English radicalism. The first function is delegitimation, requiring an existing system to be viewed as necessary for replacement. Using England as an example of a traditional society Davis illustrates delegitimation when he states, “The status quo was shown to be doomed and its displacement could be visualized” (211). In this case, tradition is the sight of an abyss, chaos necessitating acceptance and order.
The second function is the legitimation of a new system to fill the space. Delegitimation and legitimation are consequences of one another; they are mutually dependent. The third function of radicalism is the employment of transfer mechanism; the evidence that an old system has been destroyed and a new one has been implemented. CRYPTIC AS YET

*It was the goal of Parliament after the First Civil War (1642-1645) to participate with Charles I in a constitutional monarch, as opposed to an absolute monarchy. The Civil War, had the constitutional monarch been implemented by Charles I, could have been thought of as the transfer mechanism, but all things considered the attempt at a constitutional monarchy proved to be a failed attempt at reform.*

The major problem posed by delegitimation, legitimation and the involvement of a transfer mechanism, is that they essentially require an agent for destroying and for creating. By suggesting a reading radicalism according to its primary functions we gain knowledge specific to mid-seventeenth century radicals, and instead of attaching figures to radicalism we are poised to seek an artifact—a thing that serves as both the agent and the evidence of human will. Can one system really be destroyed? If it is, can the imagination’s view of what should replace it ever become a reality? What is the transfer mechanism transforms vision into reality?

Evaluating the performance of radicalism’s three primary functions similarly allows us to digest the material of the mid-seventeenth century differently, and perhaps place documents and figures that have not before been looked at in the role of performers of these functions. The claim that radicalism is crucially theoretical and that the radical “process” should be evaluated leads Davis to his final remarks about the radicals in mid-seventeenth-century England.

Davis concludes that the England’s traditional structures presented a distinct task for radicals—a society based on the intolerance for change renders radicalism of mid-seventeenth century England unique. “Thus radicalism of mid-seventeenth-century England appears unique in its own period. We should evaluate it (radicalism) in terms consistent with that uniqueness” (213). A reading of radicalism in this period, according to its primary functions, may allow us to gain insight from sources previously overlooked or categorized in opposition to the established view of radicalism as a
Davis, J.C.

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 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.
Monday, April 13, 2009

Paul de Man & William K. Wimsatt


Not only in Rousseau is the process used for creating language, [author's name] [on an untitled] [14] also constructs a landscape that simultaneously exists in [author's name] in [author's name]. But this is how the location of [author's name] in [author's name] is explained. In [author's name] it seems to me [author's name], it gives the impression that [author's name] is not the same. Thus, how does [author's name] experience the [author's name] in [author's name] and how does [author's name] experience the [author's name] in [author's name]? [author's name] does not experience the [author's name] in [author's name] and how does [author's name] experience the [author's name] in [author's name]?

In this version, [author's name] articulates what [author's name] [on an untitled] [14] means. Through his work on the new theory of language, he questions the Cartesian divide between the subject and the object. [author's name] [on an untitled] [14] questions the traditional view of language as a fixed system of rules and meanings. He argues that language is a dynamic and fluid process, constantly shaping and being shaped by the world it describes. [author's name] [on an untitled] [14] suggests that language is not a static system, but rather a process of constant negotiation and redefinition. His work challenges the idea of a fixed and unchanging language and encourages us to see language as a constantly evolving force.
For Milton to use language, identifying it as capable of...
Wednesday, April 15, 2009

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Michael Pollan writes of apple seeds in *The Botany of Desire*,

"Slice an apple through at its equator, and you will find five small chambers arrayed in a perfectly symmetrical starburst- a pentagram. Each of the chambers holds a seed ... The second, more important fact about those seeds concerns their genetic contents, which are likewise full of surprises. Every seed in that apple, not to mention every seed riding down the Ohio alongside John Chapman [aka Jonny Appleseed], contains the genetic instructions for a completely new and different apple tree, one that, if planted would bear only the most glancing resemblance to its parents" (10).

