

1991

Images Of Voice In "paradise Lost"

Elizabeth M. Sauer

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/digitizedtheses>

Recommended Citation

Sauer, Elizabeth M., "Images Of Voice In "paradise Lost"" (1991). *Digitized Theses*. 2022.
<https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/digitizedtheses/2022>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Digitized Special Collections at Scholarship@Western. It has been accepted for inclusion in Digitized Theses by an authorized administrator of Scholarship@Western. For more information, please contact tadam@uwo.ca, wlsadmin@uwo.ca.

Images of Voice in Paradise Lost

by

Elizabeth M. Sauer

Department of English

**Submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

**Faculty of Graduate Studies
The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario
April 1991**

© Elizabeth M. Sauer 1991



National Library
of Canada

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Canadian Theses Service Service des thèses canadiennes

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

ISBN 0-315-66302-2

Canada

Dissertation abstract

This thesis examines the relative status and authority of the poetic voices of Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained within a literary and socio-political context. The case against the monological function of the primary narrator has most recently been made by critics including Donald Bouchard and Jonathan Goldberg who discuss the dialogical nature of this speaker, and by Kathleen Swaim and Barbara Lewalski who examine the exchanges among the different narrators. Another scholar, Gordon Teskey, observes that before PL "few characters in non-dramatic literature appear as free as Milton's to choose their own story" (11). Milton's interpretive model of historical intervention through voice anticipates the critical reading or revolutionary action in the New Historicist-informed "unending conversation of history." The poet-revolutionary inscribes and critiques the classical epic in PL and PR by intercepting the linear narratives with the narrators' prospective and retrospective accounts. Using a self-conscious literary and cultural criticism to describe the relationship between discursive practices inside and outside the poems, I offer a highly critical forum for exchange that addresses the manner, methods, and motivations behind their representation of voice.

This study is structured according to a political and literary reading of the account of Nimrod in PL, which I explicate in chapter 1, along with several Renaissance adaptations of this story. In the subsequent chapter I examine the literary definitions of voice and the pluralization of meaning as a contribution to social formation in the seventeenth century. I address the orchestration of the individual narrative voices in the poem's dynamic hierarchy of discourse in chapter 3. Chapter 4 discusses the relationship

between language, politics and history in the debates between the Son and Satan in PR--conventionally labelled apolitical.

The multivocal reading reveals how the poems may have been circulated in order to speak to their own time and recuperated to speak to ours. Milton instructs us about dialogism, as well as about the dialectical relationship between the desire for multivocality and the ever unfulfilled need for consensus. Most importantly, he teaches us how to create a language of alternatives, and to intervene through voice in a culturally or politically censored environment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my sincerest gratitude to all those who participated so extensively in this conversation:

**To my parents who gave me their language and the potential to develop my own;
to Professor Balachandra Rajan, Milton's most compelling reader, who inspired and directed my conversation with the poet, and who showed me the importance of continuing and always reinventing the exchange;**

to Professor Elizabeth Harvey, who democratized the conversation, and whose scholarship, devotion to teaching and example have provided the impetus to develop that discussion in the classroom and extend it beyond;

to David, who taught me the meaning of dialectic and negotiation, and who continually provided the framing power for the Imaginations and Aery shapes I created;

to my colleagues in the UWO English Department and my friends at the CDLC who humanized the discussion and contributed much to my education;

to the past, current and future critics of Milton to whom my work is much indebted, and whose scholarship continues to offer a forum of exchange for the voices and ideas inspired by the poet-revolutionary.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CERTIFICATE OF EXAMINATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I -- THE CONVERSATION OF HISTORY	19
1. The Voices and Politics of Nimrod	19
2. Critical Interventions	46
3. Politicizing the Uses and Abuses of History in Paradise Lost	60
CHAPTER II -- "WITH MORTAL VOICE": LINGUISTIC MUTABILITY AND WORD PLAY	93
1. Literary Critical Interpretations of Voice	94
2. The Sad Task: Self-representation in the Tragic Accounts of Raphael, Satan and the Post-Narrator	123
CHAPTER III -- CENSORSHIP, AUTHORITY AND THE IDOLATRY OF VOICE AND IMAGE	164
Introduction: The Ecological Metaphor	165
1. The Oral Histories	179
2. Post-lapsarian Voices	205
3. Michael's Story	229
CHAPTER IV -- STAGING VOICES IN PARADISE REGAINED	258
1. Contra-censorship and Prophecy	258
2. The Voices and Politics of Nebuchadnezzar	297
CONCLUSION	332
WORKS CITED	334
VITA	351

The author of this thesis has granted The University of Western Ontario a non-exclusive license to reproduce and distribute copies of this thesis to users of Western Libraries. Copyright remains with the author.

Electronic theses and dissertations available in The University of Western Ontario's institutional repository (Scholarship@Western) are solely for the purpose of private study and research. They may not be copied or reproduced, except as permitted by copyright laws, without written authority of the copyright owner. Any commercial use or publication is strictly prohibited.

The original copyright license attesting to these terms and signed by the author of this thesis may be found in the original print version of the thesis, held by Western Libraries.

The thesis approval page signed by the examining committee may also be found in the original print version of the thesis held in Western Libraries.

Please contact Western Libraries for further information:

E-mail: libadmin@uwo.ca

Telephone: (519) 661-2111 Ext. 84796

Web site: <http://www.lib.uwo.ca/>

Introduction

Democracy is a device for institutionalizing the dialectic process by setting up a political structure that gives full opportunity for the use of competition to a cooperative end. Each voice adds to the perspective that others may adopt or oppose. Each voice is an instance, in a single statement, in a collective wrangle. (Kenneth Burke, Philosophy of Literary Form)

There may be four voices. There may be, perhaps, only two. I say this to indicate the tentative nature of my enquiry. (T.S. Eliot, The Three Voices of Poetry)

Give me the liberty to know, to utter and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties. (Milton, Areopagitica)

In An Apology for Smectymnuus, Milton describes the ideal author as a poem: "he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought him selfe to bee a true Poem, that is a composition, and patterne of the best and honorablest things" (1.890). In the Areopagitica, Milton defends books as living things, and speaks, in turn, of human experience as a text: "What ever thing we hear or see, sitting, walking, travelling, or conversing may be fitly call'd our book, and is of the same effect that writings are" (2.528). Paul Ricoeur observes that "human action is in many ways a quasi-text. It is exteriorized in a manner comparable to the fixation characteristic of writing" ("Explanation and Understanding" 160). The art of critical

reading is the means for interpreting and historicizing both the textualized world and human action. Ricoeur goes on to address the eventual detachment of the action from the actor, and the text from the author when act and text are "freed from the initial conditions of [their] production" and reinscribed in new historical and social contexts. The dissociation of the text or action from its original agent opens it up to the interpretations of an "indefinite series of possible 'readers.' The judges are not contemporaries, but subsequent history" (161).

The proposition of liberating the act or the text from its author or the circumstances of its production is, however, a problematic one that merely replaces one form of contingency with another. Neither the text nor the critical reading is autonomous. The judgement of the text or human agency by "subsequent history" is inevitably informed by the critic's entrenchment in her own history, and by the historical conditions of the text's formation. The text or act is historicized and rendered symbolic when it is interpreted, whether the critical reading occurs during or immediately after the performance, or whether it happens in subsequent history. Moreover, it occurs whether the interpretation is a historical or scientific one or whether it is poetic. Kenneth Burke challenges the hierarchical relationship between the traditionally oppositional kinds of approaches:

The body is an actor; as an actor, it participates in the movements of the mind, posturing correspondingly; it styles thought and expression which embody these correlations--and the recognition of this is, as you prefer, either "scientific" or "poetic." (PLE 130)

Without dismissing the idea of history or the possibility of historical continuities, Burke insists that poetic history be given a status equal to that of extrapoetic history. History--and, in turn, narrative whose relationship to history is a primary concern for me in this study--becomes, then, a drama involving dialectical oppositions.¹ It is this "unending conversation" that constitutes the historical process from which the

actor or critic acquires her materials, and in which she to a greater or lesser degree is heard. Critical readings and interpretations, and dialectical thinking are historical and political acts of dissent, ones which confirm, intervene in, and shape the conversation or theatre of history that is itself a dynamic construction of voices.

This study offers an examination of the poetic voices of Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained within a literary and socio-political context. Both poems represent a variety of interpretive voices and narrations while simultaneously making claims to unity and collectivity. Though a product of the seventeenth century, these multivocal texts nevertheless speak to the contemporary reader who is moved to engage in criticism, comparison and evaluation of the poetic and extrapoetic voices which the poems inscribe. In "Surprised by a Strange Language: Defamiliarizing Paradise Lost," Balachandra Rajan refers to the literary strategy of including several narrative perspectives which challenge the monological function of the primary narrator as one that has not received sufficient attention in critical studies of the poem. The position assumed in particular by Anne Ferry, Stanley Fish and William Riggs on the authoritative stance of Milton's poet-narrator has most recently been challenged in various ways by Barbara Lewalski, Kathleen Swaim, Catherine Belsey, and Jonathan Goldberg, as well as by Gordon Teskey, who observes that "few characters in non-dramatic literature appear as free as Milton's to choose their own story" (11). Burton Weber announced that Donald Bouchard has written the definitive criticism on the subject by treating the question of point of view in Paradise Lost "so astonishingly that the theme need never be touched on again" (278). This structuralist reading, however, does not acknowledge the subtle interweaving of poetic voices or the extrapoetic political constructions of voice with which the poem dialogues.

Voice, image and images of voice or echoes--*imago/imago vocis* (Hollander 11)-have several definitions for me in this study. I have artificially separated the definitions into two primary contexts which constantly intersect: a political realm of

thought and a literary context. In both contexts, voice is a means of expression through utterance or allusion, including intertextual allusion. Each voice is informed by a particular expression of will and consciousness, and has its own overtones (Bakhtin 434); yet none is autonomous. In Saussurean terms, *parole*, the isolated speech-act or utterance is located in but distinguished from *langue*, the general system of articulating relationships from which *parole* is derived. Speech is a producer of voice; yet it serves as much to conceal as to reveal voice. The solitary speaker participates in a collective expression that intervenes in but also makes up the "conversation of history" or the multivocal text. Each textual voice has a political function inside as well as outside of the text--another artificial distinction--of intervening in a given context, and of offering a certain point of view or articulating a particular perception. In the case of narrative voices, it is necessary to distinguish between the voice of the narrator and the perceptions of the focalizer which are being voiced (Bal 100). The appropriation and the muting of voices are in turn significant literary and political concerns that I will address in light of Milton's own encounter with censorship.

By *image*--which became increasingly more difficult to distinguish from voice, as my investigation proceeded--I mean a visual representation or simulacrum, either textual or non-textual. Milton uses the term to refer both to the creation of humanity in the likeness or image of God, and as well to images of worship or icons. Icons or idols are images which have been read passively or uncritically. Milton explains in The Christian Doctrine that "idolatry means making or owning an idol for religious purposes or worshipping it, whether it be a representation or the true God or of some false god" (6.690-1). A reader of the images can be either an idolator or an iconoclast. However, because the act of iconoclasm creates a void which must be filled by new interpretations, icon destruction and creation are inextricably bound (Cable 136).²

Milton's iconoclasm is more accurately defined as defamiliarization. Institutions extend their power both by fixing images or arresting the play of meaning, and by

rejecting or reifying history. The response of a poet-revolutionary like Milton who regards the world in terms of a text, is to encourage participation in the construction of "meaning" and in the establishments which create meaning. A critical reading of the images or voices of monarchy is an act of dissent and political revolution--an intervention into the monarchical control of history. In his texts, Milton seeks to expose reified images and voices of kingship and demystify them. By practising and teaching the art and political act of criticism, the poet-revolutionary creates in their place a symbolic language of alternatives.

Milton addresses critical readings in both a literary and political context. In Eikonoklastes, Milton reminds the readers of Eikon Basilike that the images and voices of kingship created by Charles and his supporters must be subject to individual interpretation. The image of worship requires the credulity of the people who must have a voice in the construction of government and leadership at all levels. The passivity of the people propagates idolatry and sanctions monarchy. In Paradise Regained, the Son also promotes a critical spirit and judgement in approaching literary texts (4.318-29) and ultimately in confronting political issues and establishments.

Even if one believes that the role of criticism is to change the world and not merely to comment on it, one must remember that the world is textualized in various ways, as Milton announces. The recent discontent with the New Historicist assumption that the will to power determines human activity and social change does not cancel out the possibility of a connection between interpretive and political practices. What it does is to provide alternative ways of addressing that relationship, and shift the focus of the critical analysis back to the literary text where the tensions are very much inscribed. Rather than attempting to determine the extent of the text's impact on society--how the text produces "social work" or how literature has been adapted to and allowed important changes over time--I will focus on the interaction between the text and socio-history as represented by the text's discursive practices and the politics of its orchestration of

voice. I will also propose ways in which the text not only registers, but imaginatively conditions the possibility for engagement with the extrapoetic discourses of the seventeenth century.³

If history speaks in our own voice (Pechter 298), then it also assumes the voices of all its interpreters. The historian whose voice is itself internally dialogized (LaCapra, History and Criticism 36) enters into a conversational exchange with current and past discourses that prevent her from projecting narcissistic or self-interested demands upon them. Any dialogue with discourses of the past occurs in a larger cultural, social and political context. Since the interplay of voices takes place "inside" and "outside" the text, it is no longer helpful, or indeed possible, to isolate the literary text from other discourses.

Milton leaves open the possibility for a variety of connections between poetic and extrapoetic discourses and, in turn, for a number of dialogues. Paradise Lost, therefore, stages not only the dialogues between the voices conversing in the poem, but engages as well in dialogism--the constant interaction between meanings that makes monologue impossible (Bakhtin 426):

The text dialogues with other voices of the culture, by referring to them intertextually and also constructing, for the participants in this dialogue, positions of compliance or resistance with respect to those other voices.

(Kress and Threadgold 234)

The "real" is constructed in the creation of the fictional world which is situated within the larger historical context. It is the creation of images of voice and authority, both monarchical and republican, I suggest, that represents a channeling of the poem's many ideas into the immediate present.

With the defeat of the revolution and the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, the need for endorsing political representation, social interaction and individual freedom of expression became especially urgent. In order to disrupt the tyranny of what

Foucault, echoing Nietzsche and Benjamin, calls the monolithic historical continuum that prevents self-formation, social diversity and interventions of any kind, Milton turns to art. Poetry in particular serves for Milton as a kind of libidinal reservoir into which political desires can be deposited (Kendrick 90). In the multigenre poem of Paradise Lost, this self-conscious dialogue in which Milton engages with the poem and with history is dramatized.

Paradise Lost is a drama in the epic style, Samuel Johnson remarks (414); an epic built out of dramas, according to Merritt Hughes (173). As kairos and chronos interpenetrate (Eagleton 72), so do dramatic and narrative voices converge in the restructured twelve-book poem. The dramatic voices intervene in the greater narrative structures that have their own distinct voices, as I explain in chapter 2. The transformation of Paradise Lost from a ten-book, five-act tragedy in 1667 to a twelve-book epic in its second edition, has political implications in terms of its orchestration of voice. The linear narrative account of biblical and human history is intercepted by the autobiographical prospective and retrospective narrations of each of the interpreters, thus dictating a literary critical approach to the poem that combines structural determinism with humanism and collective agency. LaCapra defines interpretation as "a form of political intervention that engages the historian in a critical process that relates past, present and future through complex modes of interaction involving both continuities and discontinuities" ("Rethinking Intellectual History" 63). The retrospective and anticipatory accounts do not merely suspend the linear narrative; they alter the events which they recount, and shape the structure of that narrative. Through their stories, the speakers--who relate more than narrate--also renegotiate the terms of their self-definition as speakers and their presentation within the larger official narrative context.

Still, even at the peak of his political optimism, Milton, through his political images and images of voice, qualifies the ends which the more democratic representation

of voice might achieve. Political and social revolution is not synonymous with liberal pluralism (Eagleton 69). The hierarchies of discourse that Milton does construct are, nevertheless, open-ended. In the Areopagitica, Milton emphasizes process over product by employing images of seeking and incompleteness. These include the piecing together of the jigsaw puzzle whose entire scene cannot be anticipated at any point in the process, the construction of the building whose parts are contiguous rather than continuous, and the re-membering of the limbs of Osiris whose members will never be all discovered until the end of time. The act of reading the treatise itself leads the reader through proper names to local imagery to vision, thus allowing her to roam imaginatively rather than historically or geographically. A nonprocessual reading of the treatise is thereby discouraged, and a homogeneous view of society and history undercut. The movement toward imaginative images of incompleteness offers a means of mobilization against a closure achieved through the idolatry and the censorship of images and voices.

An eighteenth-century reading history

The strategies of reading Paradise Lost into univocality have been punctuated throughout literary history by the prospect that the poem is at odds with itself. It is a way of reading the poem that has been offered since the time of Dryden. My intention here is to not to provide a history of Milton criticism. I will suggest, however, that the manner in which critics view Milton's dramatization of voice is at once a projection of their reaction to Milton's political engagement, as well as an indication of their own political tendencies. In my second chapter, I will treat this subject more specifically in reference to a number of twentieth-century Milton critics.

At this point, I wish to draw attention to the difference in the treatment of voice by some of the earlier critics of Milton as a way of contextualizing my own historically determined reading. Milton's political allegiances did not earn him high marks from

Addison who complains in "An Account of the Greatest English Poets" that there was in Milton's texts an inconsistency of poetic greatness alongside political culpability (1.24-5). David Hume was a little more admiring of the poetry, but was nevertheless highly critical of Milton's involvement in political and theological debate; he notes how remarkable it is that

the great genius by far that shone out in England during this period, was deeply engaged with those fanatics, and even prostituted his pen in theological controversy, in factious disputes and in justifying the most violent measures of the party [namely regicide]. (5.529)

The impulse of critics like Addison, Hume, Lauder and Johnson was to interpret Milton according to neoclassical standards of decorum. Addison also complained that the English language declined because of Milton. Johnson, who quotes Addison, suggested that there was some grace in the deformity of Milton's Babylonish dialect (Shawcross 2.308-9), but likewise complained about Milton's anti-royalist politics and his materialism-- particularly the confusion of matter and spirit and the allegorization of Sin and Death.

In the Lives of the English Poets, Johnson does actually commend Milton for his art of poetic narration, the texture of the fable, the variation of incidents, the interposition of dialogue and the strategems that surprise and enchain attention. However, he ultimately disarms the poem, and smooths over all sense of tension associated with voice in the poem. Shortly thereafter, these tensions would all be restored when the Romantic poets, largely supporters of the French Revolution, elevated Satan to the status of hero. But Johnson was not about to make suggestions of Satan's strength of voice or stature, or even come close. Johnson's remarks on the speeches of the characters conceal all traces of voice:

Among the angels the virtue of Raphael is mild and placid, of easy condescension and free communication; that of Michael is regal and lofty, that, as may seem, attentive to the dignity of his own nature. Abdiel and

Gabriel appear occasionally, and act as every incident requires; the solitary fidelity of Abdiel is very amiably painted....

To make Satan speak as a rebel, without any such expression as might taint the reader's imagination, was indeed one of the great difficulties in Milton's undertaking, and I cannot but think that he has extricated himself with great happiness. There is in Satan's speeches little that can give pain to a pious ear....

The addresses [of Adam and Eve] to their Maker have little more than the voice of admiration and gratitude. Fruition left them nothing to ask, and Innocence left them nothing to fear. (416-7)

The Johnsonian interpretation which offers a portrait of a passive pastoral Eden devoid of conflict is the product of a mind set that emphasized symmetry and closure. It is a mind-set which in the eighteenth century saw the rewriting of King Lear with a happy ending, and one that prompted the rewriting of the first two books of Paradise Lost in rhyming couplets. It is one which as well could not leave the open-ended conclusion of Paradise Lost untouched. So Bentley emended it in 1732: "Then hand in hand with social steps their way / Through Eden took, with heav'nly comfort cheer'd."

Pamphlets including the Areopagitica, Eikonoklastes, A Treatise of Civil Power and The Ready and Easy Way were published in the eighteenth century for the first time since their initial printing. The recognition of Milton's activism both influenced and validated political readings of the poetry. For not a few critics, Paradise Lost became, in turn, a subversive political commentary on the seventeenth century. H.L. Bentham offers this anecdote:

When Milton's friends were told the title of the poem, they feared that it would be a lament for the loss of England's happiness with the downfall of the revolutionary regime. But when they read it they saw that the prudent Milton had dealt only with the fall of Adam; reassured, they

withdrew their objections to publication. But ("so far as I understood from what Haak told me and what I read myself"), although at first sight the epic's subject was indeed the fall of our first parents, in fact this very wily politician...concealed under this disguise the sort of lament that his friends had originally suspected. (Hill, Milton 391)

Various authors of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries--particularly the Romantics who all created their own psychologized and unfinished versions of Paradise Lost--found a voice in Milton's writings which they in turn adapted to present their own hybrid literary and political view points. Each reading of the poem is in some respect in dialogue with the poem and rewrites it to some extent. Each reading adds another voice and perception to the literary tradition, the whole of which is implicated in our understanding of Paradise Lost, and in our understanding of our own history. Jonathan Richardson in his eighteenth-century Notes and Remarks on Milton's Paradise Lost claims that "reading is conversing only in somewhat a different manner from discourse *viva voce*." Milton provoked a much longer and more sustained conversation than he ever could have predicted.

The narrator's structure

There is in Paradise Lost an interplay of different interpretive voices. The poem, I suggest, enacts the process of its own development and that of the society, whose polyphony it reflects and to which it adds its voice. The discordant harmony which, according to Tasso, characterizes the Renaissance epic, counterpoints the "barbarous dissonance" of Bacchus and his Revellers. The Master of [the] Revels employed by the monarch was the primary censor, as Milton, who makes cacophony synonymous with censorship, would have recognized.⁴ The dismembering of the Orphic bard (7.32-7) by the Revellers is symbolically and historically significant. The act ends his singing and

leaves only images of voice or echoes out of which the Revellers compose their "partial song."

Bacchus' name and various mythological representations are, as I will explain at the end of Part 1, associated with those of Nimrod, the tyrant whose construction of the unfinished tower of Babel--signifying monarchical rule--led to the confusion of tongues. Francis Blackburne claims that the Nimrod passage is reported to have 'always been supposed to allude to...[Milton's] own times" (2.622). Monarchists of the seventeenth century appropriated the image of Babel to characterize the multiplicity of sects, the revolutionary movement and the many-headed monster of democracy--Spenser's Blatant Beast. The cacophonous voices resounded in a society which for the first time, gave rise to public opinion,⁵ pamphlet literature, and political parties, and which called censorship and the monarchical control of government and economics⁶ into question.

This study, then, is structured according to a political and literary reading of the account of Nimrod in Paradise Lost. In the first chapter, I explicate this account and a number of seventeenth-century adaptations of the story. The history of Nimrod offers a political and literary context in which to consider the significance of the monological voice and of multivocality from a pluralist perspective. In part 2, I define the "unending conversation of history" and characterize the New Historicist-informed concept of the critical intervention of voice. Part 3 deals with the treatment of voice in Milton's construction of society and politics, and with the various representations of historical progress and political alternatives that he offers in place of the monarchical control of history and the censoring and "negative voice" of kingship.

In the second chapter, my concern is with the literary definition of voice and the pluralization of meaning as a reflection of and contribution to social formation in the seventeenth century. Language, which is both shaped by and shapes power relations, possesses a social function by mediating between the members of the community. Speech

is the instrument of society, Ben Jonson announces in Timber. With the scattering of language that occurs through the dispersion of peoples, social ties are inevitably disrupted: "Let's all-confound their speech," God declares in Du Bartas; "let's make one brother, / The Sire, and sonne, not understand each other" (2.2.2.187-8). This social crisis caused by the confusion of tongues is one that seventeenth-century royalists associated with the revolutionary movement that produced the babble which issued from the masses. Royalists sought again to prevent this anarchy through the reinstatement of censorship, the suppression of democratic uprisings, and through the reestablishment of a hierarchical society under monarchical rule. The political oppression, a type of conquest or attempt at colonization, was embodied in language, and affected forms of speech: "the Laws of forein Conquests usually extend to Letters and Speech as well as Territories; the Victor commonly endeavouring to propagate his own Language as farre as his Dominions," Wilkins writes in the year following the first printing of Paradise Lost.

Milton's denunciation of the singular voice of the monarch is apparent in his poetic language. The poet-revolutionary defamiliarizes the voices and images of authority, and employs figures of repetition with variation and the fluid syntax of poetry to reveal the play of signification. In chapter 2, I will also trace the contemporary reading history of Milton scholarship on narrative voices. In Part 2, I return to a more specific discussion of Paradise Lost itself by examining the role of Raphael, Satan and the "primary" narrator who establish narrative contexts in the poem, which each, as well, self-consciously disrupts. I conclude the chapter with a consideration of the dynamic hierarchy of discourse in which Milton locates the narrative voices.

In chapter 3, I address the oral histories of the speakers in Paradise Lost in the context of Milton's interpretive model of critical intervention and an ecological metaphor which the poem furnishes. The epic's will to order is brought into a dialectical relationship with the diversities of interpretation that it reflects and also

encourages. In the poem, the presence of the various speakers challenges the immanent and traditionally authoritative position of the poet-narrator. Milton, then, inscribes and simultaneously critiques the form of the classical epic by introducing the personal histories with their psychological and humanistic overtones into the more politically and structurally-determined epic narrative. A dynamic hierarchy of speakers is established in the poem. The individual speaker's authority depends in part on the speaker's position in the scale of nature and on his relationship to God which determines the extent of his knowledge and credibility. However, it also depends on his reliability which is tested in the poem when the narrators engage in dialogue with the other speakers. Narrative reliability is determined as much by the language through which a speaker defines himself as by the extrapoetic status each speaker brings to the poem.

Milton contemporizes and politicizes the story of Babel, and then in composing Paradise Lost and later Paradise Regained, reverses the confusion of tongues by establishing a community of narrative voices in the poems. He thereby proposes the imaginative possibility for further intervention and interplay in the authorized conversations outside the poems. Milton, unlike his contemporaries, does not advocate a return to an original state of edenic innocence. He offers instead a portrait of a multivocal and diverse society as a creative ferment for the establishment of the new republic.

Finally, in the fourth chapter, I consider the relationship between language, politics and history by examining how each is represented in the debates between the Son and Satan in Paradise Regained, a poem conventionally labelled as apolitical. The confrontation between the speakers occurs in a contest of words initiated by Satan's attempts to incarnate history by provoking the Son to respond with definitive answers. The Son's replies are iconoclastic, breaking the visual and verbal icons Satan offers, and providing a language of alternatives which Satan's speeches cannot accommodate. The final act is a dramatization of the account of Nebuchadnezzar's reconstruction of the

tower of Babel. Satan's fall from the pinnacle signifies the imaginative death of the monological voice and thereby of monarchy.

Even when describing the focalizer or quoting directly, a narrator inevitably engages in focalization herself by lending a (number of) perspective(s) to the account. Nevertheless I continually suggest throughout this study that there are a variety of voices, discourses and manners of orchestrating voice which are characteristically Miltonic, and yet are present in spite of their author. Without conferring on the texts an ontological status of their own, I am arguing that Milton's texts and the received tradition have in turn a great deal to teach us about our own history and about how we construct history. The post-revolutionary's concern with poetry and politics offers a means of addressing the relationship between the realms of thought, speech and action. Milton, then, teaches us about dialogism, as well as about the dialectical relationship between the desire for multivocality and the ever unfulfilled need for consensus. Most importantly, he shows us how to create a language of alternatives and to intervene through voice in a culturally absolute or politically censored environment.

The act of poetic composition and the orchestration is an intervention into the epic tradition and literary history in general that anticipates the strategies of novel writing. It is also a means of dramatizing the desire for multiple voices within society. The poem offers itself as something more than a mediation between art and society; it engages the conversations of events and issues outside of itself through its staging of the interplay among politically and culturally diverse voices.

