

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

Dress natural to man—attempts of Milton even in Paradise to clothe the naked—Eve in the Rose bushes—and above all the divine Dress of Raphael.¹⁸⁾

And he also says:

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

The act of hiding, rather than what is being hidden, symbolizes human fallenness. Adam and Eve after the Fall hid themselves behind the trees. And the tree by whose leaves they covered their generative parts is, as the Jewish legend has it,²¹⁾ the tree that opened their eyes to *sapience*. If the Tree of Knowledge is to be conceived as a synecdoche for the world of nature to which the "fallen" imagination is bound—like Jesus' tree of Crucifixion, said to be of the same wood, thus converting the Tree of Knowledge into the Tree of Life²²⁾—then isn't the tree itself

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There oft the Indian Herdsman shunning heat

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

27) *Milton*, 13: 20–21.

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

Hope:

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

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

III

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

29) *CN*, II, 3215.

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

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

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

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

Each tree

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

30) *CN*, III, 3767.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

33) *CN*, III, 4410.

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

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

IV

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<아담의 언어>와 시인의 과제

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

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

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

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