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**Research Materials**

**Glossary**

- Poetic Image

**Raw Materials**

- Final Outline
- First Study: Eve's Dream
- Concept Map
- Pollen's facts about Apples
- Milton's Use of "Purpose"

**Davis Study**


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Monday, April 13, 2009

Davis, J.C.

This first book proposes first, in brief, the whole subject: man's disobedience and the loss thereof of Paradise wherein he was placed; then touches the prime cause of his fall, the serpent, or rather Satan in the serpent, who revolting from God and drawing to his side many legions of angels was by the command of God driven out of Heaven with all his crew into the deep darkness, which action passed over the poem hastens into the midst of things, presenting Satan with his angels now fallen into Hell-described here, not in the center (for Heaven and Earth may be supposed as yet not made, certainly not yet ascended) but in a place of utter darkness (as Milton called it) (Milton, 3).

These sentences suggest a writer and necessitate a reader using the word "proposes." For whom does the work propose anything that is a potential reader. For why would one propose, unless there be one to propose to. And while the following work "proposes," it does not "prove" or "show." Subsequently, the structure of the entire argument follows an agenda, if first "proposes" then "teaches" and then "hastens." Milton's work is not a work of exchanging mathematics, but the work of language, which operates differently than mathematics in its capacity to be personified, separate two sentences language "teaches," if "hastens." [italic thinking here] In terms of Davis's last claim of the instability of evaluating radiancy in terms of paradigmatic structures, I will not yet assert that a similar evaluation of Milton's work renders it exhausting rather than revolutionary. For here may be a point of interest in which literature and politics part ways, and paradigms may provide a suitable way of reading a work. [italic -- Mary

Davis finds an evaluation of radiancy in terms of realism or paradigmatic structures problematic for a number of reasons. I separate two sentences build stronger relations. "What I am suggesting then is not that the evaluation of radiancy in terms of the real world or paradigmatic structures is wrong, but that as approaches they are far too ambitious" (2002). In his attempt to think through radiancy in terms of which a conclusion can be made, Davis finds another, more conclusive approach to evaluating radiancy; an approach that articulates a thoughtful evaluation for radiancy according to criteria which take into consideration what realism and paradigms overlook. The criteria for evaluating radiancy is based in terms of the primary function of radiancy, answering the question, "What are the minimal functions that an effective radiancy can be expected to perform?" (2002).

Davis identifies the first function of radiancy to be, to deligitimize an existing order: [seealso syntax] Deligitimization produces two results, separate two sentences it establishes the existing order manageable, [two comma -- only compound sentence] it contains other operations (compound is defined as a subject and two verbs, whereas here you have one subject and two verbs) and consequently devises its authority. The O.E.D. defines radiancy as "fundamental or inherent in the natural processes of life," [italic -- period falls inside quotation mark] "towards the, for there is an intimate connection between the principles involved in deligitimization of the old and the work to legitimize the new" (2004). Davis specifies that in the case of 17th-century England, radiancy, is in its effort to deligitimize monarchal rule in favor of a Commonwealth implies that the Commonwealth should dissolve and replace the monarch. Furthermore, the articulation of 17th-century England as a traditional society, produces an indirect relationship between radiancy and traditional society. The thinking being that [word choice creates sentence organization] radiancy is attempting to overtum a society which is grounded in preservation. The goals of radiancy appear to contradict the society in which it involves itself, separate two sentences however, since it is the work of radiancy to check that which is being preserved, the goals are not a contradiction, but rather very difficult to achieve. As such, the evaluation of radiancy is fine tuned to include an assessment of the difficulty with which deligitimization and legitimation are being performed. I get lost in this paragraph -- we talk here.

The third function of radiancy which Davis identifies as a criteria for evaluating radiancy is the work of a transfer mechanism. The transfer mechanism is the means by which the old is deligitimized and the new is legitimized. "A truly effective radiancy must show the means by which the movement from an illegitimate state to a legitimate state may be brought about, and in a well-integrated radiancy it will be by means conformable with the principles of legitimation for the new order (which in turn should be consistent with the principles used to deligitimize the old order)" (2004). Here I will assert on my own time the necessity of the transfer mechanism. I think it appears that the transfer mechanism is evidence that deligitimization and legitimation have ceased, and the effort of the transfer mechanism has a direct influence on the performance of the deligitizing and legitimating functions.