This critical approach to the poem is undeniably and self-consciously a product of a late twentieth-century perspective. It is a perspective much informed by the recent reinterpretation of "textuality" as existing in a circuit of conversation, and connecting and equating--in a New Historicist fashion--canonical and noncanonical literary texts with the texts, discourses and voices of contemporary culture and politics. It is a

perspective shaped as well by current historical trends: the frustration with the single view, the influence of mass societies, the increase in political and ideological latitudes, and the diffusion particularly of institutional power--in many cases realized in a transference of power between institutions, states and corporations. Nevertheless, my readings of seventeenth-century history and literature have suggested that the seventeenth century, like the twentieth, finds institutionality very much suspect--in textual readings as in establishments of government. The literary equivalent of a monarchical structure is a reading hierarchy.⁷ Thus the case for a multivocal reading is not simply that it is time to approach the text in these terms because the univocal endeavour has gone on long enough. The case is rather that the injection of concepts such as multiple narrators and genres, open form, strategic deferral, process as opposed to product, and the dialogue between the poetic voices and the political discourses of the time tell us something about how the poem may have been circulated in order to speak to its own time and may be recuperated in order to speak to ours.

Notes

¹Kenneth Burke defines dialectics as "the interplay of various factors that mutually modify one another, and may be thought of as voices in a dialogue or roles in a play, with each voice or role in its partiality contributing to the development of the whole" (A Grammar of Motives 403).

²There are numerous definitions of the term "image" that I address less formally in this study on voice: an item of imagery--an image joining a number of similar ones in the course of a work to produce a pattern of embedded congruences; a sort of overall focus at a point in the poem, etc. (see Cook 215-27).

³Leonard Mustazza defines discourse as "the act of understanding by which it passes from premises to consequences; ratiocination; the communication of thought by speech" (79). In this study, I will also be using Bakhtin's definition of the term as a subdivision of speech determined by social and ideological differences within a single language (427).

⁴Frank Fowell considers the history of this office, and the ironic relationship between the Master of Revels, the Lord of Misrule and the Abbot of Unreason in Censorship in England 2ff. For a discussion of the transference of censorship duties from Sir Henry Herbert to Sir William D'Avenant and Tom Killigrew see The Stage Censor 56ff.

⁵A. Fletcher in The Outbreak of the English Civil War describes the formation, for perhaps the first time in English history, of what we may begin to call public

opinion--not a united opinion, but a zone of discussion within the political nation of what the nature of the English state and church should be (99).

⁶Milton's orchestration of voice can be regarded not only in terms of a republican political model, but also an economic model which expressed the Puritan's resentment toward the monarchy's advocacy and creation of commercial monopolies (see especially Kendrick). Though Milton was unsympathetic toward the impoverished (A Defense 4.471), for which he was criticized even in his own time (Aers and Kress 292-9), he did support greater representation by the middle class. Milton uses the term "monopoly" in philosophical contexts as well. In the Areopagitica, Milton warns, for example, that Truth must not be monopolized (Hughes 736 n169).

⁷The theological equivalent would be the church securely installed as the decisive institution. Right-wing Puritanism, nascently absolutist, is also the enemy. The gathered church proposes, in response, a democracy of reading, a multivocal communal text in which the truth is immanent and always provisional, rather than a transcendental blueprint which history struggles to inscribe in itself.

Chapter I

THE CONVERSATION OF HISTORY

Part 1

The Voices and Politics of Nimrod

i:

Demystifying monarchy

The premise that commoners--apprentices, street-vendors, and even women-- might not only presume to have opinions on religion and politics, but actually voice them in public was more than disturbing, particularly for the royalists. Allowing such liberties would create tremendous contention, and would reenact the confusion of tongues, according to this--ironically anonymous¹--ballad written just prior to the regicide:

Now that, thanks to the Powers below,
We have e'en done our do,
The mitre is down,
And so is the crown,
And with them the coronet too;
Come clowns, and come boys,
Come hober-de-hoys,
Come females of each degree;
Stretch your throats, bring in your votes,
And make good the Anarchie.

And thus it shall go, says Alice,
 Nay, thus it shall go, says Amy;
 Nay, thus it shall go, says Taffy, I trow,
 Nay, thus it shall go, says Jamy.

Ah! but the truth, good people all,
 The truth is such a thing,
 For it would undo, both Church and State too,
 And cut the throat of our King;
 Yet not the Spirit, nor the new light,
 Can make this point so clear,
 But thou must bring out, thou deified rout,
 What thing the truth is and where.
 Speak Abraham, speak Kester, speak Judith, speak Hester,
 Speak tag and rag, short coat and long;
 Truth's the spell made us rebel,
 And murder and plunder, ding-dong.
 Sure I have the truth, says Numph;
 Nay, I ha' the truth, says Clemme;
 Nay, I ha' the truth, says Reverend Ruth;
 Nay, I ha' the truth, says Nem....

Thus from the rout who can expect
 Ought but division!
 Since Unity doth with Monarchy,
 Begin and end in One.
 If then when all is through their own,

And lies at their behest;
 These popular pates reap nought but debates,
 From that many Round-headed beast.
 Come Royalists then, do play the men,
 And Cavaliers give the word;
 Now let's see, at what you would be,
 And whether you can accord.
 A health to King Charles, says Tom;
 Up with it, says Ralph, like a man;
 God bless him, says Doll; and raise him, says Moll;
 And send him his own, says Nan.

Now for those prudent Things that fit
 Without end, and to none;
 And their committees, that towns and cities
 Fill with confusion;
 For the bold troops of sectaries,
 The Scots and their partakers;
 Our new British States, Col Burges and his mates,
 The Covenant and its makers:
 For all these we'll pray, and in such a way,
 As if it might granted be;
 Jack and Gill, and Mat and Will,
 And all the world would agree.
 A p_x take them all, says Bess;
 And a plague, too, says Margery;
 The Devil, says Dick; and his dam, too, says Nick;

Amen, and Amen, says I. (Wilkins 1.32-7)

The babble that issues forth from the many voices of the Round-headed beast signifies the dispersion of meaning and the disruption of political unity which "doth with Monarchy / Begin and end in One." John Cleveland's reference to "the rable, that fierce beast of yours" (33) in "On the Archbishop of Canterbury" is characteristic of the royalist rhetoric which associated the Puritan revolution with a democratic and demonic movement. Democracy is "but the effect of a Crazy Brain" which mixes words and things, as Samuel Butler announces in "A Republican" (59). Seventeenth-century democratic uprisings and the proposed establishment of a commonwealth as a forum for the voices of the people were understood to be cacophonous by the monarchists, and were regarded as direct violations of the established political and natural orders. The univocal and divinely-sanctioned political and ecclesiastical hierarchies possessed an ontological reality that rendered them immune to corruption, change, and to the critique of the republicans.

The voices and images of monarchical rule in the seventeenth century assumed a variety of forms.² The Platonic metaphor of the beehive (Republic 7) was an especially popular one that Renaissance monarchists adopted and republicans in turn defamiliarized. This representation of kingship conflated voice and image, and views of polity with ideological constructions of nature or the creation.³ Contrasting the Greek *aristocratia* with the many-headed monster of the Athenian *dimocratia*, Thomas Elyot in The Book Named the Governor, argues for a hierarchical consciousness and for the aesthetic value of order in the public weal that was modeled on the divine creation (108). Since communality allowed too much liberty, royalists, like Elyot, insisted that the ancient form of rule was the most stable. Just as there is in nature one principal bee for whom all others labour (109), so must the public weal--the living body made up of sundry estates and degrees of men--be governed by a monarch or a small aristocracy. Elyot takes his analogy from Erasmus who, in The Education of the Christian Prince,

describes the king bee as one whose weapon nature withheld.⁴ Seventeenth-century monarchists adopted the image without altering its significance. Sir Walter Raleigh in The History of the World declares that “the Bees have their prince” (80), and Izaak Walton in The Compleat Angler even offers scientific evidence to justify the established political order:

those who have judged it worth their time and costs to make *Glass-hives*,
 an’ order them in such a manner as to see how *Bees* have bred and made
 thei: Honeycombs, and how they have obeyed their king, and governed
 their commonwealth. (150)

In A Defense of the English People, Milton replies to his contemporaries and to people like Salmasius for whom the bee represented an example of a divine and absolute monarchy worthy of imitation:

“Bees have a king.” Those of Trent, I suppose, as you [Salmasius]
 perhaps recall? The others, as you affirm have republics. You should
 really give up this nonsense about bees; they belong to the Muses and hate
 insects like you and, as you see, refute you. (4.428)⁵

In book 1 of Paradise Lost, Milton recontextualizes the royalist image of monarchy, as well as the image of church hierarchy. In an epic simile, Milton compares the tyrannical demonic counsel--which assembles, ironically, just after Mulciber-Nimrod’s construction of Pandemonium--to the noisy swarming bees (768-76). The scene anticipates both the hissing of the devils who are later transformed into serpents, and the confusion of tongues at the fall of Nimrod’s tower of Babel.

Not monarchy, but rather the commonwealth in which the leaders serve the public comes closest to the Christian ideal for Milton. “*Go to the Ant, thou sluggard, saith Solomon, consider her waies, and be wise; which having no prince, ruler, or lord, provides her meat in the summer, and gathers her food in the harvest,*” he recommends in The Ready and Easy Way (7.427). Addressing those who think the nation undone

without a king, Milton proposes an alternative form of government that he hopes will be in England's future. In his commentary on the political structure that nature offers in the example of the ant colony, Milton maintains that, far from living in "lawless anarchy," these creatures establish a model for a

frugal and self-governing democratie or Commonwealth; safer and more thriving in joint providence and counsel of many industrious equals then under the single domination of one imperious Lord. (7.427)

In contrast to the bee, the emmet, like the ant, provides a model of communality. Raphael's description of the emmet community in Paradise Lost presents an example not only of an ideal bygone political arrangement, like the one that existed prior to Nimrod's appearance, but more importantly, one that could be realized in the nation's future.

Raphael explains that the emmet is

provident

Of future, in small room large heart enclos'd,

Pattern of just equality *perhaps*

Hereafter, join'd in her popular Tribes

Of Commonalty. (7.485-9, my emphasis)

Christopher Hill argues that Milton after the Restoration still managed to convey many radical opinions in his later poems despite writing under strict censorship and being himself deeply suspect (World Turned 399). In this context, the parsimonious emmet serves as a model for just equality in a future republic. Milton "covers himself" both by using a "*functionally* ambiguous" "*perhaps*,"⁶ and by presenting the image in an account narrated by Raphael.⁷

Appropriating the royalist polemic for their own purposes, Milton, Lilburne, Prynne, other Puritan preachers and Parliamentarians characterized the prelates and later the king as oppressors, the dragons of ecclesiastical hierarchy, and as the beast of Revelation itself. They argued that not a parliamentary system but rather monarchy

would prove to be the cause of anarchy. In reply to Charles' prophecy that God will not "suffer those men long to prosper in their *Babel*, who build it with the bones and cement it with the blood of their kings" (Eikon Basillike 175), Milton in Of Reformation accuses the prelates--the merchants of Babylon--and the king--who is later identified as Nimrod and Nebuchadnezzar--for having "built up the *spirituall* BABEL to the heighth of her Abominations" (1.590). In The Reason of Church Government, Milton uses similar metaphors, and piles image upon image to denounce the excesses of the prelacy further:

they are ready to fight and, if it lay in their power, to massacre all good Christians under the names of horrible schismaticks for only finding fault with their temporal dignities, their unconscionable wealth and revenues, their cruell authority over their brethren that labour in the world, while they snore in their luxurious excesse. Openly proclaiming themselves now in the sight of all men to be those which for a while they sought to cover under sheeps cloathing, ravenous and savage wolves threatning inroades and bloody incursions upon the flock of Christ, which they took upon them to feed, but now clame to devour as their prey. More like that huge dragon of Egypt breathing out wast, and desolation to the land, unlesse he were daily fatn'd with virgins blood. (1.856-7)

Similar offences were committed, according to Luther in his Lectures on Genesis, by the pope who hypocritically adopted the title of servant to the people,⁸ and by kings who feigned indebtedness to divine authority while denouncing God's followers. Like the royalists, the bishops and prelates who accused their opponents of the very crimes of which they themselves were guilty, are characterized by Milton as predatory animals and hunters. In A Defense of the English People, Milton offers an even more specific example of hypocrisy, as he addresses Salmasius:

You call the people "a beast." What then are you? For neither that Sacred Consistory nor that St. Wolf can set you its master above the people or the

populace, nor keep you from being what you are, the foulest of animals!
 Certainly the prophetic books of Scripture denote the monarchical
 dominion of great kings by the name and likeness of a raging beast.

(4.484)

This accusation is echoed in the Paradise Lost description of the first post-lapsarian totalitarian ruler, the mighty hunter Nimrod, who "from rebellion shall derive his name, / Though of Rebellion others he accuse" (12.36-7).

ii:

Retelling the story of Nimrod

Milton's politicized account of the fall of Babel, which he appropriately derives from a number of sources, deviates from the Genesis story through the inclusion of the unnamed Nimrod, the first king (Eikonoklastes 3.598) and tyrant (A Defense 4.473). His usurpation and imposed ordering of a people living idyllically leads, ironically, to their dispersion and to the dissemination of language. As he adapts the Genesis commentators' stories of Babel, Milton attributes the fall of Babel to Nimrod directly, in accordance with the received Protestant tradition. The account thereby acquires not only a dramatic element, but also an added political significance.

The Genesis story of Babel serves primarily as an etiology of the diversity of languages and as polemic against pride in society. The historical points of reference and the political context are of lesser importance in the biblical account. Though his tyranny is suggested, Nimrod, who is mentioned in chapter 10 of Genesis, does not figure in the fall recounted in chapter 11. Before reaching the Renaissance, however, where the Old Testament story was again subject to reinterpretation, the account was rewritten by Philo, Augustine, Gregory, Isidore of Seville, Jerome, Bede, Dante and Lydgate among others, who were all indebted to Josephus' politicized version of the story.⁹

In The Antiquities, Josephus attributes the fall to the proud defiance of the people who declared their autonomy from God, and to the coercion of Nimrod "who excited them to such an affront and contempt of God" (35). Assuming a tyrannical rule over the government, Nimrod, described by Jerome as "the first to seize absolute power over the people, something not known before" (Schmidt 305), persuades his followers in an act of disobedience to God to construct a tower. God in turn punishes them by causing the confusion of tongues.

For his account in Purgatorio 12.34-6, Dante is indebted to Jerome's adaptation of Josephus' history of the building of Babel by Nimrod. However, the poet chooses to depoliticize the story, and focus instead on the dispersion of languages caused by Nimrod. In the Inferno, he represents Nimrod as a giant, a gibbering beast and a babbling fool (31.77-8). These references culminate in Dante's commentary on the susceptibility of language to change and decay in Paradiso 26.124-32. They thereby anticipate Du Bartas' lengthy account of the evolution of language in The Divine Weeks.

Through the later influence of the anti-monarchist Boccaccio, this political emphasis that had first entered Western consciousness through Josephus was strongly reasserted again in Lydgate's The Fall of Princes. Nimrod, who vainly attempts "to be put in memorie," is described as defying Fortune by having "wan many a straunge cuntre, / And day be day his power gan encrease, / For which he wolde off his conquest nat cese" (1.1517-9). The political context, along with the interest in the origin of diverse languages, figuring in Dante but absent in Boccaccio, was subsequently adopted by Renaissance writers including Calvin, Luther, Spenser, Raleigh, Browne and Milton. They in turn modified the story to accommodate and promote their own specific political and philological statements.

Luther and Calvin both associated Nimrod with the fall of Babel, but Luther was more intent on condemning him outright: "He was the first Turk or pope on earth after the Flood," who used tyranny to gain for himself a sovereignty to which he had no right

(197). Calvin, while also denouncing the papacy, which he compares to the Babylonian dispersion in The Institutes of the Christian Religion, is somewhat more reluctant to denounce monarchy. "It has not come about by human perversity that the authority over all things on earth is in the hands of kings and other rulers, but by divine providence and holy ordinance," he insists in his defense of the right of kingship (4.20.5). As such, Calvin qualifies the part Nimrod as the first king plays in the construction of the tower. The tower was a work "not taken in hande by the counsell and will of one man; but... all conspired together, insomuch that the fault and blame cannot be layde upon one or a few" (Commentarie 248).

Likewise, Raleigh, a monarchist who is careful to distinguish between kingship and tyranny, devotes less attention to Nimrod's dissenting voice in the account of Babel than to the immoral behaviour of his followers. In rewriting the story, Raleigh makes it polemical and moralistic. He allegorizes the fall as the decline of the ideal monarchical government through humankind's defiant attempt at self-determination. In the end, the historian explains that the "licentious disorder (which seemed to promise a libertie upon the first acquaintance) proved, upon a better trial, not less perilous then an indurable bondage" (79). Nimrod, the first tyrannical king and the father of the first adulterer and idolator, Belus (83-4), makes his appearance in the story only after the difference between a tyrannical rule and a Regal government--one which balances supreme power and common right--is outlined. Raleigh suggests, thereby, that Nimrod is largely a product of humankind's rebellious act rather than its author (79-84).

In contrast to Raleigh's meticulous tracing of the origin of kingship from the rule of elders in his History of the World, Milton, in book 12 of Paradise Lost, provides a very different history of polity. The autocratic seizure of the pastoral tribal society by Nimrod suggests that the basic principle of organization on earth after the flood is political rather than racial or ethnological. Moreover, instead of accepting the idea that human politics and kingship are divinely sanctioned, Milton, in his reworking of the

account, indicates that the organization and government of societies is in the hands of humankind itself, which, therefore, has a definite role in authoring its own destiny. In turn, the political structures can justly be challenged or subject to criticism in a way that a divinely-sanctioned monarchy or utopia could not. The foundation for the construction of an alternative form of government, a commonwealth, might then be laid, according to a "Pattern of just equality perhaps / Hereafter, join'd in popular Tribes / Of Commonalty," as Raphael suggests in the reworked creation story (7.487-9).

iii:

Homogeneous and organic creations

In the biblical Genesis account, God sanctions and encourages diversification and the scattering of earth's inhabitants. God tells Noah and his sons "Bring forth the fruite, and multiplie, and replenish the earth," (Gen. 9.1), a refrain that will later haunt Adam (PL 10.729-31), as I explain in chapter 3. Josephus' interpretation reads:

God commanded them to send colonies abroad, for the thorough peopling of the earth,—that they might not raise seditions among themselves, but might cultivate a great part of the earth, and enjoy its fruits after a plentiful manner. (35)

The people, however, defiantly refuse to live according to these terms, and become suspicious of their freedom. They conclude that "being divided asunder, they might the more easily be oppressed" (35). A similar resistance to dispersion is displayed by Nimrod's people in The Divine Weeks: "Under a king let's lead our lives; for feare / Least severd thus, in Princes, and in tents / We be disperst" (2.2.2.110-12). Du Bartas interprets the scene as an attempt by the people to achieve a stifling unification through their claims to self-sufficiency and autonomy from God. The "self-imprisoned" people who attain a self-securing homogeneity through the construction of the idolatrous

tower directly ignore the call for the cultivation and the populating of the world with different peoples.

The various accounts of Babel draw attention to the existence of two kinds of unity. The first is that desired by the people in resistance to God, and is threatened if any kind of development is to be accommodated. It is characterized as "the forc't and outward union of cold, and neutrall, and inwardly divided minds" (Areopagitica 2.551). The second is a unity-scattered dialectic, a type of harmony willed by God which permits creativity and diversity. This organic ordering does not presume that the accommodation of different families, tongues, and nations is chaotic. It proposes instead that all parts of the creation enhance each other, and bring "each in its kind" to productivity.

Refusing to regard the diversity of creation as a threat to divine order and worldly progress, Milton heretically espouses the theory of creation out of chaos in opposition to creation *ex nihilo*. Chaos and unformed matter, co-existent with God from the beginning of time, do not disrupt the order of the universe. They are the elementary materials and principles through which the Creator makes himself heard. Uriel explains to a disguised Satan that at the moment of creation,

the formless Mass,

This world's material mould, came to a heap:

Confusion heard his voice, and wild uproar

Stood rul'd, stood vast infinitude confin'd;

Till at his second bidding darkness fled,

Light shone, and order from disorder sprung. (3.708-13)

Paradise Lost is an intensely visual poem, but voice is the primary and original creative force, as the blind narrator, Uriel and Raphael announce in their respective creation accounts. Discordant harmony is best suited to creation, Milton suggests, following the Ovidian tradition (Metamorphoses 1.433). God's voice is heard amid the barbarous dissonance of the warring elements and "embryon atoms" (PL 2.900), and rises out of

babble.¹⁹ Only in this context is change and growth possible, as Du Bartas also declares in reference to his poetic creation--"the noble, sweet, Voice-ord'ring Art," "th' Accord of Discords" (2.2.4.704, 707).

Order in diversity rises out of disorder, and in Paradise Lost, the genesis story of the creation follows the account of the war in heaven, Satan's anti-creation. Milton, then, not only reinterprets the divine imposition of order on a pre-existent matter or chaos as a confirmation of God's infiniteness, but regards this confrontation with discordant elements as an act of creation that the artist must imitate. The Areopagitan pronouncement that the biblical writings of the prophets and evangelists, used to instruct the warfaring Christian, actually bristle with heresies, and that the acquisition of knowledge and moral strength necessitates an embrace of contrariety and impurity, form the basis for Milton's theory of creation. The creation of nature, the composition of the multivocal poem and the construction of the proposed commonwealth, all depend on the interaction among the discordant elements with which they remain in dialogue.

In a historical and political context, Milton distinguishes between the false static unity--which inevitably dissolves when subject to the whims of fortune (Ready and Easy Way 7.436)--and a type of organicity that provides a forum for exchange among diverse voices. By removing schisms, the prelates in fact "remove and oppose all the means of removing schism" (1.791), Milton explains in an attack on the supporters of prelacy in The Reason of Church Government. Then, in the Areopagica, Milton addresses those who complain of schisms and sects and of any person who "dissents from their maxims." He continues, accusing the prelates of pride and insecurity produced by their "inwardly divided minds" that compel them to suppress all contention. Ironically, it is the prelates and censors who are themselves responsible for the division in the church and state:

They are the troubles, they are the dividers of unity, who neglect and permit not others to unite those dissevered pieces which are yet wanting

to the body of Truth. To be still searching what we know not by what we know, still closing up truth to truth as we find it (for all her body is homogeneal and proportional), this is the golden rule in theology as well as in arithmetic, and makes up the best harmony in a church; not the forced and outward union of cold and neutral and inwardly divided minds.

(2.551)

By insisting on an imposed and artificial unity, the bishops and royalists deny the process of seeking for the Truth, a multi-faceted Truth which resists reification and institutionalization because its parts will never all be found. Though accusing others of rebellion, the supporters of hierarchy are themselves to blame for the confusion of tongues and the divisions in society. The rabble described in the opening ballad is projected back onto the authorities themselves:

Noise it till ye be hoarse; that a rabble of Sects will come in, it will be answer'd ye, no rabble sir Priest, but a unanimous multitude of good Protestants will then joine to the Church, which now because of you stand separated. (1.787-8)

The multiplicity of religious sects--the forerunners of political parties--had, along with the dispersion of peoples, the dissemination of languages and the proposed mixed government, to be legitimized as a creative ferment for social development (Rajan, Form of Unfinished 100). "Positive pluralism" in the religious and governmental sectors was offered by the more radical revolutionaries as a constructive form of tolerance, which Donald Hanson defines as a "cardinal virtue of the politics of moderation":

it is the range of concrete choices supplied by a diverse society that makes individual freedom a genuinely operational matter. To be sure, this presupposes the political liberty of consent to government, implemented by the civil liberties....it is correct to argue that pluralism dampens

conflict, since multiple loyalties will result in contrary pressures on the individual citizen. Resolute and singleminded opposition is much reduced in this way. (357)

Civic consciousness, which necessarily included civic loyalty and responsibility, helped repair rather than contribute to social fragmentation. The novel idea that society must expect and accept diversity, rather than regard it as a regrettable lapse from the one true standard of rectitude, was being fostered in the pro-revolutionary texts and discourses of the time.¹¹

iv:

Reordering the confusion

When Milton's God calls the formless mass that constitutes earth into being on the first day of creation, chaos hears his voice, and he shapes confusion into a dynamic order. But in the account of the fall of Babel, God is the one who causes the confusion of tongues among Nimrod's folk as he

in derision sets

Upon thir Tongues a various Spirit to rase
Quite out thir Native Language, and instead
To sow a jangling noise of words unknown:
Forthwith a hideous gabble rises loud
Among the Builders. (12.52-7)

God's reaction, whereby he sets the quarrelsome spirit on the tongues of the builders, seems quite out of character with his creative impulses, as does his transformation of Eden into a wasteland at the end of book 11. Adding insult to injury, Nimrod is named after the rebellion which he hopes to prevent, and of which he accuses others.¹² Like the newly fallen angels whose names are "blotted out and ras'd / By thir Rebellion"

(1.362-3), Nimrod is otherwise unnamed after his fall. Moreover, the builders' unfinished structure of the tower of Babel--*Babili* in Hebrew meant "gate of the Gods"--is mockingly renamed "confusion."¹³ After attempting to "get themselves a name lest far disperst / In foreign Lands thir memory be lost, / Regardless whether good or evil fame" (12.45-7), the builders' addresses to each other are, ironically, "Not understood" (57-8).

Calvin in his Commentarie...Upon Genesis interprets the reference to Nimrod's followers' efforts at making a name for themselves by declaring that "this is always the way of the world, never to bother about heaven and to look for immortality on earth where everything is transitory" (128). Milton and Calvin both understand "name" in terms of fame, and distinguish between a secular and spiritual attitude towards fame with a particular emphasis that is not to be found in the creation account. We can conclude, therefore, that the Renaissance authors are appropriating the story for the purpose of criticizing tyranny and for commenting on the vain ambitions of their own age.

God's answer to the builders' attempt at achieving immortality is a miracle, according to The Art of Logic:¹⁴

Languages, both the first one which Adam spoke in Eden, and those varied ones possibly derived from the first, which the builders of the tower of Babel suddenly received, are without doubt divinely given. (8.294)

The miracle includes the dissemination of languages, a fitting response to the confusion created by the internally-divided builders, who, in the search for fame and titles, disobey the call for dispersion and abuse their native tongue by dissociating word and meaning.¹⁵ By causing the "jangling noise of words unknown" (12.55), God is again rejoining letter and spirit, name and meaning, as he externalizes the inner turmoil. It is an act that Michael psychologizes after the Nimrod account: "God in Judgment just /

Subjects him from without to violent Lords; / Who oft as undeservedly enthrall / His outward freedom" (12.92-5).

The scattering of languages in Genesis prefigures a far more significant event in biblical history--Pentecost, a recuperative linguistic response to Babel, with which book 12 of Paradise Lost concludes. This time the spirit sent by the Comforter will allow the apostles to speak all Tongues (12.501) in order that they might evangelize the nations, thereby reunifying them without imposing an artificial unity. The justification of the ways of God in the poem, then, offers a new way of understanding that breaks down the barriers of language without altering the plurality of and differences among the languages. When God translates the curse into a blessing, Pentecost redeems without reversing the confusion of Babel. Calvin suggests in his Sermon on Pentecost:

If we seek the reason why there are different languages in the world, we must come to the conclusion that it is on account of a curse from God. Yet here appeared His goodness and fatherly mercy, when the message of life was brought into all tongues. That is how God converted evil into good.

(564)

According to Calvin, the miracle was performed that all people might partake of the covenant of salvation which initially belonged only to the Jews. The diversification of language becomes, thereby, a democratic action. Communication among the members of society which will be disrupted continuously (12.530-9), is made possible through the recovery of oral dialogue with God and others, without which language, knowledge and society itself are threatened. Like Calvin, then, Milton not only describes and condemns the confusion caused by the builders, but he offers in light of the event of Pentecost, an alternative social arrangement that accommodates multivocality.

