

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

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

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

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

I

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

II

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

theory of accommodation converted into temporal dimension.

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

I shall delineate so
By likening spiritual to corporeal forms,
As may express them best. (5, 572-4)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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