Following his articulation of the functions which serve to criteria for evaluating radiancy and their relationship to one another (cannot have deligitization without legitimation, cannot have either without a transfer mechanism); Davis assesses two existing legitimations of the status quo in the 17th century, custom and grace. In this discussion, Davis points to the potential problems with custom as a source of legitimation; he identifies the possibility of a void in terms of deligitimation, legitimation and transfer. When Davis points out, "the shape of social evolution through time was conditioned by forces which men engaged unwittingly but which could be controlled by art" (211), he illustrates the concept of radiancy as being commonly thought of as an attempt to overtum an existing order without a plan for what to replace it. Radiancy might be more suited as a theory for the creator because of the importance of context and content, which I would like to return to later. The processes of deligitization and legitimation can be deceiving because as Davis has shown they pose a taut wave of the theoretical problems which radiancy insists on solving. (interesting things in quotes)

Davis also concludes that 17th-century England produced radiancy unique to its own period, wondering what separated it from the radiancy that has resulted from the evolution in France. He states of England, "No comparable radiancy emerged" (213) and whilst my initial response is that the statement can be argued, my inmost self wishes to assert that Milton's text is a work which created for this period a radiancy. (interesting -- let's pursue that argument) Through its methodical positing of the question, Davis asks, "What then could be the basis for the radicalization of a new order by human rather than divine authority?" (219), separate two sentences the text does not merely visualize the deligitization and legitimation of radiancy but it provides the transfer mechanism necessary for a radiancy in a traditional society. [read, very interesting, Mary -- lovely provocation; I definitely am eager for more]

I shall take up the details of this claim in the next installment, which will look at the work of Lyndard, dealing with metanarratives as a deligitizing process and the work of Paul de Man, dealing with poetics as a legitimating process.

1. Davis notes the concept of paradigms; "concentration on structures of thought and linguistic expression" (201) as a worthy mode of investigation as introduced by Thomas S. Kuhn, in what I agree to be both an important and irreversibly influential work, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions.


1. I would like to come back to this point and introduce Blake and the paradigms (or are they) his work intends to build.

Custom is not a substantial legitimating function because it is deligitimized by a present radicalism, and can be deligitimized by claiming that status quo is not based on custom. While custom is used and can be seen as a legitimating function, and was relied on heavily for a monarchal rule, it does not deligitimize anything but can be deligitimized by denial or contracting claims about status quo. Similarly, grace, as a legitimating of the status quo, is deligitimized by a conception of the anti-Chris (2009). On the other hand grace is deligitimized by the millennium, which finds the status quo to be an interruption in God’s plan for the Second Coming (210).

Posted by Research Materials at 11:35 AM
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 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.

Posted by Research Materials at 11:33 AM
Wednesday, April 15, 2009

Footnote: to conversation about the ambrosial fruit, part of a larger discussion concerning the overlap of metanarratives.

Michael Pollan writes of apple seeds in *The Botany of Desire*,

"Slice an apple through at its equator, and you will find five small chambers arrayed in a perfectly symmetrical starburst- a pentagram. Each of the chambers holds a seed ... The second, more important fact about those seeds concerns their genetic contents, which are likewise full of surprises. Every seed in that apple, not to mention every seed riding down the Ohio alongside John Chapman [aka Jonny Appleseed], contains the genetic instructions for a completely new and different apple tree, one that, if planted would bear only the most glancing resemblance to its parents" (10).

Could the theoretical disparity - that is the fact that the Tree of Life belongs to the polytheistic metanarrative and the Tree of Knowledge to the monotheistic metanarrative- yet the Tree of Life planted the Tree of Knowledge, find biological support?

Does biological support for a theoretical ambiguity suffice?

It cannot hurt. Plus it is very interesting, this bit about apples. Not to mention that the first fact Pollen points out is that these seeds contain a small quantity of cyanide, what he asserts to be an evolutionary defense mechanism. Cyanide indicates mortality.