In his invocation in The Divine Weeks, Du Bartas requests the heavenly king to reform the iniquity caused by "Nimrodizing"--the rupturing of the Word--and to reverse the effects of the curse caused by the corruption of the court:

If our courtiers now the Po-poysoned phrase;
 Or now-contagion of corrupted dayes,
 Leave any tract of *Nimrodizing* there;
 O cancel it, that they may every where
 Instead of *Babel*, build *Jerusalem*;

That loud my Muse may eccho under them. (2.2.2.33-8)

In Paradise Lost, "Nimrodizing" results in the failure to complete the idolatrous tower, an achievement which Michael calls "ridiculous"--"an exquisitely bathetic and derisive polysyllable" (Davies 33), echoing the absurd construction. It is on the base of the unfinished tower in the spiritual Babylon of the prelates that the building of Jerusalem must commence. Ezra 5:8-17 offers one of several histories describing the legendary building of the temple of Jerusalem. The temple of God, whose construction continues indefinitely (5.16), is built with the spoils retrieved from Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon, a city that is destroyed with the creation of Jerusalem.¹⁶

The images of the reconstructed temple and the re-membered body of Truth are favourite ones for Milton, and have not only religious but also social, moral and psychological implications. In the Areopagitica, after describing the on-going reassembly of the body of Osiris, Milton compares the numerous sects and schisms that constitute the religious community to the divisions and "schisms" in the stones and timber which fit together in contiguity to construct the house of God on earth:

out of many moderate varieties and brotherly dissimilitudes that are not vastly disproportionall arises the goodly and the graceful symmetry that commends the whole pile and structure. (2.555)

The specifications for the constructed and reconstructed temple of Solomon are outlined in 1 Kings 5-6, and Ezekiel 40-48, as Milton notes. Solomon who oversees the construction in the book of Kings is displaced in the Areopagitic account by the people who continue building indefinitely. In The Reason of Church Government, Milton

psychologizes the biblical history by referring to God's prescribed delineations for the "rational temple" (1.758). This temple is the human soul and the immortal statue of Christ's body which is his Church "in all her glorious lineaments and proportions" (1.758). Physical structures, then, are merely encasements for "th'upright heart and pure" (1.17), or for the inwardly-divided minds like Mulciber's. It is he who designs Pandemonium which anachronistically "Not Babylon, / Nor great Alcairo such magnificence / Equall'd in all thir glories" (1.717-9).

v:

The unfinished commonwealth and the rebellious rout (PL 1.747)

The construction of the tower and the city of Babylon was no sin in itself, Luther assures us, for others had done the same (214); Asschur in Genesis 10:11, for example, built Nineveh because he could no longer live with the ungodly. Just as "God attributes to place / No sanctity, if none be thither brought" (11.836-7), so does he not abandon--nor leave in the dark--those who create in his name. The sin of Nimrod's people lies in attaching their own name to the structure they built, and in insisting on their independence from God. The image of the unfinished tower in Paradise Lost is used in a political context to refer as well to the unsuccessful construction of the commonwealth, and to the idolatry and vain ambitions of the builders. In The Ready and Easy Way, Milton warns his compatriots that their failure to erect the main structure of the commonwealth--for which the foundation had been laid during the years' long struggles for liberty and religious toleration--would enslave and "render them a scorn and derision" before all of Europe. What will they say of us, Milton asks, but

Where is this goodly tower of a Commonwealth, which the English boasted they would build to overshadow kings, and be another Rome in the west?

The foundation indeed they laid gallantly; but fell into a wors confusion,

not of tongues, but of factions, then those at the tower of Babel; and have left no memorial of thir work behinde them remaining, but in the common laughter of Europ. (7.423)

Like Milton's history of Nimrod's fall, the account of the construction of the commonwealth is a composite one. The references to the uncompleted tower and the scoffing laughter of the onlookers are taken not only from the Genesis story of the unfinished tower of Babel, but also from the Gospel story of Luke (14.25-33), as Milton states. Luke describes the foolish builder who laid the foundation for--but failed to complete--the tower he prematurely proposed to build.¹⁷ As Sidney disparaged those who simply build castles in the air without a substantial base (16), so Butler in "The Republican" accuses the commonwealth builders of creating a utopian democracy, which he likens to "the Intelligible world, where the Models and Ideas of all Things are, but no Things; and 'twill never go further" (59).

Though Milton himself always continued to believe in the justness of the revolution, his disillusion with the traitors to the cause and the state converts is apparent when he redirects his criticism at the newly formed anti-republican movement. By 1660, Milton recognized that Cromwell had for years been breeding predatory bloodhounds (Davies 45). He warned his contemporaries that the factions created by the negligent and foolhardy builders of the commonwealth were even worse than the confusion created by the fall of Babel. Milton, then, recontextualizes the images from the account of Babel not only to characterize the enemies of the republic, but also to denounce the former Parliamentarians themselves. At the conclusion of *Eikonoklastes* the revolutionary describes his countrymen, who idolized and hypocritically expressed their remorse at the regicide, as an "inconstant, irrational and Image-doting rabble; [that like a credulous and hapless herd, begott'n to servility, and enchanted with these popular institutes of Tyranny, subscrib'd with a new device of the Kings Picture at his

praiers...]" (3.601). The fate of the idolatrous and "miscellaneous rabble" is addressed by the Son in Paradise Regained, as I will explain in chapter 4.

In An Apology for Smectymnuus, Milton initially praised the Parliament for its ideological firmness and its willingness to hear the grievances voiced from all members of society,

Insomuch that the meanest artizans and labourers, at other times also women, and often the younger sorts of servants assembling with their complaints, and that sometimes in a lesse humble guise then for petitioners, have gone with confidence, than neither their meanness (would be rejected, nor their simplicity condemn'd, nor yet their urgency distasted either by the dignity, wisdom, or moderation of that supreme Senate; nor did they depart unsatisfi'd. (1.926)

The recent history of the state and church, however, led Milton to criticize the voices of the masses, and to believe that Babel had not been wholly destroyed. When Milton discovered that the English revolution was not prepared to sanction divorce or the freedom of the press, he turned on the Presbyterian influence in the Long Parliament. The transformation of his countrymen into beasts in the later treatises recalls another set of images that describe Milton's disillusion with this Parliament. The Parliamentarians' intolerance and oppression, masked by their feigned cries for liberty, create a rift between meanings and words. It is they now who produce the "barbarous noise" of Owls and Cuckoos, Asses, Apes and Dogs (Sonnet 12.4) by embracing the "whore Plurality," recalling the ten kings in Revelation who submitted to the whore of Babylon (Eikonoklastes 3.598). Confusion and tyranny are again equated. The image of the whore is used in a different context by Butler to refer to the commonwealth itself. The Politician is ravished by the whore who is characterized by her accessibility; the Politician

is wonderfully enamoured of a Commonwealth because it is like a common Whore, which everyone may have to do with; but cannot abide *Monarchy*, because it is honest and confined to one. (61)

vi:

The intervening psychological narrative

When Milton introduces Nimrod into the story of Babel, and transfers the Babel and bestial imagery from the monarchist supporters to the fallen Parliamentarians, he indicates that his criticisms are directed not so much at specific political systems as a whole, but more at those individuals who corrupt the institutions. He thereby emphasizes the significance of the individual's involvement in the existing social and political systems, and in the course of history. Moreover, the failure of the revolution could be regarded as less devastating and catastrophic if the defeat were attributed to a few individuals, rather than to all the participants. As Milton announces in The Ready and Easy Way, the revolutionaries' actions are characterized by

just and religious deeds, though don by som to covetous and ambitious ends, yet not therefor to be staid with their infamie, or they to asperse the integritie of others. (7.422)

The socio-political world is linked with and punctuated by problems of individual psychology. Milton criticized the builders of the commonwealth for their failure to erect the commonwealth on the already prepared base, and in other instances, for the instability of the foundation itself. Now, after the revolution, he realizes that the foundations themselves must be laid deeper in the minds of the individual builders, in order that they might build more securely. The political and the psychological realms are interconnected, as Milton's depiction of the fall in book 9 of Paradise Lost will especially suggest.

The corrupt government is the outward sign of right reason obscured by the fall, Michael explains after the account of Nimrod. Internalizing Nimrod subjects the individual to servitude: the loss of inward liberty deprives people of outward freedom (12.90-101). The socio-political allegory is transformed into an individualistic psychological model that advises the reader to conquer all those enemies which are within. The correspondence between the abuse of reason and the disruption of external liberty is the subject of a refrain heard throughout Milton's works:

What wise and valliant man would seek to free
 These thus degenerate, by themselves enslav'd,
 Or could of inward slaves make outward free? (PR 4.143-5)¹⁸

The association between the two kinds of freedom suggests that political reform will largely depend on individual rather than collective efforts.¹⁹ Interested initially in social regeneration as Of Education and The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates propose, Milton decides by the time he writes The Christian Doctrine, Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained that the reconstruction of singular leaders and representatives is the precondition for the eventual establishment of the commonwealth.

In a literary context, the inclusion of the psychological narrative within the larger epic structure accounts for Nimrod's appearance in Milton's account of Babel. Nimrod's fall is associated with Satan's, and his story is juxtaposed with that of Abraham in Michael's subsequent narrative account. The author of the fall of Babel is likewise contrasted with Enoch, Moses and Abdiel, and with the poet himself. Still, all directly shape and add their own voices to the represented political and social structures, and to the epic narrative in which their stories are accommodated.

Nimrod, the "one [who] shall rise / Of proud ambitious heart" to overturn the fraternal state, initiates the first rebellion against God after the fall. Abraham, in turn, the one faithful man springing from the chosen nation, becomes, after Enoch, the first of the just men to stand witness to God, and to reopen and redirect the course of history:

yet him God the most High vouchsafes
 To call by Vision from his Father's house,
 His kindred and false Gods, into a Land
 Which he will show him, and from him will raise
 A mighty Nation, and upon him show'r
 His benediction so, that in his Seed
 All Nations shall be blest....

all Nations of the Earth
 Shall in his Seed be blessed; by that Seed
 Is meant thy great deliverer, who shall bruise
 The Serpent's head. (12.120-6, 147-50)

The intervention of the revolutionary in the providential historical process is reminiscent of and anticipates numerous other interventions, including that of "the one greater man" (1.4) whom the patriarchs typify in biblical history and the poetic narrative. In Paradise Lost and the Seventeenth-Century Reader, Rajan comments on the juxtaposition of the accounts of the few just men with those of the rebels. Rajan draws our attention to the variations in the stories that Milton introduces to maintain a structural relation between the characters:

Enoch is meant to be contrasted with the Giants, Noah with their progeny, and Moses the Lawgiver with Nimrod who abolished "Concord and Law of Nature from the Earth." So anxious is Milton to preserve this symmetry that he is prepared to be unconventional in his account of Enoch and to base his description of Nimrod on the received tradition rather than the Bible. (83)

The story of Nimrod is structurally parallel to that of Enoch, which is the earlier story in the bible and Paradise Lost. However, Enoch is assessed theologically, whereas Nimrod is celebrated politically, thereby moving the narrative closer to identifiable

historical reality. Moreover, despite the structural parallels, Milton invites us to read the portraits both of the just men and of the rebels as disrupting the homogeneity of the narrative and historical contexts in which they appear.

The acts of intervention within society and the process or "conversation" of history indicate that the structures can be manipulated, and are forums for further interventions. Social diversity and the voices which arise out of the creation of the various tongues that Nimrod sought to suppress create the necessary background for any single voice to be heard. The attempt to institutionalize the voices with which a speaker is in dialogue disrupts communication altogether. Michael links an intellectual tyranny to Nimrod's political tyranny in the account of Babel to suggest a connection between absolute power and the censorship of multi-faceted truths.

Tyranny and dissonance result from the resistance to diversification and multiplication. It is a lesson that comes especially hard to the poet-narrator. Guilty of having internalized Nimrod, the narrator presides over the historical epic narrative until he gradually recognizes his presumptuousness and the need to accommodate other view points in the poem--my primary concern in this study. In the invocation of book 7, the narrator compares his poetic enterprise to the daring ascent to the heavens made by Bellerophon--who, after all, also ended up blind (Hollander 116). The poetic flight is connected with Icarus's and Nimrod's (or Nimrud's) foolhardy attempts to mount to heaven on eagle's wings (Herodotus 486).

In the same passage, however, Milton's poet-narrator associates himself with Orpheus and spurns "the barbarous dissonance / Of Bacchus and his Revellers, the Race / Of that wild Rout that tore the Thracian Bard / In Rhodope" (7.32-5). Once again, Nimrod's name is implicated in the harshly alliterative verses. As he does in reference to Nimrod, Milton here activates the etymology of Bacchus' name. Bacchus "was so call'd from a Greek Word which signifies to 'revel'" (Tooke 70). Tooke thereafter offers five pieces of evidence to prove that Bacchus, the corrupt monarch, is Nimrod (81). The

second reason he provides reads: "They think the Name of *Nimrod* may allude to the Hebrew Word, *Namur*, or the *Chaldee*, *Namer*, a *Tyger*. And accordingly the Chariot of *Bacchus* was drawn by Tigers, and himself cloath'd with the Skin of a Tiger" (81). As I will argue in chapter 2, this image is politicized in *The Ready and Easy Way* when Milton denounces the royalist pamphleteers, "the tigers of Bacchus" (7.453), whose cacophony threatened the voice of the poet and the revolutionary. Du Bartas likewise alludes to the relationship between the two figures by describing the confusion caused by Nimrod as "a jangling noise not much unlike the rumors / Of *Bacchus* swaynes amid their drunken humors" (2.2.2.191-2).²⁰ For Milton, Nimrod, like Bacchus, is responsible both for political anarchy and cacophony, as well as for monarchy and the censorship of voice, including the poet's (Orpheus-Lycidas's) own voice. The Master of Revels was the chief censor.

In attempting to make a name for himself, Nimrod is destined to remain nameless and powerless. Babble resounds through time in the place of his own name, and the unfinished tower testifies to his failed political control. As Nimrod remains unnamed and his tower unfinished, so does the bard's bold flight lead potentially to the disruption of the poetic enterprise. Similarly, in book 2, the demonic epic poets' recording of their own history--their Heroic deeds and hapless fall (545)--results in the creation of a partial song, one that is disharmonious and favourable only to themselves.

Linear history, like narrative, is constantly redirected by individual interveners, thereby challenging Milton's earlier conception of historical progress as a simple transition from tyranny to the free kingdom of saints. The poet's view of history is at once Neoplatonic and Hebraic--moving between being and becoming--and it is Augustinian and Orosian in its awareness of the historical events' relentless pursuit of their own tails, from bondage to liberty and back (Davies 47). "Tyranny must be, / Though to the tyrant thereby no excuse," Michael explains to Adam, while describing the

continuously disrupted course of history. This earlier model of uninterrupted historical progress is superseded by a much more complex conception

which incorporated within it the possibilities of defeats, setbacks, the notion of the interrelatedness of triumph and tragedy, but which retains at its core both the major rationalist categories themselves and a conception of historical progress. (Milner 150)

The interpenetration of the individual will and voice with concrete socio-historical forces provides for Milton, particularly in his attempt to come to terms with the idea of the reinstated monarchy, a pattern of history, as well as an outline for political, social and religious structures, and ultimately, a model for the literary forms he adopts.

Part 2
Critical Interventions

History must supply the writer with the rudiments of narration, which he must improve and exalt by a nobler art, must animate by dramatic energy, and diversify by retrospection and anticipation. (Johnson, Life of Milton)

The experience of verse always includes the unmediated sensation of present time, a backward glance at the impulse of the preceding verses, and a vivid anticipation of the verse to follow. These three intertwined experiences constitute the living interplay of invariant and variance, i.e., they suggest to the author, reader, performer, and listener a constant of verse measure enriched and embellished by diversions and deviations. (Jakobson and Pomorska, "Dialogue on Time")

i:

Interpreting history and narrative

Milton's interpretive historical model--which posits the possibility for continued though qualified activism within defined political and ideological systems--anticipates the New Historicist paradigm of critical interventions in the unending conversation of history. In this intervening section, I will address the philosophical and literary constructions of history, and the politics of intervention. Through these interventions--critical readings or revolutionary actions--our perception of the past is liberated from a narrative of continuity. Critical readings of history that allow for

rupture demystify and interrogate present ideological formulations imposed by socio-political forces that attempt to censor and thereby suppress differences. The monolithic forces include literary approaches that deny dissenting voices, or, as I will suggest in the second half of this section, that resist the possibility of self-representation.

The oppressive continuum is identified in The Will to Power. Nietzsche offers an account of the merciless, cynical past (44) which he first develops in the essay that proved to be a seminal work for deconstructionists. In the essay, Nietzsche denounces a blind and fanatic worship of the past which liquidates what is singular in order to impose order and continuity. The individual, in turn, is enslaved to an idolatrous "disguised theology" (48) or "malady of history":

there are no more living mythologies, you say? Religions are at their last gasp? Look at the religion of the power of history, and the priests of the mythology of Ideas, with their scarred knees! (52)

However, history--and Nietzsche deliberately employs the term *Historie* rather than *Geschichte* in his title, "Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben"--need not be regarded only as a closed system, but may be used advantageously, as the title suggests.²¹ In fact, the youth of the nation must be made historically-conscious if they are to participate in the "furthering of true culture" (73). Nietzsche's treatment of the past should, then, be considered in terms of exercise, not exorcism:

We do need history...we need it for life and action, not as a convenient way to avoid life and action, or to excuse a selfish life and a cowardly or base action. We would serve history only so far as it serves life....I turn at last to that great company of hope, to tell them the way and the course of their salvation, their rescue from the disease of history, and their own history as well, in a parable whereby they may again become healthy enough to study history anew, and under the guidance of life make use of

the past in that threefold way--monumental, antiquarian, or critical.

(3.71)

Nietzsche's philosophy includes two senses of history that T.S. Eliot would later also recognize: "History may be servitude. History may be freedom" ("Little Gidding" 3). The proliferation of a diseased engulfing history is caused by science which generalizes and regards things as "finished and historical, not as continuing and eternal" (70). The antidote to this "poison" is a dose of the "unhistorical" or forgetfulness, and of the "superhistorical." Nietzsche's antidotes prevent a surrender of the individual consciousness to a homogenizing world-process, by recommending an embrace with the other "spiritual powers" of art and religion (52). It is they that challenge the sovereign historical power by defamiliarizing and treating common historical actions as revolutionary events.

Foucault in "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" contrasts the Nietzschean "wirkliche Historie" or "effective history" to a traditional history--the malady of history--which is based on a pretended continuity and a comprehensive view that resists differences and prevents choice. Effective history is not teleological, but instead associates self-representation with discontinuity and rupture. It thus allows others to enter the stage to speak, and transposes the relationship ordinarily established between an event and an unviolated continuity. An event is defamiliarized as a random, subversive and unique occurrence,

not as a decision, a treaty, a reign, or a battle, but as the reversal of a relationship of forces, the usurpation of power, the appropriation of a vocabulary turned against those who had once used it, a feeble domination that poisons itself as it grows lax, the entry of a masked "other." (154)

Benjamin anticipates Foucault's dismantling of the comprehensive view of history and of the idea of the continuous development of the past by recognizing that all historical knowledge is produced from a limited vantage point. Benjamin describes the

historical materialist taking cognizance of a historical subject in order to blast a specific era out of the homogeneous course of history, and a specific life out of the era. The past for Benjamin, unlike Foucault, is not only a theoretical construct, but a political one as well. The writing of history is not a mimetic act, but the seizing hold of a memory "as it flashes up at a moment of danger," which disrupts the established historical continuum and the teleological vision called historicism. Dialectical thought is the organ of historical awakening (Eagleton 78), and critical thinking is an act of revolution.

The image of forceful political intervention is juxtaposed with a sexual metaphor. A homogeneous history from which all traces of rupture are expelled is comparable to the indifferent whore or inviolable virgin whose availability and barren emptiness respectively suggest infertility. Benjamin proposes that the continuum of history be raped and transfigured by violence into an arrested moment of time, and thereby forced to a revolutionary crisis (46). Eagleton comments on the inappropriateness of the metaphor by asserting that the woman is not the whore of history, notwithstanding Benjamin's fantasy, but in fact the exact image of the oppressed and the ultimate image of violation. Both Eagleton and Benjamin identify the inviolable force as ruling-class history, and as the capitalist system which impedes disruption. Both perceive interventions, ruptures, recyclings and re-insertions as necessary political actions. The revolutionary acts bring historical contestations, social differences and class struggles to the surface again where they might challenge the dominant discourses.

Benjamin's argument that the truth of the past and present emerges only in their collision necessitates what Dominick LaCapra calls a self-conscious dialogue with history. The engagement of interpreters "in a particularly compelling conversation with the past" (28) assumes that the past is not transparent and that the present and the past remain separate though merged. An understanding of one can only proceed from its entanglement with the other with which it is in dialogue. The act of interpretation is

not, then, either purely objective or subjective. The past cannot simply be documented, nor can the present be dissociated from the past through fictionalizing or a willful projection of present concerns upon the past. Instead, interpretation takes the form of "political intervention that engages the historian in a critical process that relates past, present and the future through complex modes of interaction involving both continuities and discontinuities" (63).

To suggest that there are historical continuities is not to say that the past orchestrates a cacophony of historical voices into momentary cohesion, repressing awkward elements and concealing disjunctures. Rather, by containing continuous forces and tendencies, history becomes a palimpsest, consisting of numerous traces and voices. For LaCapra, the act of reading involves, moreover, a dialogical relation with the layers and voices of history:

Even if one accepts the metaphor that presents interpretation as the "voice" of the historical reader in the "dialogue" with the past, it must be actively recognized that the past has its own "voices" that must be respected, especially when they resist or qualify the interpretations we would like to place on them. A text is a network of resistances, and a dialogue is a two-way affair; a good reader is also an attentive and patient reader. (64)

At the same time that he addresses the conversation between past and present, LaCapra reifies the voices of the past in this passage by isolating history's "own 'voices.'" The past, however, is continually disrupted by disparate discourses, thereby challenging the distinction between past and present. The very engagement of the past with the present ensures that the "voices of history" continue to be heard. Social heteroglossia and the voices of the past create the required context for the writer's own voice, outside of which his artistic nuances cannot be detected and without which they do not sound (Bakhtin 278).

Frank Lentricchia in Criticism and Social Change provides a particularly useful metaphor for characterizing history when he describes the "little fable of history as conversation" which he adopts from Kenneth Burke's Philosophy of Literary Form. Burke depicts the intervention of the writer, historian and rhetorician--the not-always-conscious bearers of historical and ideological forces--in a socio-political context. The intervener or critical reader becomes both the reader and listener, the subject and object of the conversation, in LaCapra's terms. The reader at once acquires her materials from the historical discussion and becomes an agent of change within it. The recalcitrant continuum of history, in which intervention makes no difference or to which single revolutionary events bear no necessary connection at all, is rewritten as a forum of exchange. It thereby provides a context for individual expression which it records and dramatizes:

Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar [/or]. Someone answers; you answer him; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you, to either the embarrassment or gratification of your opponent, depending upon the quality of your ally's assistance. However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress. (Burke 110-11, my intervention)

We enter a familiar setting in *medias res*, and history begins to "make" us. At the same time, participation in the discussion allows us to leave an impression that provides the

unending conversation with the energy it requires in order to continue. Individual contributions help shape the experiences of future speakers who are also invited to review the conversations of the past from the recently altered vantage point.²²

There is no sense of eschatology in Burke, Foucault or Benjamin, no indication of the existence of an immanent mechanism whereby earthly things are gathered in and exalted. The conversation of history cannot come to a conclusion because all future speakers or actors will similarly enter the parlour historically-burdened. Each person must summarize the discourse for herself and determine when it is time for departure. This model of history is organicist but not necessarily progressive.

In "Tradition and the Individual Talent," Eliot too rejects the teleology of liberal progressivism, but does so to meet his own conservative and formalist ends. Eliot assumes that the tradition of monuments forms an already complete and self-sufficient order which automatically absorbs--like a grazing cow (Eagleton 54)--all significant critical interventions. These he identifies as the new works of art created by the elect who belong to the "main current." The monolithic tradition is a self-equilibrating organism that has already brought about, in a Hegelian sense, the end of history:

The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and thus its conformity between the old and the new. (73)

It is not preposterous that we conceive of the past as being altered by the present to the same extent as the present is directed by the past, Eliot goes on to explain. There is room for development within the tradition, and for refinement perhaps and complication certainly, but there is no potential for improvement, superannuation or disruption. Each creation must in the end be assimilated, and the voice and personality of its author silenced.

In order to be accommodated, the author must practise negative capability and resign to a continual surrender of the self to something which is more valuable (75). Poetry is "not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality" (79). There is, then, no room for individual, dissenting or impassioned voices in this conservative homogenizing tradition, and at this point in Eliotic history, no room for Milton.

Eliot never wanders outside of the text to consider the extent to which "developments" and "complications" in the literary tradition are representative of and intervene in human history or political systems. New Historicist, Marxist and cultural critics are more bold in drawing such a connection. Kendrick observes that there is a strong sense in which political revolutions are made by the cultural revolutions that precede them (7). Milner complementarily remarks in John Milton and the English Revolution that social and political crises rarely, if ever, emerge from nothingness (182). Using a historical example, he explains that it is surely inconceivable that the ideological preconditions for the Exclusion Crisis--influenced in part by Milton's own movement from quietism to activism in his post-Restoration poems--had not already been established prior to 1678. Adopting a similar critical approach, Eagleton notes that the soldiers of the first Russian revolution of 1905 carried copies of Paradise Lost with them, and read the poem enthusiastically as a libertarian text (8 n22). The text, then, is said not only to exemplify discursive practices and ideologies, but to condition and engage those very discourses. Evidence of this engagement, however, is not easily provided. The attempt to furnish that evidence often ends in the prioritization of the socio-historical over the literary texts. The tensions and multiple voices in these texts are suppressed, as they become reduced to what LaCapra calls "a trampoline for one's own creative leaps." And when there's a world to be changed, even a thoroughly ideologized text may not seem important enough, Pechter reminds us in a commentary on the insignificant impact of critical interventions in a social context (300).

ii:

Dialectic between social and self-representation

One of the starting points for the New Historicists is the drawing of a distinction between two perceptions of history. History can be regarded as a realm of retrievable fact that grounds the polysemous nature of the literary artifact. It can also be interpreted as a construct made up of textualized traces assembled in various configurations by the interpreter. Still despite the insistence that history is not objective, transparent or unified, the tendency in New Historicist criticism--especially in the cases of Dollimore and Sinfield--is to regard history as "recoverable" (Pechter 298). According to Pechter, the contextualization particularly of Dollimore and Sinfield becomes just another form of interpretation which fails to recognize that history speaks in the voice of the interpreter and becomes an expression of her needs and desires. A self-conscious approach to historiography would allow us, on the other hand, to recognize that the writer is from the start "historically-burdened" when she reads and remakes the multivocal past. It would thereby challenge the binary oppositions between the text and history, and between interpretive and objective truths. This kind of critical approach would, moreover, invite an inquiry into what Hayden White describes as the nature, implications, and positive possibilities of historical interpretation, and the need for interpretation in the reconstruction of the past (75).

The relationships between canonical and noncanonical texts, between texts and contexts, and between the mutually constructing enterprise of the the writer's attempt at self-definition and the socio-historical conditions which shape that performance, are constantly being subject to redefinition by contemporary theorists, particularly New Historicists. The balance, however, tips in favour of contexts and structural

determinism which negate the possibility of self-fashioning as an independent activity.

In the epilogue to Renaissance Self-Fashioning, Stephen Greenblatt acknowledges:

as my work progressed, I perceived that fashioning oneself and being fashioned by cultural institutions--family, religion, state--were inseparably intertwined. In all my texts and documents, there were, so far as I could tell, no moments of pure, unfettered subjectivity; indeed, the human subject itself began to seem remarkably unfree, the ideological product of the relations of power in a particular society. Whenever I focused sharply upon a moment of apparently autonomous self-fashioning, I found not an epiphany of identity freely chosen but a cultural artifact.

(256)

The loss of self, or the discovery that it is a product of the social and political systems in force is the experience of Renaissance authors, according to New Historicists like Greenblatt. All literary claims to imaginative autonomy are ultimately undermined by a socially determined subjectivity. The act of self-making, performed by Renaissance writers while they cling to the idea of human subjectivity and to self-fashioning, is an illusion, he maintains (256-7). Despite these assertions, however, Greenblatt's emphasis on theatricality points to a self-manipulation that implies a relatively stable and independent subjectivity, and indicates that the critic himself clings to the idea of human agency. The presence of this subtext justifies the critique by Catherine Gallagher and others of those critics who, while voicing their "discontents with the New Historicism," tend to construct a monolith out of the movement (Veese 37-47).

That collective categories and discourses of history, religion, gender, politics, and especially authorship and self-representation offer something more than the oppressive construct of a dominant system is largely unacknowledged by New Historicists (Holstun 195) despite the Foucauldian influence. Resistance to the idea of agency and to the possibility of a stable subject is as much a cause as a function of this

critical approach to the text. Jean Howard recommends that critics break free from the formalist and humanist assumptions that still "inhabit" them, which include claims to authorship and intentionalism. However, the death of the author, which Richard Levin has called "bardicide," and the rejection of authorial intention that liberates the text, have actually left these critics not more but less free (502). Consciousness and criticism of those restrictive collective categories is already an indication that the oppression is not total. In encountering the established structures, opposing forces, rather than cancelling each other out, inter-relate. Without denying the power differential, it is possible to speak of some reciprocity and a negotiation-based model of social relations. Lower orders do not have to be limited to a choice between quietism and an insurrection that is inevitably disarmed (Leinwand 480).

There are alternatives to the representations of cultural totality which Marxists and those New Historicists who tend toward a socially constructed selfhood offer in the place of self-fashioning. If self-representation and self-consciousness are wholly socially determined, and history and language become monolithic constructions by denying individual expression, how is it that the individual can distinguish between individual and social roles, or propose to effect cultural and political change? What happens to self-fashioning when the socially determined individual rejects or is deprived of a public role, as women were, for example, or as the revolutionaries were after the Restoration? The element of self-consciousness, to which New Historicism has reintroduced us, actually provides evidence of the dialectical nature of self-fashioning. It also points to a current of "liberal humanism" in the notion of self-fashioning, which, as Lentricchia suggests, is already apparent in the subtext of Greenblatt's analysis (Veeser 240). Lee Patterson in Negotiating the Past addresses the possibility of the self-conscious text by insisting that "if it is true that history produced literature--and, after all, what else could?--it is also true that literature is capable of understanding the conditions of its own production" (49).

The society implied in the concept of the Elizabethan world picture had expressed itself in terms of symbols, and externalized its convictions into carefully classified rituals that pervaded religion, literature, and social and political structures. The individual in turn was expected to find fulfillment in her allotted role. However, the actors who had been assigned their parts in what Julia Briggs calls "this stage-play world," became increasingly dissatisfied with them. The conflict between what Briggs refers to as the public role and the inner life or personal authenticity was determined largely by social movements:

changes in society, structural, economic and demographic were dividing it along new and untraditional lines, so that particular groups were now being differentiated in terms of common interests and shared values, and as these broke down, a cultural and religious movement developed which challenged the whole symbolic system as meretricious and artificial.

(197)

Social developments established the conditions for self-representation, and at the same time, they led the individual to recognize that the socially designated roles were "a series of images wrongly valued for themselves and not for what they stood for" (197).

To realize that the self is both shaped by and shapes discursive practices is not to limit the ways in which social and political conditions affect self-fashioning. We must accept, however, that the relationship between interpretive and cultural practices remains tenuous. In turn, the extent to which any text can actively contribute to social formation by shaping cultural discourse cannot easily be determined. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that power relations are always to some extent reciprocal, and compromise is necessary for dialogue to occur. As a result, any critical approach to the text requires what Theodore Levinwand in "Negotiation and New Historicism" calls "a negotiation-based model of social relations" that recognizes a composite formation in which disparate modes coexist and are intertwined. What is created is a dialectic

between autonomy and dependence. Self-definition is achieved not only in reference to abstract constructions--history, culture, or collective categories including gender, class, region and political structures--but also in relation to other attempts at self-construction.

James Holstun proposes a study of popular self-fashioning which creates a liberating dialogue between oppositional collectives of past and present, and the development of an oppositional identity through collective self-fashioning (192). The dialogue inevitably occurs in, though it is not confined to, language--a cultural construction. As an inter-worked system of constructed signs, language, like culture and history, accommodates individual expression through the play of signification and the recontextualization of the sign. The moments in the narrative or history when speech reveals a character's interiority--moments of what Belsey calls *vraisemblance*--are not simply the obverse of the dominant tradition. If the self is made, it is also self-made. The end of politics itself is signalled when the human agent is prevented from in some way affecting society, politics or history at large.

Correspondingly, it is possible in literary criticism to address again the issue of intentionalism. Edward Said in Orientalism compares his literary and political philosophy to that of Foucault:

Yet unlike Michel Foucault, to whose work I am greatly indebted, I do believe in the determining collective body of texts constituting a discursive formation like Orientalism. The unity of the large ensemble of texts I analyze is due in part to the fact that they frequently refer to each other: Orientalism is after all a system for citing works and authors.

(23)

In the dangerously self-confirming vision of the Foucauldian society, the individual disappears because the historian stops searching for her. Responding to Foucault, Said traces the representation and appropriation of Eastern society not only to certain

historical and literary cultural movements, but also to individual authors. A decade later, critics who challenge the Foucault-influenced New Historicism have begun to address the problem and possibility of authorial intentionalism again. David Norbrook concludes that since in the Renaissance, "authorial intention has a substantial and under-acknowledged political element, to ignore the intention is effectively to depoliticize" (8). Without returning to the Old Historicist conception of intentionalism, critics like Lee Patterson have reopened the discussion on the subject once more:

It is quite true that specific and explicit intention can never fully govern the meaning of a text, that literature serves to constitute cultural reality in ways it can never fully know and that may run counter to its own most insistent purposes. But simply to set aside these intentions and purposes as unworthy of discussion is effectively to silence dissent; and by raising analysis to a level at which individual actions and motives become submerged into a totalized vision of a monolithic culture is to beg the question by adopting a method that can prove only the hypothesis at issue.

(66-7)

The recognition of *differance* may have made it inconceivable to address interpretation in terms of the recoverability of intended meaning. However, it cannot prevent discussion about meaning or about language as an instrument thereof (Belsey 6-8).

Part 3
Politicizing the Uses and Abuses of History
in Paradise Lost

i:

"Tyranny must be"

In this section, I will be addressing both Milton's response to the political and cultural climate in which he was located in terms of his dialectical representation and appropriation of history and narrative. Historical writings in the seventeenth century were censored and used as political tools by monarchists and church officials. Joseph Hall declared in A Humble Remonstrance to the High Court of Parliament: "Antiquity be the rule," and he invoked "all the evidence of history" to prove that episcopal authority was grounded in precedent. The tight control of history prevented Milton's efforts at facilitating dialogue and discussion. Employing a language of paradox, he challenged the closure of history, "the right of the past to control the present" (Masson 2.242), and reclaimed an organic sense of time by divorcing the multivocal drama of the past from "the carnal supportment of tradition" (R of CG 1.827). The power to act independently and to effect political change involves active and conscious participation in history.

Disillusioned by defeat, Milton recontextualizes the failed revolution by representing the event as one episode in an extended, open-ended historical scheme. The nation itself is likewise most durable and secure when its destiny is not subject to the decrees of a single authoritative figure, but when it is able to accommodate numerous voices and changes. The death of a king causes many dangerous alterations, whereas "the death now and then of a Senator" is not felt as a threat, Milton argues in REW (7.436).

Milton follows up his rejection of the monarchy's privileged position with a recommendation for an alternative authority. Still, the poet-revolutionary relies on historical evidence to defend his argument for the origination of power in the people, and while attempting to defeat censorship, he does not deny the need for a kind of censorship that would promote a responsible plurality. Milton offers a dual perspective on questions of political and cultural representation, and on historical progress both because he is conscious of censorship, and because the nature of the questions themselves demand this response. In Paradise Lost, the oral histories provided by the individual speakers offer accounts of various origins, but do not allow for escape from history. Both the entrenchment of history as an absolute, and the denial of history or authority result in the denial of voice, or more dangerously, in the privileging of a particular voice or stereotype. This kind of censorship had to be challenged through defamiliarization, and the invention of a new paradoxical language--what Foucault describes as "the appropriation of a vocabulary turned against those who had once used it" (154). For Milton, history and government, represented by a variety of voices and images, stand within the interpretive processes which they largely determine. It is this dialectic presentation of political authority and history which ultimately provides Milton with a medium for political and self-representation in history and narrative.

Subjectivity and the inscription of voice are achieved through the discursive process of speech. Voice locates itself in narrative in which it both intervenes and offers itself to the play of surrounding voices. We hear complementary voices at intersecting prospective and retrospective view points which constitute the poem's complex narrative, and simultaneously inscribe the poet-revolutionary in the nation's history. When the heroes of England's past fail to construct the earthly paradise headed by Cromwell--the model Christian hero and illustrious actor in so glorious a scene--Milton is forced to acknowledge the impossibility of the individual's unmediated direction of historical progress. In rewriting history in poetry, Milton decides that

narrative, rather than drama, is the appropriate genre for dealing with the fall and with the account of human experience after the fall--by implication, the failed revolution. The dramatic and lyric moments of Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained are in fact ruled over by the "narrative imperium" (Miner 7).²³

In a contemporary critical context, the narrative, despite its often problematic and dialectical representation in Milton's poems, becomes associated with the kind of monolithic historical continuum that the New Historicist and cultural critic seek to disrupt. The connection between the two kinds of linear structures is impressed upon us further when we recall the Renaissance topos of narrative as king, prince or monarch (Miner 24 n7). In Milton's case, the plans to compose a tragedy on Adam unparadised were abandoned for the ten-book narrative poem after the Restoration, when the monarchy again assumed control over the nation's destiny. In the composition of the twelve-book edition of Paradise Lost, the narrative form is maintained, but the attention drawn to Adam's interventions attempts again to challenge the continuum. The imaginative possibility for the disruption through voice of the teleological historical process outside the poem is thereby encouraged.

Philosophies of history are largely products of political and ideological formulations, as we have seen in this consideration of Milton, and in comparing the New Historicist reading of the past to the Eliotic tradition. As remote as Milton's perceptions of historical progress are from those of modern and contemporary literary theorists, they too afford a self-conscious model of critical intervention in the established historical, political, religious and literary contexts within which the individual speaks or acts. Each construct is constantly subject to redefinition by intervening voices and the critical readings of the interpreter or historical investigator.

Milton's initial view of historical progress was influenced by a classical understanding of the history filtered through the humanists. As the classical tradition demanded, the histories treated political struggles and narratives that emphasized the

role of fortune and the cyclical patterns of events. Historians like Machiavelli and Bodin argued that the political obligations of the man of letters entailed a return to a pragmatic and moral interpretation of the function of the past, which teaches the art of survival by rewarding people with fame or punishing them with anonymity. At the same time, however, the Christian view of history and the revival of millenarianism inspired by the Reformation, challenged the humanists' reading of the ancients, and proposed instead a linear pattern of events that was determined by Providence, and progressed from the creation to the Last Judgment. At another level, the Reformation was itself a rupture in the course of history that was subject to monarchical (read: Catholic) control (McKeon 40). Milton conflates the ancient and Christian models, and arrives at a conception of providential history that is influenced by moral causation and human action mediated upon choice and right reason. It is derived from the primal history of the Bible, and from the various accounts of world events indebted to the received tradition that inevitably appropriates them.

After the Restoration, Milton qualifies his view of historical necessity, and his belief in the possibility of action in the present, as well as the predictability of providence--what Cromwell called "the strong windings and turnings of providence, those very great appearances of God in crossing and thwarting the purposes of men" (Hill, God's Englishmen 241). Providence, which serves as a means of interpreting religious, historical and political events for Milton, is an ideological construct insofar as it assumes numerous shapes and is given significance and design by the historian in retrospect. Dismissing its common associations with eschatology and teleology, Jameson defines providence as the enabling presupposition of the historian. Providence is an ideology--a practice by which one imagines one's relations to the actual conditions of one's existence (Howard 28)--that governs the form with which historiography endows the events of the past (43). As such, the inscription of the self in the act of recounting

historical events is unavoidable. At the same time, the identification of providence with historical inevitability impedes self-expression.²⁴

The Puritan integration of necessity and freedom involves an integration of the individual in the providential historical process, and yet allows for individual action and dissension. "Trust in God and keep your powder dry" was the cry of the revolutionaries who, convinced they knew the mind of God, intervened to precipitate the victory of God and the national cause. Freedom, therefore, meant action taken in accordance with (one's interpretation of) the will of God, thereby making destiny one's choice (Marvell, qtd in Hill 227). The story of God's interventions constitutes providential history which is brought to fulfillment by individual actions. God will accomplish his work in his own time, Milton announces as he advocates religious toleration on behalf of Cromwell. However, the intercession of individuals here and now who interpret providence and "inculcate and persuade" others to cooperate actively in the cause would hasten the results, he adds (Hill 230).

In his comparison of the Calvinist and Leninist dilemma of the antithesis between voluntarism and fatalism, Jameson offers a Hegelian solution:

the past is necessary and its chain of events as inevitable as in any Providential scheme, but where the understanding has nothing whatsoever to do with the possibilities of action in the present. (44)

Those actions are taken in but not within time. One cannot know whether an action might have proven successful until it is attempted. It is in retrospect, then, that interventions--which are nevertheless located at the intersection of prospective and retrospective view points--acquire significance. Providential history is itself subject to redefinition when the individual actor or speaker affects not only the present and future conversation, but also the way in which the past is read.

After several defeats during the Civil War, and especially after the Restoration, providence and the roles in which the revolutionaries served as agents of God, deman...

reinterpretation. The providential view, which had provided history with a sense of predictability and narrative closure, was ripped open and its millenarianism challenged. The revolutionaries demystified history by recognizing that it had indeed served an ideological function. Hooker in Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity defines providence as the order received from the settled stability of divine understanding and the belief that all things have a designed end. Still, he simultaneously maintained that individuals themselves act according to their interpretation of God's will. People's opinions became, then, "as thorns in their sides, never suffering them to take rest till thy have brought their speculations into practice." The providences of God were, as Hooker self-consciously realized, appropriated to justify individual notions of political engagement, and were comparable to a two-edged sword.²⁵

At the beginning of the war, the revolutionaries were for the most part strongly attracted to millenarianism--the belief in the thousand-year reign of Christ and the saints on earth after the destruction of Babylon and the binding of Satan--and believed that the Long Parliament precipitated the Second Coming. The failure of the revolution challenged this view, and caused them to return to the assumption that God's ways were largely inscrutable. "All things are best fulfilled in their due time, / And time there is for all things," the Son explains to Satan in response to his temptation to commence his reign presently and make his kingdom come sooner:

Truth hath said:

If of my reign prophetic writ hath told,

That it shall never end, so when begin

The Father in his purpose, hath decreed,

He in whose hand all times and seasons roll. (PR 3.182-6)

The ways of providence can be made accessible to human reason, Milton suggests, but they are not predictable.

Individuals themselves became increasingly more responsible for evaluating the justness and value of actions in relations to an unpatterned course of historical events. The fulfillment or materialization of providence, and the connection between religious obligation and political engagement in the revolution were interpretations imposed by humans not determined by God. In Reviving Liberty, Joan Bennett argues that the revised view of providential history, unlike the one that grew from a belief in a voluntaristic deity and a nominalist universe:

looks at events not as discrete manifestations of God's intervention in human affairs, but as a complex, ultimately unified, network of passages comprising God's universal government. The individual faithful participant cannot reasonably doubt that his service is needed. Whether an individual's actions have been accepted as "well done" will be known to the individual "according to the uprightness of his heart." (84)

Rather than undercutting the significance of the cause or of their actions, the defeats suffered by the revolutionaries served ironically to bestow an even greater importance on the role of individuals in interpreting their positions in a disoriented world. Each person would have to determine the value of the cause and individual actions in accordance with right reason rather than in reference to the outcome of those actions.

Guilty of having imposed an artificial linearity on the course of providential history that charted an uninterrupted movement from tyranny to the establishment of God's kingdom on earth, Milton was compelled to qualify his reading of history. "Tyranny must be," Michael recognizes, thus creating a dialectical relationship between providential and secular history. In the third book of Paradise Lost, Milton, in an unprecedented move, places defensive words into the mouth of God who declares the free will of humankind to chart its own destiny. They are words later echoed by Adam when Michael narrates the course of human history. God insists vehemently,

if I foreknew,

Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,
 Which had no less prov'd certain unforeknown.
 So without least impulse or shadow of Fate,
 Or aught by me immutably foreseen,
 They trespass, Authors to themselves in all
 Both what they judge and what they choose; for so
 I form'd them free, and free they must remain,
 Till they enthrall themselves: I else must change
 Thir nature, and revoke the high Decree
 Unchangeable, Eternal, which ordain'd
 Thir freedom: they themselves ordain'd thir fall.
 The first sort by thir own suggestion fell,
 Self-tempted, self-deprav'd: Man falls deceiv'd
 By th' other first: in Mercy and Justice both,
 Through Heav'n and Earth, so shall my glory excel,
 But Mercy first and last shall brightest shine. (117-34)

By dissociating divine will from God's foreknowledge of history, the poet-dramatist attributes the authorship of history to humankind. In the conclusion of this speech, however, God assumes the voice more of Mercy than Justice, and predicts his intervention in the course of human history. Divine intervention does not prevent the death sentence from falling upon humanity. However, the act does extend the narrative of history so that the fall, like the defeat of the revolution, might be recontextualized as a singular event in a larger process.

The failure to interrupt the linear process would result in a satanic victory, a triumph for a corrupt monarchist. In contradiction to the Romantics' interpretations, I would suggest that Milton's Satan is insistent upon maintaining the closure of the existing political and historical system. He is overly protective of his position in the

divinely established hierarchy, and resents dissenting voices and the possible intrusion of others who might usurp his position (2.467). Such potential upheavals include primarily that of the Son whose elevation disrupts the status quo. "By Decree / Another now hath to himself ingross't / All Power, and us eclips't under the name / Of King anointed" (5.774-8), Satan fears.

The devil becomes, in response, the tyrannizing force behind the creation of an oppressive historical continuum. In The Use and Abuse of History, Nietzsche disparages the "historical power" by associating its perpetuation with egotism, embodied ultimately in the prince of the world himself:

The purest and noblest adherents of Christianity have always doubted and hindered, rather than helped, its effect in the world, its so-called "historical power"; for they were accustomed to stand outside the "world," and cared little for the "process of the Christian Idea." Hence they have generally remained unknown to history, and their very names are lost. In Christian terms, the devil is the prince of the world, and the lord of progress and consequence; he is the power behind all "historical power," and so will it remain, however ill it may sound today in ears that are accustomed to canonize power and consequence. The world has become skilled at giving new names to things and even baptizing the devil. It is truly an hour of great danger. Men seem to be near the discovery that the egotism of individuals, groups, or masses has been at all times the lever of the "historical movements"; and yet they are in a way disturbed by the discovery, but proclaim that "egotism shall be our god." (62)

The construction of a world process that absorbs all dissension must, therefore, be intercepted by individuals who challenge the "mass-produced" system of history.

The revolutionaries characterized historical progress in the seventeenth century as a complex network of passages and episodes comprising God's inscrutable universal

government. At the same time, the course of history also revealed an underlying sense of connection for the historical investigator who regarded each event as informing subsequent decisions and actions in a larger context. As such, it becomes possible to speak of reparative and disruptive events, though the former are also inevitably disruptive. Failed efforts or incidents of tyranny never bring the story to its close. They are, rather, providential events to be considered in planning for the next step of action.

In the poetic narrative, the account of Nimrod framed between two descriptions of a society under paternal rule, must be read in a context that includes the stories of Satan and Abdiel, and those of the unnamed and lesser characters mentioned by Michael: Enoch, Cain, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Antipater. The history of Nimrod reminds us that the course of history can be frustrated, and that it includes tragedies and setbacks. At the same time, it suggests again that because it can be interrupted, the historical process must also be open to other changes. Any intervener has the opportunity, if not to reverse, then at least to challenge the effects of tyrannical acts. Instead of indicating the inevitability of humankind's destiny, the falls of Satan, Adam and Eve, Cain and Antipater confirm the religious and political liberty of the individual actor. This is not to suggest that the effects of tyranny could or even should be erased. The Son roots out but does not destroy the fallen angels at the conclusion of the war in heaven. In book 12, as we have seen, God also intervenes, and rather than destroying the tower and restoring the originally pastoral society, adds to the confusion by causing the dispersion that Nimrod's folk initially sought to prevent. All historical events and interventions are recontextualized in a larger, more comprehensive understanding of history whose significance and whose conclusion are never fully realized in time. It is this notion of recontextualization that Milton uses to repair the effects of the dissolution of the Word after the fall, and it is this philosophy of history that he applies to the occasion of the Restoration to which the account of Nimrod in Paradise Lost alludes.

ii:

The reconstruction of the commonwealth

The commonwealth that Milton hoped to see established resembles the divine meritocracy in the poem--the political community of diverse though harmonious voices under the direction of just and merited leadership. In Milton's descriptions of the ideal commonwealth in his political treatises, there is a dialectical relationship between the self-rule of the people, and the necessary establishment of a senate. Because it is chosen and entrusted by the people, the senate would ideally prevent the settling of too absolute a power or of an unchecked democracy. The "insolence of a despot" and the "insolence of the unbridled commonality" had first been equated by Herodotus (Williams 83). Milton also makes Anarchy synonymous with Tyranny (1.918-9). Though the Parliamentarians were intent on restricting governmental control, and the royalists on checking the power of the people, their common goal during the early part of the revolution was to preserve both king and Parliament, as Milton suggests throughout Of Reformation. The terms of representation that each side proposed for its respective government differed considerably. The monarchists emphasized divine right and birthright, while their opponents defended the rule according to merit by a class of virtuous, though by no means low class, men. For Milton, a senate-run government constituted a commonwealth of people "fittest to chuse, and the chosen fittest to govern" (7.443). The institutional requisites for his commonwealth--one that consisted of an oligarchic element fused with popular representation--corresponded, then, to the idea of humanity as fallen, yet possessing the potential for moral reform. Democracy, like liberty, has a double edge: just as all people are equal, so all are given a voice, but only those judged the most just and virtuous are fit to be heard and to lead. It is the terms of

this political arrangement that provide a means of approaching Milton's orchestration of poetic voices in the subsequent chapters.

In The Ready and Easy Way, Milton associates the commonwealth in his emmet colony metaphor with a frugal and self-governing democracy. He contrasts this government to a licentious and unbridled democracy, whose rabble he hoped to check, not by the suppression of its multiple voices through the reinstatement of monarchy, but by proposing the election of representatives who would merit a position of leadership and speak for the others. By qualifying and refining suffrage, the nation would not be committing all

to the noise and shouting of a rude multitude, but permitting only those of them who are rightly qualifi'd to nominat as many as they will; and out of that number others of a better breeding, to chuse a less number more judiciously, till after a third or fourth sifting and refining of exactest choice, they only be left chosen who are the due number and seem by most voices the worthiest. (7.442-3)

Though having associated, like Burke in the opening epigraph, polity with the representation of voice, Milton gradually became distrustful of civic power, and feared, as the royalists themselves did, the misguided or abused multitude. The perpetual oligarchy recommended in The Ready and Easy Way (7.433) was, then, not necessarily "the only remedy he could think of to check the Gadarene rush to monarchy" (Hill 200), since Milton himself had become disillusioned with democracy.²⁶ He eventually defined the "people" as those who had achieved, primarily through virtuous actions, socially acceptable positions, though nobility of birth did not always hurt either.²⁷ Milton, in turn, constructed a "great man" concept of history and government which proposed that the elect, who possessed the greatest powers of reason, were to represent the people. For the purposes of salvation and worldly politics, the elect consisted of

the middle class which produces the greatest number of men of good sense and knowledge of affairs. Of the rest some are turned from uprightness and from their interest in learning their country's laws by excessive wealth and luxury, and others by want and poverty. (Defense of the English People 4.471)

The poet-revolutionary could speak of liberty for all, yet not promote universal equality. To be fair, we have to recognize that there were various kinds of freedoms and equalities, whose relationship throughout the Renaissance was contradictory. Erasmus claimed, for example, that women had the same free will and moral responsibilities as men. According to Luther, no one had free will, but women could receive God's grace and come to the faith just as men could. Still, the rights and privileges enjoyed by the citizens of society were denied to women. The Leveller John Harris in The Grand Designe wrote that "all persons have an equitable right to a voice in elections, therefore the Franchise should be given to all men, except servants and beggars" (Macpherson 8).

For Milton, everyone and everything under God is simultaneously equal, and to a greater or lesser degree, unequal. The espousal of a political hierarchy modeled on the scale of nature and reflected in the hierarchy of discourse, negates at one level, the notion of equality. Yet liberty is not threatened, according to God, and the poet-narrator of Paradise Lost: 4.294-6, and according to Milton in The Christian Doctrine: "For if our personal religion were not in our power, God could not properly enter into a covenant with us; neither could we perform, the condition of that covenant" (6.398). What happens, then, when you apply the theological message of free will to a social and political one, as the Anabaptists did in the sixteenth century, as the English Ranters and Diggers did in the seventeenth, and as Milton himself attempted? It is true that Milton did dissociate civil and spiritual liberties (7.456) and civil and ecclesiastical affairs by arguing that one must not permit the two utterly diverse powers "to make harlots of each other" (4.678). Nevertheless, Milton's defence of free will, and his connections

between religious and political liberty strengthened his arguments against censorship. In The Christian Doctrine, he suggests:

When the magistrate takes away this liberty, he takes away the gospel itself; he deprives the good and bad indiscriminately of their privilege of free judgement. (6.541).

Religious rights justify cultural and political freedoms, so that the denial of the former deprives the individual of the latter: "They who seek to corrupt our religion are the same that would intrall our civill liberty" (Apology 1.923-4). Inversely, the freedom of the press and of speech ensure religious freedoms. In the Areopagitica, Milton draws a connection between civil rights, freedom of expression, and the moral, political and religious right to seek out truth, which the authorities were preventing through censorship:

Suffer not these licencing prohibitions to stand at every place of opportunity forbidding and disturbing them that continue seeking, that continue to do obsequies to the torrid body of our martyred saint. (2.549-50)

The process of seeking truth counteracts political oppression.

The search itself depends on the free will of the individuals, that is, on those individuals who are free to exercise their will. In a political context, Milton's advocacy of a senate or "perpetual" council, and his refusal to promote the franchise for all seem to be quite at odds with his "democratic principles." In Classical Republicans, Z.S. Fink addresses this paradox by claiming that

the reader will doubtless feel that Milton's discovery that the better part of the people could be taken as standing for the whole even when they were a numerous minority removed whatever genuinely popular elements there may have been in his political theory. The fact, however, that there would appear to be nothing truly democratic about Milton's conception of

the people in 1660 must not be permitted to obscure the fact that he saw the better part of the people as constituting the democratic element in his ideal commonwealth. (119)

In theory, the elect, like the Godhead, did not diminish the liberty of the commonwealth. By possessing and relegating all powers and functions necessary to public interest, the council ensured the sovereignty of the people and prevented the lapse of the nation into an unchecked democracy. Moreover, it is inaccurate to suggest that there appears nothing truly democratic about Milton's proposed political system when we realize that democracy in the seventeenth century was defined as any government whose power was distributed more broadly than in an aristocracy. Milton's view of polity was, then, democratic. Even the radicals' conception of the "people" did not include everyone, but that is not really the point, explains Hanson:

The medieval notion of the populus had been a fiction. The revolutionary idea, despite the fact that it embraced only about half the male population, was an operational principle. This is most apparent in the Levellers' constitutional schemes. (330)

Mixed constitutions contained a democratic element: the House of Commons--the representative of the people--was a democratic authority, despite the eligibility of only a limited number of voters. Furthermore, Milton could see the better part of the people as constituting the democratic element in his ideal commonwealth if it were headed by virtuous leaders, and if the mode of choosing representatives were regarded as more important than the proportion of people who participated in the electoral process. Unconditional equality would result in anarchy, whereas this mixed government would ensure the liberty of the people. In opposition to the monarchists, Milton insisted that power be bestowed on the people, and at the same time, he proposed that a balance be maintained to preserve due authority on the side of the senate. Aristotle defined this type of polity as a combination of oligarchy and democracy. The institution of rule by merit,

whereby the government is in the hands of a select body of virtuous leaders, transforms the oligarchy into an aristocracy, according to Polybius (Geisst 80).

Milton's mixed commonwealth has, however, more contemporary models. These are found not only in governmental structures,²³ but also in contemporary religious institutions. In fact, analogues between the government of state and church were commonly made. Thomas Cartwright, the Elizabethan Puritan leader, described the Presbyterian polity as a mixed form of government composed of a monarchy, aristocracy and democracy (Manning 156). These three structures also constitute the basis for the government of the church proposed by John Cotton, the philosopher of Independency. Cotton explains that

in regard of Christ the head, the government of the church is sovereign and monarchical. In regard of the rule by the presbytery, it is stewardly and aristocratical. In regard of the people's power in elections and censures, it is democratical. (Manning 156-7)

The division of power among the three parties depended on the politics of the individual religious sects: the Presbyterians attributed less influence to the people than did the Independents, though they, in turn, were not as democratic as the Levellers.

The divine meritocracy described by Milton--identified by Milner as an Independent (200)--is a monarchy, aristocracy and democracy according to the definitions provided by Cotton. Milton's proposed commonwealth, however, while dividing its power between the aristocracy and the people, had justifiably no monarchical representative. Monarchy as a form of government no longer fitted the facts of political life in the nation. God, the only legitimate king (YE 7.445), alone headed both institutions, thereby connecting church and state once again.²⁹ The provision for multivocality within the political communities of church and state confirms the free will of the members. The necessary differences among the voices, not in terms of kind, but in terms of the degree of persuasiveness, prevents cacophony by

adding to civic power and consciousness a sense of merited authority and, in turn, answerability. Psychological and political discourses converge in portraits of the alternative forms of government portrayed in Paradise Lost to which I now turn.

Both Milton's politics and his ideas of poetic creation oppose the privileging of one voice or image, and moreover, the representation of binary opposites. In terms of Paradise Lost, Catherine Belsey suggests that the truth the text reveals cements difference as opposition (84). Yet the observation cannot account for the plurality and complexity of voice and imagery in the poem. Nor can it explain why the poem has no one hero, why we feel an initial attraction to Satan, how the effects of the fall can be rewritten, why truth and history are processual rather than absolute, and why we might speak of a psychological poem as politically engaged.

At the same time, there are admittedly direction indicators, a hierarchy of discourse, and a kind of arbitration, even censorship, that shapes and mediates the interpretive process. On what basis is ranking determined in the hierarchies and in the orchestration of voice; and who has the authority to arbitrate? Who censors the censors, and according to what terms, Milton asks in the Areopagitica. Milton's political ideal is a mixed government, a meritocracy modeled according to God's elevation of Christ as the anointed universal king, whose position is determined "By merit more than Birthright" (3.311). This philosophy of government is dependent on the participation of the arbitrator in the system itself, and on his relationship to the people who establish for themselves the conditions for merited rule. Merit is determined according to how the "rational principle" is used:

when God gave [Adam] reason, he gave him freedom to choose, for reason is but choosing; he had bin else a meer artificiall *Adam*, such an *Adam* as he is in the motions. We our selves esteem not of that obedience, or love, or gift, which is of force: God therefore left him free, set before him a

provoking object, ever almost in his eyes; herein consisted his merit.

(Areopagitica 2.527)

Merit can only be recognized in those systems which allow for intervention and movement. In his epic, Milton shows how hierarchies can in fact be altered from within, thereby indicating the extent of the liberty and authority of God's creatures, and the organic nature of the structures themselves. Like Milton's complex view of providential history, his account of the divine hierarchy provides an example of the fluidity of the established system. In book 3, God introduces his Son with several epithets which characterize the relationship between the two figures:

O Son, in whom my Soul hath chief delight,
 Son of my bosom, Son who art alone
 My word, my wisdom, and effectual might,
 All hast thou spok'n as my thoughts are, all
 As my Eternal purpose hath decreed. (169-73)

Nearly, but not quite equal, the Son bears a relationship to the Father defined by Milton's heretical proposition that "the Son himself and his apostles acknowledge in everything they say and write that the Father is greater than the Son in all things" (CD 6.223). As such, the latter necessarily occupies a different place in the hierarchy than the Father. He thereby poses a threat to Lucifer, who like Nimrod, believed himself stationed "Before the Lord" (12.34).

At this point in book 3, the Son is lauded by the angels and assigned his place next to God in recognition of his merit:

Because thou hast, though Thron'd in highest bliss
 Equal to God, and equally enjoying
 God-like fruition, quitted all to save
 A world from utter loss, and hast been found
 By Merit more than Birthright Son of God,

Found worthiest to be so by being Good,
 Far more than Great or High; because in thee
 Love hath abounded more than Glory abounds,
 Therefore thy Humiliation shall exalt
 With thee thy Manhood also to this Throne;
 Here shalt thou sit incarnate, here shalt Reign
 Both God and Man, Son both of God and Man,
 Anointed universal King; all Power
 I give thee, reign for ever, and assume
 Thy Merits; under thee as Head Supreme
 Thrones, Princedoms, Powers, Dominions I reduce. (305-20)

Milton juxtaposes the epic address to the Son in this passage with the exaltation of the "anointed universal King" by God in the speech immediately following the Son's agreement to intercede and die for humankind. It is here that the conditions of the Son's right to govern are outlined. The language and images of kingship are used by God only once the merit of the Son, reiterated in book 6.43, is established. The celebration of the Son's deserved appointment creates a heavenly harmony in which all the angels participate (370-1). Affirming, ironically, the validity of Satan's claim that "Orders and Degrees / Jar not with liberty, but will consist" (5.792-3),³⁰ Abdiel rebukes the defiant angel prior to the war in heaven by reminding him that history itself has illustrated the Son's role in unifying God's creatures:

Yet by experience taught we know how good,
 And of our good, and of our dignity
 How provident he is, how far from thought
 To make us less, bent rather to exalt
 Our happy state under one Head more near
 United. (5.826-31)

By volunteering to descend "to assume / Man's Nature" and to lessen his own (3.303-4), the Son becomes responsible for uniting the secular and divine communities. The announced incarnation, in literary or structural terms, interrupts and suspends Satan's narrative in book 3, and mediates between an individual and a collective world history, as the poet-narrator and the poet-revolutionary himself attempted to do.

In 1660, Milton assented to criticism by acknowledging in The Ready and Easy Way that Parliament itself was responsible for the failure to complete the commonwealth:

Tis true indeed, when monarchie was dissolv'd, the form of a Commonwealth should have forthwith bin fram'd, and the practice therof immediately begun; that the people might have soon bin satisfi'd and delighted with the decent order, ease and benefit therof: we had bin then by this time firmly rooted past fear of commotions or mutations, & now flourishing: this care of timely setting a new government instead of ye old, too much neglected, hath bin our mischief. Yet the cause therof may be ascrib'd with most reason to the frequent disturbances, interruptions and dissolutions which the parliament hath had partly from the impatient or disaffected people, partly from som ambitious leaders in the Armie; much contrarie, I beleeve, to the mind and approbation of the Armie it self, and thir other Commanders, once undeceivd, or in thir own power. Now is the opportunitie, now the very season wherein we may obtain a free Commonwealth and establish it for ever in the land, without difficulty or much delay. (7.430)

The best defense is a strong attack, but Milton was interested in more than criticism, and did not hesitate to warn Cromwell that the establishment of a just rule in peacetime would be more difficult than winning the war (Bennett 103).³¹ In Paradise Lost,

Milton offers along with the example of merited leadership in the heavenly court several model political communities. The episode of King Nimrod's fall into confusion is framed between two versions of broadly republican forms of government. Milton not only criticizes the tyranny of the first monarch and his successors, but offers viable alternatives to kingship in its place. At the same time, he presents a history of seventeenth-century governmental development.

Prior to the appearance of the warrior-king, the pastoral society is organized into familial and tribal divisions and ordered according to paternal rule, thereby constituting what Michael calls a government with fair equality, a fraternal state (12.26). Michael's description of this ideal post-lapsarian society is contrasted sharply with the autocracy of Nimrod who arrogates "Dominion undeserv'd / Over his brethren," thus disrupting social concord and violating the laws of God and nature. The "Empire tyrannous" causes its own dissolution through its division into the numerous factions and voices which it sought to suppress.³²

In his reaction to the account, Adam underscores the sanctity of the fraternal state, by recalling the divine mandate of human liberty which constituted exemplary edenic polity:

He gave us only over Beast, Fish, Fowl

Dominion absolute; that right we hold

By his donation; but Man over men

He made not Lord; such title to himself

Reserving, human left from human free. (12.67-71)

By placing these words in the mouth of Adam directly, Milton challenges the identification of Adam with the "first monarch of the whole world" made by Milton's contemporaries, including Robert Filmer in Observations upon Aristotle's Politiques (Wooton 110). Michael Wilding interprets the passage as an assertion of Milton's

radical egalitarian sentiments of 1649 that included justification of the regicide (248), thereby contemporizing the story of Nimrod.

Contrasting the present dictatorship to the prelapsarian government, Adam leaves Michael to illustrate the emergence of the new nation out of the tyranny of the old. In framing the form of a commonwealth in the account that follows the story of Nimrod's tyranny, Michael offers not a nostalgic view of a lost world, but a portrait of a political community whose future construction is inevitably interrupted by the anti-creations of Nimrod's successors. The building commences, nevertheless, first with the strengthening of self-governing reason, which forms the basis for any construction--psychological, ideological or material. Liberty of conscience is, in turn, most effectively protected by a free commonwealth, Milton declares. Reason, however, is continually thwarted by the uprising of inordinate Desires and upstart Passions (12.86-90).

The subsequent form of government which Michael describes is one established in the wilderness under Mosaic law (12.223-35). Raleigh in The History of the World explains that the invention of laws--a recourse taken in a fallen world--followed the reign of kings. Monarchy was in turn preceded by the ideal form of government by wise elders. Milton, however, challenges this order and suggests that the movement from kingship to the government by law under Moses, the twelve tribes of Israel and the chosen senate is progressive rather than regressive.³³ This senate, along with the people and magistracy, constituted what James Harrington in The Commonwealth of Oceana regarded as the perfect pattern of a government by law and tribal organization rather than by royal power. This pattern forms the basis for the Jewish commonwealth.

Harrington's subsequent description of the Israelite community is much more elaborate than Milton's own. In the passage, he addresses, as Milton later would, the relationship between the established law and the people's right to political representation and self-determination:

If all and every one of the laws of Israel being proposed by God, were not otherwise enacted than by covenant with the people, then that only which was resolved by the people of Israel was their law; and so the result of that commonwealth was in the people. Nor had the people the result only in matter of law, but the power in some cases of judicature; as also the right of levying war, cognizance in matters of religion, and the election of their magistrates, as the judge or dictator, the king, the prince: which functions were exercised by the *Synagoga Magna*, or congregation of Israel, not always in one manner, for sometimes they were performed by the suffrage of the people, *viva voce*, sometimes by lot only, and at others by the ballot, or by a mixture of the lot with suffrage. (33)

The Jewish commonwealth provides the basis for the construction of a society which, though based on a historical model, offers a pattern for the kind of political community that its author hoped would be established in England after the regicide.

Milton, in a similar fashion, designed a prospective governmental model on the base of an ancient one. The establishment that replaced the dictatorships of Nimrod and Pharoah is a counterpart to the English commonwealth that Milton proposed to construct on the foundation begun by the revolutionaries and left unfinished at the Restoration. It is, in turn, the type and shadow of the political system designed by the Son under a "better Cov'nant" determined by works of Faith rather than Law.

The political systems, the representation of social and political voices, and the "interventionist" models of history that I have examined in this chapter offer a means to approach the subject of the orchestration of poetic voices. The poem, which serves as something more than an interim between biblical and contemporary history, reconstructs providential history in order to accommodate a model of a multivocal political community that nevertheless bears the scars of the oppressed nation. "Now is the opportunitie, now the very season wherein we may obtain a free Commonwealth and

establish it," Milton urges in 1660, while the royalists extolled the merits of the traditional government, and while his contemporaries otherwise concentrated on defaming each other in works like Lump, Bats Rhymed to Death and News from Brussels.

Unless we regard it as a vain boast intended to inspire false confidence in his compatriots, Milton's iconoclasm, his patterning of the new commonwealth, and his cry for continued action does little to support the belief that he ultimately resigned himself to accepting a quietist doctrine. Critics, nevertheless, are divided on the subject of Milton's activism during the last quarter of his life. Coleridge in Lecture X speaks of Milton's keen love of truth finding "a harbour in a sublime listening to the still voice in his own spirit," and being transformed after his disappointment into "a love of man as a probationer of immortality." Unable to realize his own aspiration either in religion, politics or society, "he gave up his heart to the living spirit and light within him, and avenged himself on the world by enriching it with this record of his own transcendent ideal" (97). Coleridge interprets Milton's silence in terms of his blocking out all surrounding voices except that of his own still voice. It is a voice that he, withdrawing into the inner recesses of his mind, might hear and express in the form of a sublime vision (53). Coleridge's reading anticipates that of Hugh Richmond A.L. Rowse, O.B. Hardison and Frederic Jameson, to name a few, who argue that the emphasis on Milton's life of the imagination and on his private salvation in his late poems indicates that he considered quietism the only remaining viable political option after the defeat of the revolution. Milton's rejection of humanism was forced on him by history; he shifted his concern from the life of society to the inner life of the individual, Hardison claims (79). Jameson, too, describes Milton's movement from politics to psychology and ethics that found expression in the revival of the Calvinist meditation on original sin and the fall, and in the repudiation of millenarianism in his two epics.

After the restoration of the Stuart monarchy, the establishment of the kingdom of God could no longer be regarded by the revolutionaries and Puritan sects as a military or political objective of this world, but only as a moral objective of the spirit. This discovery was accompanied by a searching examination of the efficacy of social and political actions. However, despite the defeat, they perceived their earthly ambitions as premature, rather than as ignoble or impossible to fulfill. A turn inward to strengthen the psychological and moral foundation of the new commonwealth whose construction had been arrested was the first stage of the process. Like More's commonwealth, to which Sidney refers, this castle built in air required grounding. It is this reading of the potential construction of the commonwealth that Marxist and New Historicist critics, among others, are especially inclined to adopt. Christopher Hill, Andrew Milner, Michael Wilding, Christopher Kendrick, Mary Ann Radzinowicz and Joan Bennett are the most recent advocates of Milton's post-Restoration political activism.³⁴

Milton's continued political activism has assumed a variety of forms for those critics who have addressed the issue. Dr. Johnson wrote of Milton: "Even in the year of the restoration he bated no jot of heart or hope but was fantastical enough to think that the nation, agitated as it was, might be settled by a pamphlet" (Smith 108). Though Milton wrote pamphlets on the eve of the reinstatement of the monarchy and thereafter, poetry was his primary medium. In the Blakean tradition, Kendrick argues that Milton turned to art into which he deposited his political desires (90). The issue becomes even more complex when we consider that Milton, who was writing under censorship, created a highly symbolic language, assumed multiple voices, and represented alternative communities in his texts to assert his political ideals. In this study, I am, then, concerned with countering Jameson's observation on the utter silence and the absence in the poems of the themes of church collectivity, gathered communities and political parties with which the English cultural and political revolution had had a burning preoccupation. Jameson insists that Milton anticipates the social impoverishment of the

modern world (54). Bennett, who focuses like Hill on Milton's embrace of the public life, suggests, in contrast, that the poet lived out his religious commitment in the service of political parties and social movements, as well as in mutable congregations of the faithful, through the writing of poetry.

I concur with the proposition that Milton does not become silent, but rather continues to assert his beliefs through his writings. For the time, it will be as a voice, or number of voices speaking amidst the barbarous dissonance that echoes within his poems as much as it does outside: "I sing with mortal voice, unchanged / To hoarse or mute, though fallen on evil days, / On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues" (7.24-6). The dramatic poems suggest that the poet-revolutionary does not become passive when England reinstates the king to the throne, though he did not, I am arguing, propose unmediated political action either. Rather, he offers a model for intervention within the existing historically determined structures, that include the literary tradition in reference to which he attempts to define himself.

At the conclusion of his analysis, Charles Geisst dismisses Milton's identification with future democratic reform because "Milton belonged to a tradition of theo-political thinkers whose immediate academic interest was in the past rather than in the immediate future in a sense of progress" (100). Though rooted in antiquity and the Judaic-Christian tradition, Milton's philosophy of history and polity never lets us forget his sources. However, that does not mean that Milton did not use historical models to construct or reconstruct concepts of history, or even social and political philosophies which provided guidelines for future courses of action or reaction. The voices which intrude in and talk from various perspectives about the past, in which the present and future are implicated, are in dialogue with each other, and comprise what Shelley would call the episodes to that great poem written by time.³⁵ This poem consists not of any

singular body of objective fact--the common gloss of historicists--but of multiple truths and layers described by a variety of voices.

Despite the Restoration, the reinstated monarchy of the 1660's was not absolute, nor would ever be again. Charles' request for a standing army in the provinces and his attempt to increase control of corporations were both rejected. The censorship of the press and the ability to wage war now depended on the good will of Parliament (Hutton 181). The increase in the power of the ruling class was also extended to the church laity whose dissenters, though persecuted by the law, prevented the restored church from ever regaining its original loyalty. A society that included parliaments, poor laws and juries, and in which the rich and titled were at least in theory taxed more heavily, did not form all that repressive a system. The radical pamphleteering of the early Restoration years was as vigorous as in the previous decade. In the Quaker movement, it even possessed a base that the earlier reformers had lacked, covering almost all the country and representing rural and urban areas. At the same time, there was no denying that the Restoration had again served to suppress the atmosphere of free debate, the discussion of fundamental issues from numerous points of view, and the hope that governments could be directly persuaded by force of argument. The self-serving tower of Babel was far from being destroyed. When the course of history again turned on the revolutionaries in 1660, they were compelled to seek solutions to their dilemmas that excluded direct political activism. As a principal victim of the revolutionaries' defeat to whom England would turn to find a voice, Milton took it upon himself to usher in a new Pentecost.

Notes

¹C.V. Wedgwood identifies Thomas Jordan as the author (91).

²See Stevie Davies' Images of Kingship.

³I will examine the political implications of Milton's defamiliarization of the natural order (ecosystem) in chapter 3.

⁴The beehive metaphor found in Proverbs 6.6 was adopted by seventeenth-century royalists from Edward Summons' A Loyal Subjects Belief, Griffith William's Jura Majestatis, and Godfrey Goodman's The Fall of Man.

⁵All citations to Milton's prose works are taken from Complete Prose Works of John Milton, New Haven: Yale UP, 1953-82. Citations to the poems are taken from Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Merritt Hughes, New York: Odyssey Press, 1957.

⁶I will discuss Patterson's definition of "*functional ambiguity*" in chapter 3.

⁷In chapter 3, I will address the significance of the emmet in the context of the book 7 creation story and the socio-ecological system represented in the poem.

⁸Milton comments on Luther's denunciation of the pope in An Apology (1.953). In chapter 4, I will discuss Milton's own use of the images of the Turk to characterize monarchy.

⁹See Richard Harden, "Milton's Nimrod," Milton Quarterly 22 (1988): 38-44, and A.V.C. Schmidt, "Chaucer's Nembrot: A Note on 'The Former Age,'" Medium Aevum 47 (1978): 304-7.

¹⁰Creating and imitating babble makes speech possible (Appelbaum 103).

¹¹For the history of the development of civic consciousness, see Donald Hanson's From Kingdom to Commonwealth. For texts discussing the politics and literature of the revolutionaries see Bennet 217 n13.

¹²According to Charles Stephanus' Dictionarium, cited by Starnes and Talbert (267), "Nimrod" is a derivative of "marad," the Hebrew term meaning "rebellion."

¹³The Aramaic word balal ("confound") replaces the Hebrew term Babilii. The displacement of Hebrew, the original language, is also indicative of the effects of the Confusion of tongues (Leonard 55).

¹⁴Downname, not Milton, is the author of this treatise (Leonard 58-9).

¹⁵The dissemination of languages and meaning itself is a divine act, but one susceptible to corruption, as the The Art of Logic suggests: "But as for words which are derived or compound, either their origins are to be sought in other ancient and now obsolete languages, or because of their age or the usually corrupt pronunciation of the lower classes are so changed and from the practice of incorrect writings are, as it were, so far obliterated, that a true notation of words is very rarely to be had" (8.294). I will examine Milton's reaction to the "corruption" of language in chapter 2.

¹⁶In Paradise Regained, Nimrod is replaced by his successor Nebuchadnezzar, who conquered Jerusalem in rebuilding Babylon--"the wonder of all tongues" (3.280)-as I will discuss in chapter 4.

¹⁷Milton's story of Babel in PL is a composite account. As such, God's laughter, to which Milton alludes, is not, as M.A. Radzinowicz suggests, an expression of Milton's enjoyment of the fierceness of divine mockery (Toward Samson Agonistes 303). It is, rather, a justified reaction to the folly of the tower builders, who imitate or anticipate the action of the foolish builder in Luke 14:25-33, at whom the onlookers direct their laughter.

¹⁸For other analogues displaying a correspondence between inner and outward liberty, see Rajan's Paradise Lost and the Seventeenth-Century Reader (87) and Hughes 456 n82-101.

¹⁹The relationship between the two is nevertheless dialectical, so that the collective is implicated in the individual.

²⁰In historical terms, the story of the tearing of the bard by the rebellious rout is "overpositively" identified by McColley with the abuses by the courtiers of Charles II at the Restoration (Hughes 664). McColley's reading is qualified by Broadbent who points to a similar allusion in Lycidas to the drunken worshippers of Bacchus, thus foreshadowing the digression of the corrupt clergy, as well as Milton's reference to the barbarous crew of Irish rebels in the Reason of Church Government.

²¹Williams in Keywords states that *Historie* refers mainly to the past, while *Geschichte* refers to a process which links past, present and future (119).

²²The notion of historical understanding as a conversation with the past is addressed by Martin Heidegger, "Onto-theo-logical Constitution of Metaphysics" in Identity and Difference, tr. Joan Stambaugh (New York, 1969), and Hans-Georg Gadamer, Truth and Method, tr. Garrett Barden and John Cumming (New York, 1975).

²³Addison regarded Paradise Lost as an epic or narrative work (OED). Grossman defines narrative as the working out of the story through the integration of the episodes, or as a kind of transitive discourse, a discourse that records a change from one state of affairs to another (25-6).

²⁴Bennett criticizes the Marxist definition of Providence in reference to Milton by arguing that, far from using literary means to mirror a doctrine or theoretical construct "(named "Providence" by Jameson, conflated with "Predestination" by Kendrick, and roughly paralleled by "historical determinism" in Marxism), Milton uses literary means to capture, work through, and understand the same human experiences-- "the ways of God to man"--that have been addressed less effectively by (competing) ideologies (32).

²⁵In God's Englishmen, Hill provides an insightful discussion on the two-edged nature of providence (229ff).

²⁶Milton's earlier attack on Salmasius in A Defense becomes ironical in the later stages of the Revolution when Milton adopts a similar attitude: "You must attack the populace as 'blind and brutish, without skill in ruling, the most fickle of men, the emptiest, the unsteadiest, and most inconstant.' This description best fits yourself" (4.471).

²⁷For Milton's definition of "the people," see YE 3.337-49, Hill, Milton 160-2, 168-70.

²⁸See, for example, "What it is which constitutes a mixed monarchy," 4.2 of A Treatise on Monarchy in Divine Right and Democracy, 192-3.

²⁹Hill addresses the conflict noted by Milton commentators between the poet's Republicanism and the Royalist imagery used to describe God. God in Paradise Lost is at once different from the kings of the earth and precisely like them: in the end he will cease to be a king at all (343-4).

³⁰Satan announces this after declaring that he thought himself impaired by the Son's elevation (5.665).

³¹See A Defense 4.535-6; Second Defense 4.673-5; sonnet to Cromwell.

³²The proposition that authority (and ultimately any achieved identity) "always contains within itself the signs of its own subversion or loss" is made by New Historicists, particularly Greenblatt (9).

³³Also see The Ready and Easy Way 7.436.

³⁴In The Experience of Defeat, Hill claims that there is no evidence to support the idea that Milton ever adopted the post 1661 Quaker position of pacifism and abstention from politics, and that he did not shift God's kingdom to another world (314).

³⁵Shelley defines history as "The episodes to that great poem, which all poets, like the co-operating thoughts of one great mind, have built up since the beginning of the world" (Defence 493).

Chapter II

"WITH MORTAL VOICE": LINGUISTIC MUTABILITY AND WORD PLAY

Metaphors, and senseless and ambiguous words, are like *ignes fatui*; and reasoning upon them is wandering amongst innumerable absurdities; and their end, contention and sedition, or contempt? (Hobbes, Leviathan)

The new cultural and creative consciousness lives in an actively polyglot world. The world becomes a polyglot, once and for all and irreversibly. The period of national languages, coexisting but closed and deaf to each other, comes to an end. Languages throw light on each other: one language can, after all, see itself only in the light of another language. The naive and stubborn coexistence of "languages" within a given national language also comes to an end--that is, there is no more peaceful co-existence between territorial dialects, social and professional dialects and jargons, literary language, generic languages within literary language, epochs in language and so forth. (Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination)

The voice alone is company but not enough. Its effect on the hearer is a necessary complement. Were it only to kindle in his mind the state of faint uncertainty and embarrassment mentioned above. (Beckett, Company)

The play of metaphor is an imposing threat to the work of referential security in the way that artistic freedom imperils fascism. (Appelbaum, Voice)

God every morning rains down new expressions into our hearts and, for a variety of circumstances, gives a variety of words. (Milton Eikonklastes)

Part 1

Literary Critical Interpretations of Voice

i:

The rupture between sign and signified

According to Foucault, language in the Renaissance was characterized by a direct correspondence between the signifier and the signified. Words were

intimately connected with things; words were believed to be inherent in the script of an ontological discourse (God's *Word*) that only required reading for the guarantee of their meaning and truth. Words existed inside Being: they reduplicated it; they were its signature; and man's decipherment of language was a direct, whole perception of Being. (Said 284)

Despite Foucault's observation, the Renaissance was very much plagued by the rupture between *res* and *verba* that writers of the period sought so fervently to prevent or mend. The rupture between word and thing was an Old Testament event, continually reenacted throughout history (Howell 187-99); at the same time, socio-political explanations for

the corruption of language were also being offered by authors and critics of the period. Thomas Wilson in the Arte of Rhetorique devised a Babel-Pentecost explanation of linguistic mutability that had its end in social formation. "Eloquence first given by God, and after lost by man, and last repayed by God againe" is the title of his Preface. God stirred up his faithful, to whom he granted the gift of utterance, to "perswade with reason all men to societie" (27). George Puttenham in the Arte of English Poesie claimed, as Milton would in reference to political structures, that utterance or language was given to humankind by God, and that speech is, in turn, shaped by humans. He outlined various rules to prevent the misuse of rhetoric and poetic language.

Ben Jonson insisted in his Discourses that "Whersoever manners and fashions are corrupted, Language is. It imitates publicke riot" (Kahn 153). At the same time, society, civic life, as well as social fragmentation not only created but were themselves shaped by language and rhetoric. Hobbes contended that the rhetorical strategy of arguing two sides simultaneously--*in utramque partem*--was not a sign of rhetorical possibility, as the humanists maintained, but rather of logical scandal, and in fact, a cause of civil war. Before he intervened in the episcopacy controversy, Milton too had told an Italian friend that "when the language falls into corruption and decay" the downfall of the State is imminent. The debasement of a language is accompanied by "a proneness to submit to any form of slavery." On the other hand, "not once have we heard of an empire or state not flourishing at least moderately as long as it continued to have pride in its Language, and to cultivate it" (1.329-30). It is the relationship among socio-political reformation, self-representation, and the various definitions of linguistic mutability in the seventeenth century that I will first consider in this chapter. This discussion leads me to an examination of the seventeenth- and twentieth-century interpretations of the multiple voices in Paradise Lost, and the politics of their representation. My formal consideration of the individual narrative voices in the poem begins in the second half of this chapter, and continues into the subsequent chapter.

Seventeenth-century royalists argued for the dependence of society and social order on government. James I himself had insisted in the Trew Law of Free Monarchies that without the organizing sovereign power, the people were nothing more than a "headlesse multitude." The revolutionaries, on the other hand, argued for decentralization; they pressed for the distinction between government and society, and defended the value of society independent of government. The anti-monarchists regarded government as an essentially human affair rather than as a divinely-sanctioned institution. Political life in turn was subject to willful manipulation in accordance with human purposes and desires.

The idea of individual and social liberty presumed both a distinct sphere of private life and a public life separable from government. The belief in the natural stability of society was founded on the underlying notion of a uniform human nature, a uniformity that transcended the obvious political disorder. The revolutionaries associated all injustices with governmental involvement. Little reflection, however, is required to recognize the narrowness of this view. In his reassessment of democratic ideals in the later part of the revolution, Milton himself, as I explained in the previous chapter, gradually discovered that the social order is too often shot through with coercive relationships, and ironically becomes dependent on governmental power to ensure individual freedom. It is this philosophy of polity that informs his representation of voice in the poem.

The tension within society and government, and between social and political philosophies of the seventeenth century, prevented both the anarchy associated with an unchecked democracy and with the institutionalization of truth. The endless deferral of re-membering the body of Truth in the Areopagitica is not just a function of inevitably inadequate human endeavours, but is in fact imperative if the conversation of history and fair representation in government is to be ensured. Plural interests and values created

by and which continually recreate multifaceted truths sustained the constitutional system of government which the revolutionaries after the Restoration still hoped to see established.

The realization of this socio-political vision would provide a forum for organized power, genuine alternatives and social energy. As well, it would foster the establishment and re-establishment of social groups from centripetal and hierarchical to boundary-oriented and horizontal communities which formed the basis for the new nation. Benedict Anderson describes the formation of this nation as an imagined political community--imagined because its members never come to know the majority of their fellow members. The nation was founded on a reorganization of society in which high centres and hierarchical political loyalties were overturned. As well, the impact of economic change and of social and scientific discoveries drove a wedge between cosmology and history, and along with print-capitalism, made it possible for people to develop a greater degree of self-consciousness and interact with others in new ways (Anderson 40-1).¹ Bakhtin claims that it was the rupture in the history of European civilization at this time that resulted in its emergence from a "socially and culturally deaf semi-patriarchal society," and caused the entrance into "international and interlingual contacts and relationships." As a result, Europe witnessed the emergence of numerous different languages and cultures, and these became decisive factors in its life and thought (11).

The fragmentation and pluralization of the particular sacrosanct language which had offered a privileged access to ontological truth at once threatened the stability of the old regime and laid the foundation for the development of the new multivocal nation. Describing the various challenges to the hegemony of Latin,² and later to the vernacular French and the "unadulterated" English itself, Bishop Wilkins, under the auspices of the Royal Society, provided a Renaissance counter-etiology to the fall of Babel by offering socio-political explanations for the variations in language:

The mixture with other Nations in Commerce; Marriages in Regal Families which doth usually bring some common words into a Court of fashion; that affection incident to some eminent men in all ages, of coining new words, and altering the common forms of speech, for greater elegance; the necessity of making other words, according as new things and inventions are discovered. Besides, the Laws of foreign Conquests usually extend to Letters and Speech as well as Territories; the Victor commonly endeavouring to propagate his own Language as farre as his Dominions; which is the reason why the *Greek* and *Latin* are so universally known. And when a Nation is overspread with several colonies of foreigners, though this does not alwaies prevail to *abolish* the former Language, yet if they make any long abode, this must needs make such a considerable *change* and *mixture* of speech as will very much alter it from its original Purity. (Allen 7)

Migration, war, the implementation of new customs, commercial intercourse as well as colonization,³ which tended ironically to produce as much as suppress differences, accounted in part for the variety of tongues that replaced those of the Confusion. While the language of the colony is inevitably appropriated, language serves as an palimpsest, bearing both the signs of appropriation and resistance, Wilkins suggests. The change and mixture of speech greets both the colonist and the colonizer despite the power differential.⁴

The scattering of languages caused by the dispersion of peoples throughout the world disrupted the established "civil society." According to Hobbes, prehistoric humanity

being hereby forced to disperse themselves into several parts of the world, it must needs be that the diversity of tongues that now is, proceeded by degrees from them, in such manner as need, the mother of

all inventions, taught them; and the tract of time grew everywhere more copious. (4.141)

In "Of Speech," then, Hobbes' recommendation for the purgation of speech and language through the precise authoritative use of definitions and the abandonment of all rhetoric (except his own rhetoric of science), complements the proposed institution of the "law of contradiction" in the form of a commonwealth. The development of his great Leviathan demands the surrender of all individual judgment, authority and will to the sovereign power. It necessitates, accordingly, the conferring of all "power and strength upon one man, or upon one assembly of men, that many reduce all their wil's by plurality of voices unto one will" (2.17). Individual expression and existence is synonymous with madness, and is the cause of war. Even the potential for difference, oppositions, the clash of voice against voice, or contradiction--represented by *in utramque partem* in language--produces the conditions for civil war, Hobbes warns.

War is not only the effect but also the cause of linguistic mutability, as Thomas Sprat declares in providing alternative social and historical explanations for the flux and mixing of individual languages. Sprat indicates in his account of the corruption of the English language in The History of the Royal Society of London that from the time

of King Henry the Eighth down to the beginning of our late *Civil Wars*, it was still fashioning and beautifying it self. In the Wars themselves (which is a time wherein all Languages use, if ever to increase by extraordinary degrees, for in such busie and active times there arise more new thoughts of men which must be signifi'd and varied by new expressions), then, I say, it receiv'd many fantastical terms, which were introduc'd by our *Religious Sects*, and many outlandish phrases, which several *Writers* and *Translators* in that great hurry brought in and made free as they pleas'd, and with all it was inlarg'd by many sound and necessary Forms and Idioms which it before wanted. (113)

The foreign elements which included tropes and figures--"this vicious abundance of *Phrase*, this trick of *Metaphors*"--produced "this volubility of *Tongue*, which makes so great a noise in the world" (117).

The maintenance of the kind of "civil Society" that the Royal Society proposed necessitated the refinement of the "impurities" of language--introduced by the "Impuritans" (Wedgwood 91)--as well as the censorship of all books and authors by an "Impartial Court of Eloquence" (114):

there is one thing more about which the Society has been most solicitous, and that is the manner of their *Discourse*, which, unless they had been very watchful to keep in due temper, the whole spirit and vigour of their Design had been soon eaten out by the luxury and redinance of *speech*.

(116)

The attempted purgation of language--the banishing of eloquence and correction of excesses--in which the members of the Royal Society were involved,⁵ confirmed political domination. The Greeks had spoken best "when they were in their standard of conquest." The Romans, in turn, "made those times the standard of their Wit, when they subdu'd and gave Laws to the World" (113). Sprat's later recommendation for the compilation of a History of the Civil Wars was based similarly on the assumption that "a full view of the miseries that attended the rebellion" would ensure the obedience of the subjects to the monarch and the country.

The practices of the Royal Society and of its precursors, including Francis Bacon, resembled the reductive approaches of seventeenth-century philologists.⁶ The philologists were primarily concerned with establishing the nature of the basic languages and their sub-branches, and with systematically studying the process of linguistics, stylistics and several philosophies of language, thus creating a stifling uniformity out of diversity, according to Bakhtin's accusation (274). Linguistic mutability and deviations from the natural or original language were like democratic representation in

being sources of authentic anxiety for various Renaissance writers. These authors denounced eloquence as an obstacle to the furthering of knowledge, and characterized language as "the feeblest of instruments--far more untrustworthy than a silvan pipe--preferably to be dispensed with altogether if possible" (Steadman 1). The tuneable Sylvan Pipe is mentioned in Paradise Regained by Satan when he flatters the Son by describing his language as one that "glozes" and smoothes over all contradiction (1.478-80). Ironically, it is Satan himself who is at once the eloquent orator, and, paradoxically, the employer of an absolutist terminology.

The multilingual and multivocal text was designed to involve the reader in a process that mirrored the construction of the commonwealth, a process denounced by many of Milton's contemporaries. Erasmus, Samuel Daniel, Castiglione, Montaigne, Hobbes and Locke, among others, were particularly concerned about the flux of meaning and language on which civilization itself was founded. Steadman identifies similar tension-filled commentaries on language, and traces the growing dissociation between *res* and *verba* in the writings of Donne, Bacon, Browne, Dryden and Milton. Linguistic mutability and the difficulty of representing truths manifested themselves in diverse ways in the writings of these authors and of the "destructive" and "constructive" skeptics.⁷ While various of their contemporaries were lamenting the fall into socio-political, linguistic and epistemological relativism, and were attempting in response to invent or return to an edenic language of certainty--a sovereign logic that would exclude rhetoric *in utramque partem*--Donne, Browne, Milton and others were more inclined to celebrate paradox, the play of signification and a janus-faced truth created in reference to a pluralistic society.⁸

The dynasty of speech, particularly that used for political domination, covers over individual attempts at voicing. Repetition through speech merely reconstitutes the original political covenant. However, a critical intervention in speech-making through the expression of an individual voice is an act of revolution that at once disrupts and

makes signification possible. Hobbes and his contemporaries associated this intervention with madness, as Appelbaum explains:

Interruption of speech making threatens to uncover the erasure. Thus any interruption provokes repression and retention--the agents of phonemic authority which maintain the economy of fear. The revolutionary, most feared in the sovereign kingdom of speech, wears the identity of the madman. He alone breaks the cognitive hold on the breath and glottis, liberates inarticulate and brutish sounds from his body, and negates the civil state at its origin. His attack on the signifier-signified relation is the most significant antipolitical act. Its effect is to retrieve the world from the political history. (57-8)

Critics of the neoclassical and Tory-dominated eighteenth century characterized Milton's voice and language as the politically dangerous expression of a madman. Milton was cast as a contemporary Nimrod who reconstructed Babel through his writings.⁹ Dryden complained of Milton's "unnecessary coinage" and invention of new words, and Johnson denounced his Babylonish dialect (Shawcross, Critical Heritage 1.101, 2.309). In The Censure of the Rota Upon Mr Miltons Book, Milton is criticized anonymously for his pamphleteering that included the composition of The Ready and Easy Way, intended for "the elevation of that Rabble and meant to cheat the Ignorant" (Shawcross 1.72). Voltaire disparaged Milton's use of puns, and his too familiar expressions that are "inconsistent with the Elevation of his Genius, and of his subject" (1.253). Leonard Welsted complained that Milton had created a "second *Babel*, or Confusion of all Languages" (1.244), and various critics remarked on the incongruity of the voices he included in Paradise Lost (Clarke qtd. in Shawcross 1.263; Johnson, Writings 416-7).

The redistribution of political power in a society that was becoming increasingly socially and historically conscious was complemented by a more modern apprehension of language. The signifier dissociated from the signified served as an echo, or disembodied

voice which returned only fragments of speech.¹⁰ However, the new understanding of language in the seventeenth century allowed the author to perceive this change as a movement away from the notion of a word immediately invested with significance and toward the understanding of language as a transaction of words with other words (Grossman 18-19). Truths thereby emerged through narrative, and in the course of linear time or through the "process of speech." The dependence of words on other words for meaning manifests itself not only in linear relationships of succession, but also in relationships of adjacency, correlation and complementarity. Word play does not necessarily end in meaninglessness. In fact, the play of signification and the practices of metaphor promise to bring down the citadel of phonemic authority and the dominating voice (Appelbaum 63). Moreover, meaning is not only a product of, but is inseparable from the activity of reading. Insofar as reading requires active interpretation, it provides evidence of free will.

The development of language is one of the actions that succeeds the loss of origin, Said explains. Language begins after the fall:

Human discourse, like Paradise Lost, lives with the memory of origins long since violently cut off from it: having begun, discourse can never recover its origins in the unity and unspoken Word of God's Being. This, we know, is the human paradigm incarnated in Paradise Lost.

(Beginnings 280)

The poem's concern with loss is especially apparent in its self-conscious expressions of linguistic mutability and wandering signification feared by the poet-narrator and denied by Satan, the eloquent orator. Implicit in the tenuous meaning-word association--one first alluded to in Paradise Lost in the hierarchical and heretical relationship between the Father and Son--is both a sense of lament and loss as well as of freedom and the possibility for greater interaction among the other *characters*. Despite its complex use of echoes in reiterated sounds, words, and phrases, and its incorporation of the various

figures of repetition, patterns of imagery and allusion, Paradise Lost at once records and challenges the fall into linguistic play to which Said alludes.

The effect of the resonances and of the play of signification in a literary text is not necessarily one of cacophony, meaninglessness or aimless verbal play, Bakhtin reminds us. Rather, for Milton, it is through this association and transaction among the voices inside and outside of the poem that the gradual re-membering of Truth, like that of the commonwealth itself, is facilitated. Bakhtin's model of the novel, which he regards as a Renaissance invention, provides a means for beginning to understand this phenomenon of a diversity that tends toward a dynamic but ultimately unachievable unity. Though categorized as monological by Bakhtin, the epic, in dialogue with its milieu, is novelistic. Bakhtin defines the dialogic novel:

A particular language in a novel is always a particular way of viewing the world, one that strives for a social significance. It is precisely as ideologemes that discourse becomes the object of representation in the novel, and it is for the same reason novels are never in danger of becoming a mere verbal play. The novel, being a dialogized representation of an ideologically freighted discourse (in most cases actual and really present) is of all verbal genres the one least susceptible to aestheticism as such, to a purely formalistic playing about with words.

(333)

Without attempting to return to an adamic language, the only one which had escaped "this dialogic inter-orientation with the alien word" (Bakhtin 278), Milton offers a means of orchestrating and celebrating its multivocality though cautiously in what he proudly called his own native tongue. Though recognizing the hierarchic world view that characterized even the post-lapsarian society, Milton's experimentation with language and voices--like his endorsement of more democratic representation within the

commonwealth--anticipates Bakhtin's approach to word play and to the diverse voices of society and the contemporary novel.

ii:

The socially-determined multigenre poem

Milton's political philosophy that gave rise to the proposal for a free commonwealth on the eve of the Restoration is manifested in the multilingual consciousness of the art work, in its linguistic play and in its engagement with contemporary discourses. The relationship between the totalizing epic and what George Lukacs calls historico-philosophical realities which confront the author (56) is for critics such as Lukacs, C.S. Lewis, Milner and Bakhtin, however, quite limited. This is especially true when the epic is compared with the self-conscious and historically-conscious novel.

Milner draws attention to the restrictive categorization particularly of the Renaissance epic, and recontextualizes the analysis more specifically in social and economic terms. However, he does not ultimately offer a much less rigidly constructed account of the epic and its social milieu. The extent to which the epic is constructed organically or artificially is contingent on the nature of the surrounding social context, Milner announces:

The integrated civilisations of classical Greece permit the organic epic of Homer; the relatively more constructed verse of Virgil is a product of a Roman civilisation in which the gap between life and meaning had opened up, but in which that gap still appeared as bridgeable; Dante's epic is a product of the new medieval synthesis which conceived the Church as a new polis and which postulated an immediate transcendental totality; and Milton's Paradise Lost, as artificial and constructed, as non-organic, as

an epic poem can be, becomes possible, briefly possible, at the precise moment in history when the bourgeois revolution, temporarily overcome by the feudal counter-revolution, finds it necessary, indeed urgently essential, to postulate an immediately attainable transcendence of the chasm, not between meaning and bourgeois reality, but between bourgeois ideal and feudal reality. (145)

Milton's formalism is not the result of a simple-minded intention to do damage to the English language, Milner explains. Rather, it is an expression of the very nature of his deepest moral, political and aesthetic preoccupations, and of the social context in which they come to be articulated (146).

Milner's characterization of Paradise Lost as a monological epic is the product of a common critical desire to read the poem into univocality. Kress and Goldthread suggest, in contrast, that social instability and the conflicting cultural voices of the period in fact contribute to the formation of the multigenre Renaissance text:

In a classical text, adherence to the rules of genre was highly regarded precisely because purity of genre ensured both fixity of meaning and social stability. Renaissance textual practices were equally "generic" but here there was no particular value associated with fixity or purity of genre. Indeed much Renaissance textual practice deliberately mixed genres, producing texts which foregrounded social instability and focused on heteroglossia, the many conflicting voices of culture. Such texts seem often only to be readable in so far as readers recognize a superordinate or "master" genre, within which the mixing of genres is embedded.

Milton's Paradise Lost is a text whose multigeneric nature seems, for example, comprehensible even coherent to most readers in the light of its self-professed "Biblical epic" status. (220)

This is not to deny the possibility that Milton himself implied an underlying sense of social stability by foregrounding the epic in the multigenre Paradise Lost. The privileged genre, however, remains in dialogue with the "lesser" textual and nontextual voices.¹¹

The classical epic cannot be characterized as dialogic, Bakhtin argues. The epic, "an utterly finished thing" which discourages multiple view points, is presented by the author who is immanent in the poem, and who speaks about a past that is inaccessible to him. Epic discourse, as a result, remains infinitely far removed from the discourse of a contemporary addressing a contemporary, or a man speaking to men. The representation of the history of a people in the early epic required impersonality in the narrator, according to Bakhtin. Epic poetry and criticism, especially Aristotelian poetics, had served the one project of further unifying and suppressing difference in the languages of social groups and generations (271).

In the Poetics, Aristotle praises Homer for his reticence because it is consistent both with the poet's role as imitator and Aristotle's view of Homer as a dramatist. The critic recommends that the epic poet, in imitation of the dramatist, refrain from presenting his point of view *in propria persona*. This prescription was also in the main observed by Virgil and became as well part of the neoclassical epic tradition. For Aristotle, moreover, the suppression of diversity in epic poetry was also extended to the mixed genre work. He privileged the already completed genre that was formed "during eras of closed and deaf monoglossia" (Bakhtin 12).

In the Renaissance, monarchists like Thomas Elyot in The Book Named the Governor likewise applied their political philosophy to their theories of art. Elyot associated worldly order with kingly rule and a hierarchical consciousness to which he attributed an aesthetic value. Pots and pans garnish the kitchen but not the chamber, he declares, offering an implicit justification for the purity of genre (108). The integrity

of the individual genre is further defended in the Renaissance by critics like Puttenham and Sidney.

In the Apology, Sidney creates a hierarchy of kinds that ranges from the pastoral to the heroic, "the best and most accomplished kind of Poetry." Nevertheless, while characterizing the differences between the genres, and while criticizing the mongrel tragi-comedy of the English who "mingle kings and clowns" and "match hornpipes and funerals," Sidney in his literary theory and application actually advocates multigenre works. "If severed they be good, the conjunction cannot be hurtful," he maintains (42). Milton, a master of the *genera mixta*, later challenges the defined status of each genre, and disrupts the prescribed hierarchical ordering, as Sidney himself had done by exalting the epic over the tragedy.¹² In Paradise Lost, Milton includes numerous kinds, whose intersection in the poem is often signalled by changes in the speaking voices. Through the incorporation of multiple genres and a range of voices which differ in degree not kind, and through its engagement with contemporary discourses, Paradise Lost deviates from the classical epic, whose traditional shape and voices are nevertheless invoked in the poem.¹³

iii:

Dialogue contests

In book 20 of the Iliad, Aeneas confronts Achilles, and admits:

The tongue of man is a twisty thing, there are plenty of words there
of every kind, the range of words is wide, and their variance

The sort of thing you say is the thing that will be said to you. (248-50)

The words of exchange spoken by the two characters are deemed useless by Aeneas, who returns to military combat. Milton, rehabilitating Homer's twisty words, again substituted military encounters for dialogue contests, in which the poet-revolutionary

was most intensely involved during the Revolution, and which are best dramatized in Paradise Regained. Milton's own contribution to the cause did not take the form of military engagement, but of intense personal and political engagement through writing. Anticipating Abdiel's own defense in Paradise Lost 6.121-6, the poet-revolutionary explains in the Second Defense:

For I did not avoid the toils and dangers of military service without rendering to my fellow citizens another kind of service that was much more useful and no less perilous....I exchanged the toils of war, in which any stout trooper might outdo me, for those labors which I better understood, that with such wisdom as I owned I might add as much weight as possible to the counsels of my country and to this excellent cause, using not my lower but my higher and stronger powers. And so I concluded that if God wished those men to achieve such noble deeds, He also wished that there be other men by whom these deeds, once done, might be worthily praised and extolled, and that truth defended by arms be also defended by reason--the only defence truly appropriate to man. (4.1.552-3)

The terms used to describe bodily functions are transferred onto the text which stands in for the poet and at once displaces and gives expression to his voice.

If the embodiment of knowledge and power in society is socio-political action, then its equivalent in poetry is voice, dramatic exchange and narrative intervention. Harold Toliver argues that one of Milton's aims in Paradise Lost is to discover a style that can recite in all the tongues the glory of a single word (154). If that is so, then one of Milton's discoveries in composing the poem is the dialogic nature of "the single word" and of the tongues that recite it. When we consider how the voices emerge and interact in the poem, we must remember that in both their socio-political milieu and in the text, words, discourse, language and voices become dialogized, that is, they become de-

privileged or aware of competing definitions or voices (Bakhtin 427). The resolution of the resonating or oscillating meanings is, furthermore, continually deferred.

The extent to which the poem emerges from its social setting is problematic. At best we can say that the one "determines" the other, not in the sense of causing it, but rather in the sense of providing the limiting context to which the text must be seen as necessarily responding (Kendrick 7). If we choose to read the text in this light, then Milton's need to reassert in the face of defeat the possibility of a dialogue with or imaginative transcendence of reality must also take into account the inevitable inscription of those "traces of reality" in the language of the poem.

The range of mean to lofty descriptions, expressions, styles, languages and voices in Paradise Lost, which Charles Gilden identifies in the 1694 "Vindication of Paradise Lost" (198-9) is the result of an attempt to represent a variety of voices, view points, and a community of different speakers. The poem is an imagined community that provides a pattern for Milton's proposed commonwealth. In the exchanges between the speakers created by the "perfect, unimitable *Master of Language*," and in the conversations of the poem with socio-historical voices, language itself is dialogized. The attempted dissociation of the poem from the barbarous dissonance that threatens its harmony involves the incorporation of that very dissonance. Language bears the imprint of its confrontation with historical becoming and social struggle; it remains "still warm from that struggle and hostility, as yet unresolved and still fraught with hostile intentions and accents." The novel--a term that must include multilanguage conscious texts like Paradise Lost--subjects this discourse to "the dynamic unity of its own style" (Bakhtin 331).

iv:

Twentieth-century critical definitions of voice

The range of contemporary literary treatments of voice is considerable. In The Three Voices of Poetry, T.S. Eliot offers an analysis of some of the fundamental distinctions between the various poetic voices. The first kind of voice is that of the poet talking to himself or to nobody, yet inevitably being overheard. The second is that of the poet addressing an audience irrespective of size, and this is the dominant voice of epic, though not the only voice (15). The third voice of the poet is heard when he attempts to create a dramatic character in verse. This voice becomes audible through the interaction of two or more characters in the poem. Eve in Paradise Lost is born out of a dialogue between two voices, Rajan claims. She echoes the two creating voices in her own account. At another level, the invoked "dialogue" between the poet-narrator and Urania gives birth to the poem, which stages Satan's voice first.

Voice is complemented by hearing, as the narrator gradually realizes. The turn that transforms the speaker into a listener redeems him by making dialogue possible. The act of speaking is a reciprocal process, as is writing and the inscription of the self within the text:

Some bit of himself that the author gives to a character may be the given germ from which the life of that character starts. On the other hand, a character which succeeds in interesting its author may elicit from the author latent potentialities of his own being. I believe that the author imparts something of himself to his characters, but I also believe that he is influenced by the characters he creates. (11)

Eliot's account of the mutually creating authorial and character voices is also relevant in explaining the relationship between an author and a predecessor whose voice resounds in the later text--in intertextuality. Dramatic texts, then, do not invariably provide the

forum for the greatest number of voices. In every text, various voices are represented, as Eliot himself acknowledges:

all that matters is, that in the end the voices should be heard in harmony:
and, as I have said, I doubt whether in any real poem only one voice is
audible. (23)

In this examination of Paradise Lost, however, I will focus on the movement toward harmony or consensus that depends, paradoxically, on the differences among the participating voices of the poet-narrator and the other narrators. Confusion can be rehabilitated into conversation, and conversation will potentially lead to univocality, a dynamic univocality that must, however, remain a conceptual horizon rather than a realizable possibility.

Eliot himself had recognized the indefiniteness of the distinctions between the kinds of poetic voices that he identified. Literary theorists of the 1970's and 80's have challenged the definitions more explicitly, and questioned the assumptions about the privileged position and controlling function ascribed to voice in our time by New Critics and Phenomenologists in particular. The phenomenological voice is situated within and pervades all discourse, according to Poulet, Croce and Husserl. Nevertheless it is heard as transcending that discourse; it governs structurality without being governed or becoming subject to internal or external conditions. Writing, then, is an expression of acoustical images of speech or voice. The attempted representation is that of a silent, unmediated and self-present--a logocentric--meaning lodged in consciousness (Lentricchia, After the New Criticism 73).

A number of Structuralists thereafter characterized the narrative voice similarly through a dissociation of speech and writing. With the privilege granted to speech in Saussure's methodology, voice becomes an image of truth and authenticity, a source of self-present living speech that offers the possibility for transparent understanding, thus providing a contrast to the lifeless emanations of writing.

However, writing actually destroys the ideal of pure self-presence. By sacrificing authority to "the vagaries and whims of textual 'dissemination,'" writing threatens the "traditional view that associates truth with self-presence and the 'natural' language wherein it finds expression" (Norris 28).

In "The Weaving of Voices," Roland Barthes claims that it is in fact through utterance--the convergence of codes and voices which he identifies--that writing is created. Alongside each utterance, one might say that off-stage voices can be heard. In their interweaving, the voices (whose origin is "lost" in the vast perspective of the *already-written*) de-originate the utterance (*S/Z* 21). Barthes declares that writing involves the destruction of every voice, origin, and the author himself, thereby allowing only language to speak. The reader of the text is without history, and merely holds together all the text's traces (*Image-Music-Text* 142-8). The argument describing the disempowering of utterance by writing forms the basis for the Derridian proposition that writing is actually the precondition for language. The textualized voice must be conceived as prior to speech, Derrida announces, ironically offering an alternative explanation of its origination. The written word disrupts the "natural bond" between sound and sense. Voice is thereby fully dialogized and textualized.

The application of this postmodern concept of voice to *Paradise Lost* is undertaken by Jonathan Goldberg in his chapter on Milton in *Voice: Terminal Echo*. Goldberg's explanation of the reciprocal relationship between the speaking, though inscribed, Miltonic voice and written speech, which continuously rewrites the "I," is particularly insightful. The text renders "the author" speechless and provides him with a voice in the "now" that defines his place in history and in literary history (124-5). At the same time, the resulting anonymity of the written "I"--associated as well with the darkness and blankness in which the "I" writes--makes speech and voice possible (133). The loss of voice, paradoxically, allows the voice to be heard. Speech,

which demystifies authorship, remains a function of written language and of the various voices and echoes--images of voice (133)--in the text.

This dialectical model of the deorigination and rewriting of the inscribed "I" and of the already present textual voices undercuts the hierarchy of discourse and the authority of any particular speaker. Furthermore, it textualizes the socio-historical evolution of the various voices. From a critical cultural perspective, however, voices are created in relation to surrounding voices--social, cultural, literary, historical--that they help define, and through which they find expression. We recall Kenneth Burke's model for the unending conversation of history in which the historically-burdened speaker enters, participates in, and finally leaves the discussion vitally in progress. Eric Griffiths also reminds us that we are socially-constructed and burdened. Our voices bear the marks of social particularity--of gender, regional and class origin, diversities of culture, degree of education, and so forth (70). An author serves, in turn, as a mediator for the various groups that adopt diverse moral codes in society. The differences, however, are liable to become a conflict within the writer himself (69), and thereby, the subject of the text.

The textualization of voices, like the denial of multivocality, must be recognized as politically dangerous and socially oppressive. Bakhtin thus offers the loosely defined "double-voiced" novel as a maximally complete register of all social voices of the era which remains open-ended because it is in dialogue with contemporary discourses. To each of the represented voices, Bakhtin ascribes a speaking personality and a speaking consciousness. Each has a will or desire behind it, and possesses its own timbre and overtones. The politics of the orchestration of voice in Milton differs only in degree not in kind from that in Bakhtin.

v:

Literary self-consciousness

The creation of the poetic voice and personal interventions in Renaissance texts is connected with what Susan Bordo has characterized as the "emergence of inwardness." Bordo attributes the "birth of subjectivity" to the recognition of cultural difference and a shared social world in which there is a sense of a "being-for-otherness" and a diversity of perspectives that must be taken into account. At one level, then, we are speaking not so much about the birth of subjectivity as the discovery of subjectivity. Bordo defines subjectivity as

the notion of influence proceeding from within the human being--not supplied by the world "outside" the perceiver--which is capable of affecting how the world is perceived. (50)

The recognition of inwardness is incited by the discovery of a rift between the self and the world, which undercuts the notion of a participating consciousness. It also challenges the synecdochic relationship between the sign and signified, the word and the Word, the self and the world, or, as we have seen, between human agency and the process of history.

Subjectivity, perspectivity and objectivity are linked to particular historical developments. The epistemological crisis and the scientific (Copernican) revolution that created a new philosophy which "called all in doubt," displaced the controlling individual consciousness by teaching that one's ideas and actions do not have universal relevance. For many this demystification of objectivity and universal correspondence proved a great threat to the established worldly order. For others, the recognition that truth may have more than one shape--which proposed the validity of multiple perspectives and a variety of ways of addressing meaning--reaffirmed the omnipotence of the Creator and the free will of the creation.

Critics like Steadman have attributed the development of a literary self-consciousness in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the characterization of the authorial voice inside or outside of autobiography to Reformation and Counter-Reformation spirituality, religious meditation and techniques, as well as to a variety of philosophical and scientific influences. The literature of introspection, representing at one level a reaction to the humanist rhetorical doctrine, assumed various forms. These included self-revelation in the familiar epistle, dramatic soliloquy, self-examination in autobiography and in the literature of meditation, the tendency toward individuation in poetic and rhetorical theories concerning the variety of emotions and types of character, and the analysis of moral categories in the literature of virtues and vices (Steadman 131). The inclusion of authorial intrusions, digressions, self-conscious commentaries in the drama and epic is part of this literary trend. The personal voice in its "drama of inquiry" makes itself heard in relation to the various voices inside and outside of the text. Milton's response to the increased concern with self-representation is problematic: he at once celebrates the authorial presence, and at the same time, recognizes that its authority must inevitably be challenged.

vi:

Narrative presence, negative capability and digressions

Defying the Aristotelian dictum that the poet not speak *in propria persona*, Milton develops a type of authorial presence in Paradise Lost which critics including Coleridge claim can be detected in every verse. At the same time, Milton insists that "the author is ever distinguisht from the person he introduces" (1.880). What concerns me here, however, is not so much the relationship between Milton, the historical figure, and the various personae he creates, as the socio-political significance of incorporating and tempering these voices in his texts. Authorial interventions and

digressions in the prose works, like the prologue of "The Second Book" in the Reason of Church Government, and the autobiographical passages in the Apology and the Second Defense anticipate the intervention of the poet-narrator's voice in the epic narrative.¹⁴

There is a difference between how the personal voice is represented in poetry and prose. Milton claims first that autobiographical commentaries are less disruptive in poetry than in prose in which "a poet, soaring in the high regions of his fancies with his garland and singing robes about him might without apology speak more of himself than I mean to do [in prose]." Even when the poet is stripped and blinded, his voice resounds in the poem, "unchanged / To hoarse or mute though fallen on evil days / On evil days though fallen and evil tongues" (7.24-6). Despite the claims, however, the confusion inscribed in the poem infects the voice that it also helps shape.¹⁵ Self-expression is elusive, and ultimately no more defensible for Milton in poetry than in prose. Poetry and prose blend the vacillations and modulations and changes in the representation of individual voices and interweave the voices themselves.

In the narrative prose tracts, as in Paradise Lost, Milton at once denigrates and celebrates self-expression. Personal moments are signalled and often distinguished from the narrative that they disrupt. Yet subjectivity can in turn only be defined through the narrative. The personal moments and autobiographical digressions are constituted in an act of reflection and retrospection. They become thereby events in the larger narrative structure, reliant on linearity to which they can never submit. Moreover, in the treatises, the speaker draws various voices into the text along with his own to suggest consensus.¹⁶ Multiple voices and the acts of relation, interpretation and appropriation characterize both the prose and poetry.

Milton labels the autobiographical prologue of book 2 in his pamphlet directed against church hierarchy a "digression," a term that Samuel Johnson would use to characterize the invocations of Paradise Lost. Though the speaker of the prose digression prefers "a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking" (1.823), which he

also recommends in An Apology (1.870, 871), he calls himself both an interpreter and relater of the issues he addresses (1.811), and announces his intention to "meddle" in matters of church politics. This he does by composing five antiprelatic tracts. But Milton already breaks his silence in this treatise before he even writes the tracts. The digression of the Reason of Church Government suspends time, and yet very much informs the narrative structure of the text. In a larger context, the treatise itself is a digression, one that nevertheless responds to and is intimately connected with the historical process it defies. The authorial voice is dialogized in the act of inscription and confrontation with future voices represented in the historical text, which are heard in the present speaking of the past. Goldberg says it better:

For the Reason of Church Government is written within a "preventive fear" (806) that is represented as the heeding of a voice of the future that will look back at Milton in 1642 and ask, how did you advance the Revolution? To that voice, in that voice, Reason of Church Government is written, within a future which *prevents* him, literally comes before him so that the present of writing is after this future and yet this future is blocking him from the future he would have as his own, and towards which, and in which, he writes when he convenants with the knowing reader towards the future which he has delivered and aborted by writing within the future that cuts him off, prevents him and yet, by standing in his way, opens the way towards writing. ("Dating Milton" 208)

The digression in which the self is produced and lost is also the space in which the whole of the tract is written and retracted (208). The digression and the authorial voice created in the passage work with and against the narrative of the treatise and the sense of the future that calls for their formation. The recreated self is very much a historical construct at the same time that it helps reconstruct a sense of history.

vii:

Twentieth-century interpretations of Milton's poetic speaker

Though critics have varied widely on the subject of Milton's narrative voice, the majority of contemporary studies have focused on the relationship between Milton and his persona. In the earlier analyses, the variety of, let alone the interaction among, interpretive voices is not considered. The strong movement in that criticism toward a unified whole in the poem seeks to resolve tensions or difference in the text by isolating it from a socio-political context, and by creating a univocal ubiquitous poet-narrator. The voice of the bard, the presence of the poet, Louis Martz announces, is

indeed everywhere in the poem, advising, exhorting, warning, praising, denouncing, lamenting, promising, judging, in all ways guiding us...by his strong evaluative comments. (107)

Here we recognize the claims later made by Stanley Fish, who declares that the historical reality of the epic genre requires that we consider the narrator as "an authority who is a natural ally against the difficulties of the poem" (Surprised by Sin 47). Fish dictates one right reading of the poem, and makes the narrator even more prominent than Anne D. Ferry does in Milton's Epic Voice (Weber 288 n4). The poet-narrator as guide is proposed by Ferry and as well by William Riggs, who argues for the Miltonic presence in the language, tone and structure of the poem. Though he is justified in criticizing the artificial distinctions made by Ferry to characterize the stylistic uniqueness of the speakers, Riggs simply uses the presence of the other voices to legitimize the authority of the primary speaker. He distinguishes himself from Ferry in asserting that the angels do not speak a different language from that of the epic narrator (102), and argues that Milton's inclusion of the angels' narratives serves only to confirm that the singing of God's ways by the inspired poet follows angelic precedent.

Arnold Stein contends similarly that the ghostly presence of the poetic voice is responsible for wielding absolute authority over the characters' speeches and the poem's tone, themes and structure. Various critics who recognize the dramatic quality of the poem see the poet-narrator as a stage-manager who produces and presents his own drama of inner conflict (Gardener 35). The dramatic role that the "actor-priest" assumes unifies the whole poem (Rollin 29).

From among the earlier critics who dissociate Milton from the speaker he creates, Rollins and Ferry are most conscious of the disparity that ultimately only affirms again the autonomy of the represented voice and its control over the mood and meaning of the poem (Ferry 49). Insisting that it is misleading to call the speaker of Paradise Lost "Milton," Ferry argues that the poet creates in the place of himself "an objectified voice with a distinct identity, tone, and manner, and the attitudes which the voice expresses are in keeping with that identity" (50). Rollin likewise distinguishes between Milton and the poet-narrator, objectifies the latter as a controlling device, and declares his heroism:

Readers of Paradise Lost do not need to know Milton's biography in order to respond to the poem's narrator. Enough information about him is supplied for them not only to know him and believe in him as a character, but ultimately to empathize with him as a hero committed to a quest for "Things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhyme." (30)

In each case, the claims to totalisation are reported by the critics to have been fulfilled by the monological function of the detached speaker, in the circle of whose vision everything in the poem is contained (Ferry 179). The language of the novel which echoes and simultaneously criticizes daily speech is avoided in Paradise Lost because the relation of the speaker to the characters and the readers is not social (Ferry 180). The words of the omniscient narrator who is cut off by his blindness "from the cheerful waies of men" are inscribed in a language and in a self-containing poem devoid of social

relation of the speaker to the characters and the readers is not social (Ferry 180). The words of the omniscient narrator who is cut off by his blindness "from the cheerful wales of men" are inscribed in a language and in a self-containing poem devoid of social context, thereby suggesting that the allegedly self-contained poem interprets the world without being immersed in the world it interprets.

More recent criticism recognizes difference both in the narrative voice and also among the other interpretive voices that the poem seeks to accommodate. The critical analyses include studies by Catherine Belsey, Mary Nyquist, Donald Bouchard, Barbara Lewalski, and Kathleen Swaim, among others. The role of the bard and of the two angelic narrators as prophet-poets is a consideration in Lewalski's *Paradise Lost and the Rhetoric of Literary Form*. Her analysis of the literary genres, modes, strategies and conventions in the related accounts provides a guide by which the reader might further compare and evaluate the relationships among the interpretive voices. Kathleen Swaim offers a long overdue, largely philosophical, analysis of the narrations of Raphael and Michael, in which she first compares the pedagogical procedures of the two speakers, and the reliance on the Book of Nature by the former and on Scripture by the latter. Swaim then discusses the emphasis on invention and illumination by Raphael and on disposition and judgement by Michael, and thereafter contrasts as well Raphael's concern with analogy to Michael's interest in typology.

The angels' accounts, however, cannot ultimately be construed as opposites. The relationship of the narrative voices to each other and to that of the poet-narrator complements the complex sign-signified relationship. Language resists binary oppositions, so that likenesses, whether between words, images, types of representation or voices, hobble in the text. Words are not inherently significant, but derive meaning from contexts, both in terms of their association with other words, and from the historically-situated literary text in which they are inscribed. Similarly,

the way things are in their own nature, not through patterns of priority in the mind; their format is that of being not of judgment; their energy is centrifugal or centripetal, not externally imposed. (175)

The force of comparisons does depend largely on the relationship between the subjects being compared, whether they be truthful or not. Yet, I would argue, that it is as well contingent both on the context in which the comparisons appear, and on the "patterns of priority in the mind" which define the parts and determine the effects of the interplay.

The acts of comparison and evaluation in which the reader of the multigenre, multivocal text is involved produce the other voice that emerges as a *tertium quid*. In accounting for its creation, Eliot claims that this third voice became audible to him

after I attacked the problem of presenting two or more characters in some sort of conflict, misunderstanding or attempt to understand each other, characters with each of whom I had to try to identify myself while writing the words for him or her to speak. (8)

If, then, one of the theoretical propositions of The Art of Logic is that the purpose of comparatives in rhetoric is to clarify and mediate between seemingly unequal quantities or qualities, then poetry speaks in quite a different way. What comparisons make plain in the end is that the truth is very much entangled, as the following comparative examination of the narrations by Raphael, Satan and the poet-narrator will suggest.

Part 2

The Sad Task: Self-representation in the Tragic Accounts of Raphael, Satan and the Poet-narrator

Raphael's narration of the tragic history of the war in heaven, the monologues of Satan, the speeches of the poet-narrator and the laments of Adam and Eve have common characteristics. The "sad task," which is addressed in the accounts by Raphael, Satan and the poet-narrator, refers both to the tragic subject matter of those accounts, as well as to the act of narration and the difficulties of verbal expression. Through voice and perception, Raphael, Satan and the poet-narrator establish narrative contexts in the poem which each also interrupts. The three speakers use the text not only as an arena for self-expression, but also as a means of revealing the self in discourse. At the same time, they disrupt the linear narrative through their self-conscious and historically-conscious commentaries. If there is for each of the speakers a heightened self-awareness that manifests itself in soliloquy and apostrophe, then there is also an increased recognition of the imposition of control upon the voice that causes the narrators, particularly the poet-narrator, to reject the monologue in the end. The "emergence of inwardness" is accompanied by the recognition of the speaker's dialogized voice and of the other points of view within and outside of the official narrative he establishes. The narrative continuum and the historical process at once suppress individual utterance and simultaneously establish a forum in which interventions have the greatest impact. The rupture of the continuum by the speakers allows for self-representation and performance--"an action which must go through passage; that both impede the action and give it form" (Poirier xiv).

I:

Comparisons, evaluations and hobbling likenesses in Raphael's narration

In Milton's drafts in the Trinity manuscript, Raphael's accounts in books 6 and 7 are represented as choric songs to be related by an omniscient narrator. Milton, in composing the epic, turns the act of narration over to Raphael, who not only possesses a distinct voice and less-than-omniscient perspective, but who makes a disclaimer of knowledge when he admits to absence on the sixth day of creation. In the ten- and twelve-book epics, Milton emphasizes that books 6 and 7 are narrated from one particular privileged and yet limited point of view. Raphael later welcomes a further stage of the narrative on the creation of Adam who presents his story.

In this second half of the chapter, I will, then, first consider the narration of Raphael, who is technically a secondary narrator, but one of higher status in the hierarchy of creation than the blind and fallen primary narrator. The poet-narrator's vision is impaired by the fall, that is, by his participation in the post-lapsarian account he describes. However, in reading Raphael's account, we discover that the angel too is a participant in the war he narrates (6.363). The account, therefore, is a subjective one, both because the partisan angel's language must be accommodated, and because this narrator experienced the events and viewed them from a particular perspective.¹⁷ Raphael self-consciously draws his audience's attention to the problems of accommodation throughout the narratives (Swaim 168-175). At the same time, the angel's dramatic portrayal and extensive use of direct speech conceals the difference and the ruptures caused by the translation of spiritual into the "corporal forms" of human discourse.

Bouchard claims that as a partisan angel, Raphael does not see that his own side in the war is as much at fault as the side he opposes. Raphael, however, does recognize that the "perverseness" that resides in the "hapless Foes" (788) is also apparent in the

theatricalism of the loyal angels (594, 662-70). Bouchard goes on to argue that Raphael mistakes the Son's meekness for ire, by interpreting the Son's merciful judgement as a heroic victory (130-1). This reading denies the Son's self-declared "rage" (6.813), and the anger directed at the defiant angels by God through the Son (717-8). The fact that the Son defeats the rebels by mirroring their ire (6.834-53) does not undercut his own anger or agency. The Son is described as hurling the ten thousand Thunders "such as thir Souls infix'd / Plagues" (836-8). Bouchard literalizes the simile when he regards the Son as purely reflective, and also fails to account for the Son's merit that Milton takes great pains to emphasize. Raphael is a partisan angel, but primarily, as he himself admits, because of the difficulties of accommodation.

In her comparative study of Raphael and Michael, Swaim describes the angels' narrations as oppositional. Her examination of the relationship between the two narrative accounts, and between the past and future or spiritual and material subjects of comparison in the individual accounts, can be read in terms of Raphael's own poetic, particularly his use of analogy. Milton's discussion of comparatives in The Art of Logic provides, in turn, a gloss on Raphael's rhetorical strategies. In Swaim's study, Raphael is very much a Ramist pedagogue. According to Milton's The Art of Logic, all knowledge and teaching are based on consent and on established and establishing likeness (Swaim 175), and the primary function of comparatives is "to make plain." The general assumption underlying the act of comparison is that

"there is nothing which when compared with another in quality is not either like it or unlike it" but that likes "are not to be urged beyond that quality which the man making the comparison intended to show as the same in both." (175)

Authorial intention (inferred rather than announced) constitutes a boundary beyond which the pursuit of likenesses is not to be pushed. If the reader decides that

comparisons are not to get out of hand, she does so because she favours a certain way of reading. The univocalizing reader has to make out the case for her hermeneutic preferences. By engaging in the acts of comparison and evaluation of the voices in the poem in light of the multivocal approach I have proposed--one that denies binary opposites--it is necessary to realize that the voices and verses often render one thing both like and simultaneously unlike another.

There are yet other important reasons why we should be reluctant to regard the narrative voices as oppositional, or to use The Art of Logic as a gloss on Paradise Lost, as Swaim does. The treatise on logic lays to rest Ramist Raphael's truthfulness in choosing to recount divine history to Adam by likening spiritual to corporeal forms (Swaim 176). It is the force of comparison, not the validity of the data in the comparison with which Raphael is concerned, Swaim concludes, exonerating Raphael's artifice (177). Swaim explains, nevertheless, that the fictive base does not compromise the truthfulness of the imparted information. The questions Raphael raises are for Milton, the angel, and his audience as much epistemological and ontological matters as they are rhetorical strategies. As such, Raphael--a skilled orator who is attempting to clarify or "make plain" in an effort to secure confidence in his pupil (Swaim 176)--can be judged as an unreliable narrator (Bouchard 130), and a prevaricator and fumbler (Rajan "Osiris and Urania" 222). Narrativity "always entails a measure of opacity" (Kermode 25), so that the Divine Interpreter becomes responsible for creating a highly complex and potentially illegal argument--which Johnson would call "confused"--on the relationship between heavenly and earthly languages and histories. There is more at stake here than effective oratory and the methods of comparison outlined in The Art of Logic.

Individual points of view, authorial intrusions, digressions, and the inclusion of episodes in the literary work interrupt and shape its narrative structure. The difficulties involved in re-presenting and intervening in the process or narrative of

history are described by the "Divine Historian" prior to his account of the episode on the war in heaven. The introductory passage illustrates the convergence of conflicting images, view points and philosophies:

High matter thou enjoin'st me, O prime of men,
 Sad task and hard, for how shall I relate
 To human sense th' invisible exploits
 Of warring Spirits; how without remorse
 The ruin of so many glorious once
 And perfect while they stood; how last unfold
 The secrets of another world, perhaps
 Not lawful to reveal? yet for thy good
 This is dispens't, and what surmounts the reach
 Of human sense, I shall delineate so,
 By lik'ning spiritual to corporal forms,
 As may express them best, though what if Earth
 Be but the shadow of Heav'n, and things therein
 Each to other like, more than on earth is thought? (5.663-76)

Todd, Fowler and Hughes in their respective editions of Milton read the verses in a Platonic or Neoplatonic context by citing the poet's indebtedness to the Timaeus and Cicero's Timaeus ex Platone which describe the earth as an image, reflection or shadow of heaven. If Raphael were a Platonist, however, would not the effort of unfolding the secrets of another world by imitation and accommodation--that is, by employing the inadequate language of corporeal forms--be a foolish or impossible endeavour rather than an illegal act? A Platonic reading of the passage could not account, moreover, for Raphael's suggestion that the earth as an image of heaven may in fact resemble the invisible world to a greater extent than humankind realizes.¹⁸ The implications in literary terms are that the relationship between the two is synecdochic rather than

analogous, and that limited human perception is at fault for not recognizing it as such. Patterns of priority in the mind do affect the terms and force of comparison.

Madsen rejects the Platonic interpretations of the passage, and like J.S. Lawry, equates "shadow" with the Christian sense of foreshadowing and adumbration, thereby making the symbolism of Paradise Lost typological rather than Platonic (519). He argues that when Michael later explains the development from the Mosaic law to Christian works of faith in terms of the progression from shadowy Types to Truth (12.303), he is asserting a view of history of which the Platonist has no conception. For Michael, we could say the difference between the stages of historical progress is one of degree rather than kind. It is an interpretation determined by and justifying the reading of a similar relationship between matter and spirit, and earth and heaven in Raphael's prefatory passage. Madsen's typological reading foreshadows that of Jackie DiSalvo, who inverts the Platonic doctrine treating earth as a simulation of an ideal model. She argues, like Hill, that the account of the war in heaven is actually based on Milton's experience of England's tragic revolution. While the question with which Raphael's speech concludes provides the poem with an alternative perspective of the earth and its history, it does not completely deny the earth's status as a shadow, nor cancel Raphael's preceding announcement of the difficulties of accommodating high matter to corporeal forms.

The passage announcing Raphael's plan to incarnate spiritual matters, that is, to bring heaven down to earth--which may in fact be an act more of translation than condescension--invites comparison with his account of the scale of nature (5.469-502). The interpreter conflates matter and spirit in the passage, and using the Platonic image of the tree, describes humanity's potential ascent to the realm of pure spirit. However, in order to teach Adam the nature of obedience and the steps by which to ascend to God (512), Raphael, who is literally converted to proper substance, metaphorically inverts the scale of nature both by "lik'ning spiritual to corporal forms," and by

relating not what is to come, but what is past (6.895). For the angel, the narrative act becomes a remorseful and "Sad task" first because he, like Satan in book 1 and the narrator in book 9, took part in the tragic history. As a participant in the war, Raphael is naturally partisan, and unable to offer a comprehensive, objective report (Bouchard 130-2). Yet his unreliability is, as I have suggested, largely a function of his medium. The act of relation is a sad task because, despite justifying his unlawful relation of high matters, Raphael must nevertheless translate spirit as substance and re-present history. Words betray him, but poetry makes the task possible.

The problems of comparing worlds with different languages and diverse means of measuring time are at once overcome and made apparent by the reachings of the verse. The passage oscillates between descriptions of heavenly and earthly subjects, past and present events, and eternal moments and linear time, thereby dissolving and simultaneously reaffirming the distinctions. Examining the passage more closely, we discover how Milton uses verse to juxtapose otherwise opposing concepts of time and states of being. In the preceding Platonic description of the scale of nature, Raphael associated intuition primarily with angels and discursive reasoning--which differs in degree, not kind, from intuition--with humans. However, we realize that he must resort to discourse, that is, to "running to and fro" in his attempt to draw comparisons between the two worlds. Discursive reasoning becomes the way of the poet, the interpreters and the readers.

Language serves as a means of representing discursive reasoning, and yet at the same time is self-conscious. In the prefatory passage to the war in heaven describing Raphael's attempts at accommodation, sentences are broken up into verses that reveal a fluid syntax and possible connections between contrasting terms. Beginning in line 563, "high matter" is accommodated to "men," that is to human understanding, and the act of "relating" is consequently a "sad task and hard." "Human sense" is juxtaposed in line 565 with "invisible exploits," and the modifying phrase "of warring spirits" is left for

following verse where it is appropriately placed next to "without remorse" (567). In the subsequent line, "ruin" and "glorious" are contrasted, and in line 568, the description of the once "perfect" reign of the devils is cut short in the verse as Raphael reveals his plan to unearth the mysteries of heaven, "The secrets of another world, perhaps" (569). The word "perhaps" refers us back by its sound and sense to "secrets"; but it also has an anticipatory function, and looks forward to the suggestion that the narration of high matter is "Not lawful." The word further anticipates Raphael's phrase "perhaps / Hereafter" which speaks, as we saw in the first chapter, of a vision of democracy. It is a vision for which poetic language itself serves as the most effective medium.

The suggestion of the potential illegality of the narrative act is undercut by Raphael's following announcement of the possibility that the relationship between model and image, and heavenly and earthly history is closer than on earth is thought. The verse, however, again redefines the terms of the relationship by balancing "perhaps" with the equally conjectural "What if." The juxtaposition of "not lawful" with "for thy good" in line 570 again emphasizes the paradoxical and precarious nature of the upcoming narrative account for both the speaker and his audience. While Raphael teaches obedience, his own obedience is being tested. The succeeding verse reassures us that the revelation of the secrets is legally and divinely sanctioned. Yet the announcement does not ease the tension: in the same line, Raphael reminds us that he is conveying high matter to humans with limited understanding by ending the verse with the word "reach" and leaving the modifying phrase "Of human sense" for the next line. Though Raphael might have satisfied the legal requirements for the narrative act, his subject matter remains out of bounds.

The juxtaposition of spiritual and corporeal forms in line 573 again draws attention to the dichotomy, while simultaneously anticipating the fusion of spirit and matter which Milton had described in The Christian Doctrine (6.316-7). The conflation

is one which the poet will achieve in the narration of the war in heaven through the act of delineation. If spirit and substance are more similar than was previously thought, and if the narrative act could potentially be unlawful, then Raphael's delineation must be more than simply an outline or a shadowy impression of the actual event. The scene he recreates is an animated painting of forms that fuses the mythical and historical, and looks forward to the tragedy of human destiny. When Milton intervenes in history, he brings his whole orchestra along.

Line 574 "As may express them best, though what if Earth" articulates more explicitly what the arrangement and structure of the verses have already suggested: if properly perceived, contraries will reveal their similarities. Through his poetic speech, Raphael compels us to reconsider the nature of accommodation. The likening of spiritual to corporeal forms "As may express them best" is apologetic, and in Milton's terms, condescending. However, the word "though" which begins the subsequent proposition that earth may be more like heaven than humankind recognizes, suggests that the acts of accommodation and comparison are ones of interpretation, not simply imitation. As a possible counterpart to heaven, the shadowy world and its history may not be a mere reflection of what lies above or behind after all. Raphael allows us to understand the distinction between earth and heaven in terms of the difference between night and day in heaven, where the change to twilight is welcomed:

ambrosial Night with Clouds exhal'd
 From that high mount of God, whence light and shade
 Spring both, the face of brightest Heav'n had chang'd
 To grateful Twilight (for Night comes not there
 In darker veil). (5.642-6)

Raphael's parenthetical alignment in this passage is one of several throughout his narrative. In each case, the alignment marks a distinction between heavenly and worldly experience. But the preface to the narration of the war has already invited a

is one which the poet will achieve in the narration of the war in heaven through the act of delineation. If spirit and substance are more similar than was previously thought, and if the narrative act could potentially be unlawful, then Raphael's delineation must be more than simply an outline or a shadowy impression of the actual event. The scene he recreates is an animated painting of forms that fuses the mythical and historical, and looks forward to the tragedy of human destiny. When Milton intervenes in history, he brings his whole orchestra along.

Line 574 "As may express them best, though what if Earth" articulates more explicitly what the arrangement and structure of the verses have already suggested: if properly perceived, contraries will reveal their similarities. Through his poetic speech, Raphael compels us to reconsider the nature of accommodation. The likening of spiritual to corporeal forms "As may express them best" is apologetic, and in Milton's terms, condescending. However, the word "though" which begins the subsequent proposition that earth may be more like heaven than humankind recognizes, suggests that the acts of accommodation and comparison are ones of interpretation, not simply imitation. As a possible counterpart to heaven, the shadowy world and its history may not be a mere reflection of what lies above or behind after all. Raphael allows us to understand the distinction between earth and heaven in terms of the difference between night and day in heaven, where the change to twilight is welcomed:

ambrosial Night with Clouds exhal'd
 From that high mount of God, whence light and shade
 Spring both, the face of brightest Heav'n had chang'd
 To grateful Twilight (for Night comes not there
 In darker veil). (5.642-6)

Raphael's parenthetical alignment in this passage is one of several throughout his narrative. In each case, the alignment marks a distinction between heavenly and worldly experience. But the preface to the narration of the war has already invited a

relieves himself of his narrative duties and bestows them on various other interpreters because of his increasing fears about the relation of high matters.

According to the terms of credibility established by the poem itself, the divinely sanctioned authority of the angels should prevent them from having any misgivings at all about the narrative act. The angels are, after all, the illuminated prophets of revelation sent directly by God to humankind, Lewalski reminds us (27). Through their common need to employ human discourse, however, all the narrators in the poem are related. Language serves as an equalizer while also revealing the differences among the speakers. Moreover, even if he refers to the precarious nature of narration only to refute the need for defence, Raphael, like the poet-narrator, betrays a self-consciousness in his monologue and dialogues. Both speakers repeatedly draw attention to the methods of accommodation which, in turn, testify to the presence of a mediating voice in the historical narratives. The lyrical moments--the interjections, as well as the authorial intrusions and proems of the poet-narrator--temporarily suspend the narrative. These personal moments are, however, complicated by the fact that the lyricists themselves are conscious of being overheard, thus implicating the "suspended moment" which cannot be sustained, in the greater narrative. The voice of each narrator must define itself against those of the other characters. As Goldberg explains, "the 'I' in discourse exists only by virtue of its relationships to the third person and second person" (129). The divine interpreter Raphael recalls his role as an actor in the event by inscribing himself in the episode in the third-person (6.363), and then returning to the first-person (373).

The narrations of books 6 and 7 seem generally to come from the poet-narrator, and not from Raphael at all, Allan Gilbert argues (65), thereby drawing attention to the underlying control of the narrative voice. The two histories were not in fact originally composed for Raphael. As I mentioned, the accounts of the creation and the war in heaven were to be sung as choric songs by an omniscient voice in the earlier plans for the

tragedy. The voice of Raphael competes in importance with that of the poet-narrator in the current epic, just as the various voices of Milton as poet and disillusioned revolutionary intercept the narrative of history dominated by the monarchists. In both cases, the voices are created out of the historical episode that first resisted them. Now multiple voices, accommodation and "functional ambiguity" are the means by which the narratives of history inside and outside the poem are presented.

The act of accommodation which Raphael identifies is, on one hand, an act of condescension, one that depends on power differentiations or hierarchically constructed relationships. Yet the announcement of difference implicit in the process of accommodation paradoxically calls for its opposite. Raphael in his prologue to the impending tragedy proposes the possibility of a correspondence between the shadowy image and the model. Through the imagination, then, the act of comparison reveals a similarity of form and balance among the contributory elements. Again Raphael's question "what if Earth / Be but the shadow of Heaven" opens the possibility of expanding human capacity to receive, and while receiving, to transcend the limits of the information imparted (Swaim 170). It alerts us as well to the limited nature of human understanding that is "perhaps" guilty of having established an artificial hierarchical relationship between otherwise like things. The similarity becomes evident through the echoing language, and at the intersection of prospective and retrospective view points. In the acts of accommodation and comparison, discursive and intuitive processes, linearity and simultaneity, narrative and dramatic voices converge.

ii:

Satan's "doleful tale"

Satan denies the dialectical nature of expression and narration by setting himself up as the biographer of his own narrative which he constructs out of an absolutist

language. Raphael, Michael, Adam and Eve are confronted by situations and by a created universe, while Satan, on the other hand, generates situations. Adam and Eve "emerge from their choices, but Satan dwells within his abstract potential and cannot confront situations at all" (Grossman 37), having denied his past and suppressed all contending voices from the start. The attempts to subvert the other voices in the poem are made by this dictator of Pandemonium through his soliloquies, which interrupt the narrative, thereby allowing him to establish his own history and terms of authority. In constructing his past, Satan inscribes himself in a counter-epic which becomes in the end, a fragmented song that speaks of the devils' own hapless fall.

The authoritative position that Satan assumes in rewriting the past is one he adopts in the first public address to his cohorts after their fall. The poet-narrator presents the image of a tragic classical hero, who nevertheless succeeds in enchanting his followers by his splendor, though he is darkened like the eclipsed sun. The darkened sun perplexes monarchs with fear of change (594-8). In book 4, Satan finds himself similarly overshadowed by the sun, "the God / Of this new World" (4,33-4). The censor employed by Charles II considered such comparisons between doomed rulers and suns in eclipse as veiled threats to the king (Leonard 113). A fallen monarch who denies change, Satan still holds his subjects mute in anticipation of his words:

Thrice he assay'd and thrice in spite of scorn
Tears such as angels weep, burst forth: at last
Words interwove with sighs found out thir way. (1.619-21)

This description of Satan at the point of speaking alludes to that in the account of Henry, Duke of Buckingham by Thomas Sackville in A Mirror for Magistrates:

Thrice he began to tell his doleful tale,
And thrice the sighs did swallow up his voice,
At each of which he shrieked so withal,
As though the heavens rived with the noise;

Till at the last, recovering his voice,
 Supping the tears that all his breath berain'd,
 On cruel Fortune, weeping, thus he plain'd. (547-53)

The instructive tragedies that make up A Mirror for Magistrates are fragmented and parodied in the depiction of the fallen monarch in Paradise Lost. The "sad task" of recounting the tragic narrative by the actors Buckingham and Satan makes their stories all the more tragic. At the same time, the act of narration allows for the possibility of dealing with the tragedies. Buckingham offers his experience as an example by which the readers might learn to redirect their own actions and political inclinations.¹⁹ Satan, on the other hand, colours and misreads the tragedy of his rebellion and fall to deny its implications.

To Satan's distorted reading of the past Milton adds various other historical accounts that are presented by the individual characters themselves. In the larger context of the poem, these interpretations of history propose a means of working through the tragedy, though the effects thereof remain. Paradise Lost and "The Induction" to Sackville's tragedy both conclude with a panoramic account of a world demonized by human perversity. However, Paradise Lost, unlike the latter, engages in dialogue with the tragedy which it inscribes by offering an alternative though qualified vision of the future history of humankind. Milton's poem, then, mediates between the imperial triumphs represented by Virgil, the purgation and redemption of souls in Dante, and the tragic vision of Sackville.

In Paradise Lost, the reign and relation of Satan's ahistorical narrative is intercepted as much by the retrospective and anticipatory stories of the other characters, as by Satan's own contradictory voice. The soliloquies jar both with the linear narrative and the public speeches that he orates. The soliloquy, which temporarily suspends the related events, offers a particular point of view on the action, one that replaces the earlier choric commentary. The soliloquies allow only for a

singular perspective; and their meditational mode and psychological content exclude the possibility for other points of view. The multivocal poem is generally quite distrustful of the soliloquies, monologues and apostrophes that it nevertheless accommodates. As the forms of the discourse of the divided self, these monologic speeches are very much dialogized in the larger context of the poem.

The projection of the singular voice has political implications. The apostrophe of Satan in book 4 contrasts with the colloquy between Father and Son in the previous book which culminates in the later creation account. Satan's voice, which speaks in isolation, uncreates, and is the voice of tyranny. Book 4 opens with the words of the warning voice which prophesies that the assault on humanity will take place through speech. In Revelation, the prophetic voice warns the earthly inhabitants of the coming of the seducer or accuser Satan. The ancient Serpent and beast "was given unto him a mouth, that spake great things and blasphemies" and, after conquering God's people, achieved a tyrannical authority over every race, people and nation (Rev. 13:5). Only the blood of the Lamb and the testimony of the prophets will eventually defeat him, according to John, the author of Revelation.

In The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates, Milton recontextualizes the passage: "in the thirteenth of the Revelation wee read how the Dragon gave to the beast *his power, his seate, and great authority*: which beast so autoriz'd most expound to be the tyrannical powers and Kingdoms of the earth" (3.210). Kingdom and magistracy are called "a *human ordinance*," according to God (1 Pet. 2:13). Since "There is no power but of God, saith Paul, Rom. 13" (YE 3.209), any unaccountable powers must be resisted, Milton argues, thereby appropriating Scripture for political purposes to denounce those magistrates who stood in the way of justice by preventing the trial of the king. The corruption of language and political authority go hand in hand. Both must be corrected through human ordinance and the collective voices of the people who exercise their right to challenge government "as they shall judge most conducing to the public good" (3.212).

Justice, as determined by the people, is "the only true sovereign and supreme majesty upon earth."

The voice of Satan in Paradise Lost extends the political power of its speaker by controlling the other voices through the creation of an absolutist language. In his opening speech on Mt. Niphates, Satan does acknowledge the presence of an addressee, thereby associating himself with the poet-narrator who engages in dialogue with the voice he invokes. The addressee, whose identity Satan acknowledges by naming, is, however, appropriated in Satan's apostrophe:

O thou that with surpassing Glory crown'd,
 Look'st from thy sole Dominion like the God
 Of this new World; at whose sight all the Stars
 Hide thir diminisht heads; to thee I call,
 But with no friendly voice, and add thy name
 O Sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams. (4.32-7)

The term "sole," suggestive of "sol," is juxtaposed with "dominion," and located in the middle of verse 33. However, by the end of the apostrophe, Satan--the self-proclaimed king who is threatened by the Sun, the reigning monarch--marginalizes the "Sun" in verse 37. The apostrophe at large reduces the vocative to the descriptive, "eliminating that which attempts to be an event." What is at stake is "the power of poetry to make something happen" (Culler 140). The establishment of a relationship between the self and the other in this speech is an act of solipsism. Both the poet-narrator and Adam call out to the Son and the sun respectively, and likewise project on the addressee a name and identity. However, these invocations ultimately end in a kind of exchange between the speaker and addressee which Satan's soliloquies cannot accommodate.²⁰

Satan's apostrophe begins as a dramatic expression of his bitter memory awoken by conscience, and the acknowledgment of his difference from the creator. The acceptance of this indebtedness to authority is potentially liberating, again revealing a

dialectical relationship between equality and liberty. "A grateful mind / By owing owes not, but still pays, at once / Indebted and discharg'd; What burden then?" (4.55-7), Satan admits, recognizing that advancement leads only to further decline (89-92). Yet the apostrophe ends as an internalized monologue when Satan rejects his difference: "by [Evil] at least / Divided Empire with Heav'n's King I hold / By thee, and more than half perhaps will reign" (110-12). The devil thereby denies his confrontation with the dual nature of his identity, suppresses the voices that speak of his relationship to God and history, and announces unambiguously: "so farewell Hope, and with Hope farewell Fear, / Farewell Remorse: all Good to me is lost; / Evil be thou my Good" (4.108-10).

Despite their personal and psychological nature, Satan's soliloquies and apostrophes have a public, rhetorical and oratorical quality. If we compare the public speech made after the devils' fall with his first apostrophe, we find a similarity in style and argument. Lewalski explains, in fact, that Satan's apostrophe can be divided into the parts of the classical oration (97-109). The devil's first public speech, to which he refers in book 4 as one of his "vain boasts," reveals a resolved argument. It renders its listeners mute prior to its presentation, and makes no mention of them afterwards. The language of this eloquent orator is crafted and contrived, even when his subject is most personal. Milton invites us later to compare Satan's mock invocation with the "unpremeditated" prayers of Adam and Eve in the subsequent book.

The rupture between the images of himself that Satan projects and his conscience or reason that reminds him "Of what he was, what is, and what must be / Worse" is achieved in the apostrophe. Any further internal or external dialogue is prevented. Satan becomes wholly immersed in image-making, to which he ultimately succumbs. The image of himself that he creates is seemingly immune to difference, change, or corruption, as is the mind which is its own place (1.254), or the form which "had yet not lost / All her Original brightness" (591-2). The orientation of the apostrophe and monologue toward an object world which cannot respond, marks the movement from

voice and auditory perception to visual perception which denies dialogue. This movement in the poem is a function of Satan's use both of an uncompromising language which fixes the relationship between sign and signified, and of reductive rhetorical strategies, which are in part indebted to the Ramistic arts of discourse. This rhetoric renounces any possibility of invention within a speaker-auditor framework. Communication and understanding through voice are denied, and we are left only with a kind of narrow vision:

The Ramist arts of discourse are monologues. They develop the didactic, schoolroom outlook which descends from scholasticism even more than do non-Ramist versions of the same arts, and tend finally even to lose the sense of monologue in the pure diagrammatics. This orientation is very profound and of a piece with the orientation of Ramism toward an object world (associated with visual perception) rather than toward a person world (associated with voice and auditory perception). In rhetoric, obviously someone had to speak, but in the characteristic outlook fostered by the Ramist rhetoric, the speaking is directed to a world where people respond only as objects--that is, say nothing back. (Ong 287)

Satan throughout book 4 experiments with one disguise after another. He assumes the forms of various animals; he imitates and images them, but does not become them. The poet-narrator predominantly uses figurative language to describe the performances: "As when a prowling Wolf, / Whom hunger drives to seek new haunt for prey" (183-4). Satan "sat like a Cormorant; yet not true Life / Thereby regain'd" (196-7). Thereafter he assumes the shape of a lion (402), a tiger (403), and later is squat like a toad (800). The devil also literally represents the complex classical epic simile whose tenor is lost in the elaborateness of the vehicle. Through his descriptions, the poet-narrator underscores the insubstantial nature of the representations.

Satan's acting is eventually interrupted by the voices of Adam and Eve.

Alternating between exhibitionist and voyeur, Satan, as well, provides an audience for Eve who recounts the story of her enchantment with the image she sees. The voyeur continues to attempt to master the object of inquiry. His vision is the antithesis of eternal life (4.199-210) because his eye is lethal. The voyeur and exhibitionist both avoid the "other" role. However, by objectifying what he sees, Satan, the actor-turn-spectator, at the same time assumes the role of a passive object. The Freudian mechanism of reversal-aggression toward an object is turned back upon the self, thus preventing communication.²¹

Just as the language of Satan, which the other voices echo, censors and controls the narrative of the poem in various ways, so too does the gaze of Satan contribute to the structuring and "reign" of a linear and totalizing narrative. The poem begins, not with a Genesis creation story, but with the account of Satan's fall. It is through Satan's perception that we experience many of the poem's events. At the beginning of the poem, the vision of the Muse from whose view "Heav'n hides nothing" is displaced by the view of Satan who comments on the change in Beelzebub: "If thou beest he; but O how fall'n! how chang'd / From him, who in the happy Realms of Light / Cloth'd with transcendent brightness didst outshine / Myriads though bright" (84-7). The devil's destructive gaze leads to the rape of Sin in book 2, an account I will examine in chapter 3. We experience Eden in book 4 through the eyes of Satan who is ironically perched as a cormorant on the tree of life (194-201). In book 8, Raphael comments to Adam that on the sixth day of creation he was absent on a mission to capture any spies intent on mixing "Destruction with creation" (229-36). The Satanic eye uncreates.

The poet-narrator superimposes his vision of Eden on Satan's, but the account of the garden is nevertheless characterized by negative comparisons and anachronisms--the function of a historical perspective implicated in fallenness. In the garden which the poet-narrator regards as "A happy rural seat of various view" (247), the Fiend

"undelights all delight" through his monopolizing and censoring vision. Satan, "still in gaze" (4.356) and in "couchant watch" (406) sees Adam and Eve in the garden "Imparadis't in one another's arms" (506). He proceeds to curse the "Sight hateful, sight tormenting!" (505), and finalizes his plans for destruction. In the apostrophe, Satan reduces the garden to a *hortus conclusus*: "first with narrow search I must walk round / Thus Garden, and no corner leave unsp'd" (4.528-9). In book 5, the gaze that Eve comments on in recounting her dream (47, 57) is the same totalizing gaze that prompts her downfall in the tragedy of book 9 (494-612), which I will consider further in chapter 3. Satan's monopolizing vision, then, complements his absolutist language in propagating the anti-creation.

The later monologues comment further on Satan's encounters in Eden. Satan continues to address subjects whose voices he appropriates and silences, and further distorts the sights of Eden by containing and framing those visions in the language of his monologues. It is the means by which he will objectify Eve in book 9 and provoke the fall. In the second apostrophe, Satan calls out to the gentle pair (4.366) and their yet uncreated offspring. Adam and Eve will be received by the kings of hell into hell, Satan predicts, as he inscribes the unnamed "pair" in the apostrophe that is framed by the words "Hell" and "abhor." Necessity, which the narrator defines as the "Tyrant's plea" (4.394), compels Satan to commit the devilish deeds leading to the temptation that will literally entrap Adam and Eve. The third soliloquy (4.505-35) reveals Satan's appropriation of their own words. Determined to use "what [he had] gain'd / From their own mouths" (512-3), Satan denies the free will and knowledge of Adam and Eve by reducing their autobiographical accounts to testimonies of their ignorance (519) and oppression.

The first apostrophe of book 9 announces again Satan's plan for the anticreation: "only in destroying I find ease / To my relentless thoughts" (129-30). The speech also describes his own metamorphosis or demonic "incarnation" (9.166) into the serpent,

and Satan's voice echoes this transformation. In the monologue, the imminent temptation is signalled by the alliterative "s" sound of the words that would be used by Satan in the serpent to address Eve thereafter:

Revenge, at first though sweet,
 Bitter ere long back on itself recoils;
 Let it; I reck not, so it 'light well aim'd,
 Since higher I fall short, on him who next
 Provokes my envy, this new Favorite
 Of Heav'n, this Man of Clay, Son of despite,
 Whom us the more to spite his Maker rais'd
 From dust: spite then with spite is best repaid. (171-8)

The apostrophe recounts the act of the divine creation that culminates in the fashioning of Adam and Eve, an event that proves to be the devil's greatest source of torment. The devil turns his spite on Adam, whose creation by God he reduces to an act of vengeance against Satan himself. The devil's speech uncreates by returning Adam--"this Man of Clay, Son of despite," "rais'd / From dust"--to the clay and dust from which God originally created him.²² In the fifth apostrophe--Satan's most solipsistic speech addressed to his own thoughts, and offering the best illustration of his own divided mind (9.473-93)--the devil provides a portrait of a formidable Adam that very much contradicts his previous description. Ironically, as Satan himself realizes, revenge, like language, "recoils" back upon itself. It is Satan who is literally transformed into the serpent that consumes and becomes dust (10.566; 208), and whose voice in self-mockery articulates thoughts and acts of spite through its hissing (10.543), recalling the dismal hiss and dire noise of Conflict produced by the warring angels (6.212). The language of the apostrophe also repeats the cannon fire: the terminology "recoils," "well aimed" and "fall short" suggests that the temptation speech will be a militant act.

The speaker of these five monologues, which deny all but one voice and perspective, is described prior to his first speech as standing above his cohorts in a shape and gesture proudly eminent "like a Tow'r" (1.588-91). Just as Satan assumes the numerous creaturely disguises that mock, as we saw, his once stately form, so does the meaning of his eloquent speech splinter. The many conflicting significances conveyed by his words--the babble--flame out and hurl defiance toward heaven (1.662-9), only to "recoil" and wound the speaker himself. Both language and history return to haunt him. Yet whereas Satan's soliloquies become gradually more inwardly directed, the monologues of Adam and Eve in book 9 are transformed into complaints, lamentations, elegies and eventually prayers in the subsequent books, as we will see in the following chapter on conversation and dialogue. The poet-narrator, who both recounts and participates in the history of the fall in book 9, betrays the dialectical nature of his speaking voice that moves between the post-lapsarian soliloquy and the restorative dialogue.

iii:

The Orphic voice

The verb "to narrate" comes into English use only after 1750, according to the OED. The term "narrator" was used prior to this time to refer to a speaker who recounted true stories or histories. The narrator was, however, inevitably as much a story-teller and maker of fictions as a reporter of historical facts. Nevertheless, John Smith assumed a synecdochic relationship between the narrator and the subject of his imitation or accommodation: "The representation of divine things by some sensible images or some narrative voice must needs be in them both" (Selected Discourses OED).

As I noted in the Introduction, Milton would similarly prescribe a moral character for the poet--the true poem.

In his prose and poetry, Milton, however, employs not the term "narrator" but "relater" which carries with it greater authority, narrative certainty (Miner 10), and a regard for otherness. The etymology of "relate" is to recount, narrate or tell (1530; OED). In 1596, it acquired the meaning of "referring back to." The narrative acts in Paradise Lost are primarily retrospective. Moreover, the various narrators relate stories in which they also served as actors, thus blending objectivity with subjectivity.

The pamphlets and poems both speak of the difficulties and dangers of writing *in propria persona*, as I have discussed. In the representation of history in narrative, the speaker's sense of difference is revealed and this speaker is inevitably displaced. At the same time, the dialogization of the narrative voice or the doubling of the subject into narrator and character makes it possible for the speaker to be heard at all. Milton describes the process of writing as involving industrious and select reading, steady observation, and insight into all seemly and generous arts and affairs, as well as invocation to "that eternal Spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge" (1.820-1). It is this Spirit that is also responsible for the democratization of the Word at Pentecost with which Paradise Lost concludes.

As Milton's speaker announces in the poem, the possibility that the "mortal voice" of the poet may be speaking alone (9.41-7), affords the possibility of meaninglessness or bacchic cacophony: "if the speaker depends solely on himself, his 'evil days' will be read as the expression of 'evil tongues,' a reminder of the confusion of tongues in Babel and an expression of disorder" (Bouchard 109-10). The soliloquy, monologue, apostrophe, and even the invocation are post-lapsarian modes of discourse in Paradise Lost which nevertheless reveal the dialogic nature of the speaking voice. The consequences of speaking in soliloquy are ignored by the internally divided Satan

who, as we have seen, tyrannizes over the other voices in the poem. The reformation of the soliloquy that begins in Paradise Lost with the invocations of the poet-narrator and the elegies and laments of Adam and Eve is fully achieved in Paradise Regained. The Son's dialogic soliloquy makes possible a humanizing self-confrontation that extends into his debate with Satan.

Bouchard remarks on the ill-fated journey of the erroneous narrator in the poem by pointing to the numerous false starts, hesitations, and interruptions balanced by presumptions, faulty identifications, accusations, and counter-accusations, beginning nowhere and leading "God knows where" (108). The whole enterprise may potentially lead to oblivion: "an age too late, or cold / Climate, or Years damp my intended wing / Deprest" (9. 44-6). Bouchard explains, in turn, that Milton's response to this cacophony is a duplicitous approach to Paradise Lost. Two voices--that of the narrator and of Milton's muse--control two different narrations in the poem at large. The narrator's composition is a temporal construction; "it is successive, linear, tedious, and doomed to failure." The muse, on the other hand, establishes through conversation and play with God, a "sort of oblique counter-point to the sequential action of the poem which recreates the circularity and perfection of the creation" (109-10).

The distinction between the two voices is not, however, as easily drawn as the structuralist approach suggests. The speeches of the voices intersect, and the narrator moves from retrospection to atemporal lyrical moments to prophecy. The speaker is at once implicated in present time and in the time frames of the various related accounts. He speaks initially in the poem of "all our woe" (1.3); thereafter we hear what seems to be a response from the Muse that begins in line 34, and that takes us through the history of Satan's fall and classical epic journey. However, in the subsequent book, we hear without warning the voice of the fallen narrator who describes the key of Sin as the "Sad instrument of all our woe" (2.872). The return to the narrator's voice is, then, signalled prior to the second invocation. Changes in voice not indicated by a move

to direct speech are difficult to mark. If the poet does initially introduce us to two speakers, one telling the story and the other taking dictation, he soon after merges the speaking voices, and, at the same time, creates different identities for the epic voice.²³

The narrative voice speaks in several voices, and describes a number of different perceptions. Though blind, the poet-narrator is a focalizer²⁴ who, at the same time, introduces internal focalizers. When focalization--the relation between the vision, the agent that sees and that which is seen (Bal 104)--lies with one character who participates in the fabula as an actor, we refer to internal focalization. The transition from external to internal focalization is, nevertheless, not marked any more distinctly than the transition between voices. Though the blind poet-narrator initially chooses to distinguish his failed vision from that of the Muse from whose view "Heav'n hides nothing" (1.27), his narrative performance consists of the verbalization of his insights.

The invocation to the muse was itself a classical convention that represented an attempt by the poet to shift authority from the confining tradition to inspiration, which afforded greater personal freedom and creative possibility. The classics did in fact include more variance in the authoritative voice and a greater number of voices than modern and contemporary critics, including Bakhtin, have acknowledged. The Homeric bard, for instance, is biased, and does make the reader aware of a manipulating presence, despite Homer's seeming commitment to impersonality and detachment. The authorial interjections and the kind of outbursts of sympathy to Patroklos in the *Iliad* which come out of nowhere, and which have been largely ignored by critics, enhance the dramatic quality of the work, as do the episodes related by the poem's other speakers.

The episodes of the classical epic were classified by Minturno as either "attached"--having some relation to the main fable or simultaneous with the action thereof--or as "outside," that is, comprising events that occur before or after the main action begins or ends. In either case, the episodes served primarily an aesthetic

function, and could be altered or excluded without detracting from the main story. The difference between the poetic voices in classical and Renaissance epics lies in their representation, their importance in relation to the official voice, in the extent of their interaction, and in the community-building enterprise in which the poet involves them.

In Johnson's commentary on Milton, the invocations are relegated to the same status as the episodes in the classical epic:

the short digressions at the beginning of the third, seventh and ninth books might doubtless be spared but are superfluities so beautiful who would take them away? Or who does not wish that the author of the Iliad had gratified succeeding ages with a little knowledge of himself? Perhaps no passages are more frequently or more attentively read than those extrinsic paragraphs; and, since the end of poetry is pleasure, that cannot be unpoetical with which all are pleased. (Lives, Sel. Writings 418)

In Paradise Lost, the poet-narrator speaks around and through the poem's other voices, and makes his presence unmistakable in the four proems, as well as in his other commentaries and intrusions. At the same time, we hear him speak less confidently in the later invocations, and we hear less from him by the end of the poem. Despite the accusation that the poet-narrator has monopolized the poem, his own voice is dialogized, and he is in fact relieved of significant parts of the narration by other characters who recount their own stories in the classical episodes. As the proems are of much greater significance than Johnson allows, so too do the episodes of Paradise Lost constitute more than the extraneous and accidental part of the epic that they apparently do in the classics. Whereas the retrospective stories of Aeneas and Odysseus do not possess equal status to the primary narrations in the respective classical epics, Raphael's and Michael's narrations compete in importance with that of Milton's poet-narrator. Though Paradise Lost is also largely retrospective, the historical prophecy, presented by Michael on the hill of the Visions of God and not in the underworld, comes at the end of the poem, unlike

that in the Odyssey or Aeneid.²⁵ Moreover, Milton's tempered millenarian and political hopes are in the end presented as the subject, not only of a revelation, but of a dialogue between two speakers.

In discussing the dialectical nature of the poet-narrator's voice, I am not entirely relinquishing its authority, or denying that it serves in various ways as a "public voice." By privileging the poet-narrator's voice, the poem does both reflect and anticipate the development of a socio-political system based on hierarchically structured relationships, in which contributory elements nevertheless negotiate and engage in dialogue. The terms of authority prescribed by the classical epic tradition are invoked and challenged in Paradise Lost. Privilege becomes a function not primarily of the narrator's claim to inspiration--which the narrator of this poem in fact questions--but of the speaker's relationship to the poem's other voices with which he necessarily interacts. Admittedly, the exchanges and the representation of the poet-narrator's voice through the poem's other speakers are often not easily distinguishable from the poet-narrator's calculated engagement with self-presentation, which I will shortly be considering.

Voice and identity are constructs formed in reference to surrounding constructs and contexts, as Milton realized when his own voice was muted by the failed revolution. Language, rhetoric and representation through voice determine identity and status once the speaker is cut off from established forms of identity or centres of power inside or outside of the poem. The abandonment of the drama for the epic narrative--traditionally controlled by a single omniscient voice--is an expression of this reaction to the recent past. In the ten-book epic, the tempering of the narrative voice through the inclusion of various interpreters, whose presence is made even more apparent in the later twelve book epic, is, in turn, indicative of the attempt to lay the pattern for a more democratic or dialectical social order. The poet-narrator's public voice is authoritative and in

various ways authorial. However, the author is himself historically burdened and determined by conflicting socio-political and literary codes that inform self-definition and representation. At the same time, the act of self-representation, which takes place in but is not confined to language, shapes and conditions the coding.²⁶

The inadequacies of language--the process of speech--even, or especially, that in the lofty style, are particularly evident in the lyrical moments of the poem. The narrator's awareness of the distinction between name and signification in the third poem, in which he invokes the "Voice divine," opens into a highly self-conscious moment. Yet the partial song of the mortal voice, the Orphic voice, is endangered by the presumptuousness of the narrator and by the discord that surrounds him:

But drive far off the barbarous dissonance
Of *Bacchus* and his Revellers, the Race
Of that wild Rout that tore the *Thracian* Bard
In *Rhodope*, where Woods and Rocks had Ears
To rapture, till the savage clamor drown'd
Both Harp and Voice. (7.32-7)

The barbarous dissonance is a product both of the language of the poet-narrator, and of the historical political conditions to which his style is answerable and from which it deviates. The reference in The Ready and Easy Way to the royal pamphleteers "diabolically creeping out of thir holes, thir hell"--pamphleteers whom Milton identifies as the "tigers of Bacchus...inspir'd with nothing holier than Venereal pox" (7.452-3)--provides one possible gloss for Bacchus and his Revellers. In this case, Milton's poetic language imitates not only the royalist bacchic confusion, but as well the "language of [the pamphleteers'] infernal pamphlets" used to malign the poet-revolutionary himself.

The Privileged Voice

The appropriation, of course, works the other way as well. In the fourth proem, the poet-narrator acknowledges his recontextualization of the traditionally heroic subject matter. He proposes to replace the descriptions of epic wars and battles--the kind that fill the classics, and ironically, book 6 of Paradise Lost--with illustrations of "the better fortitude / Of Patience and Heroic Martyrdom / Unsung." But the proem makes an even more significant statement about voice. The fourth proem is first of all the only one of the four that is not an invocation. We are led to believe that the voices of the Muse and the poet have already merged. Yet the threat of monologism remains, and inspires thoughts of unreliability, even meaninglessness:

Mee of these

Nor skill'd nor studious, higher Argument

Remains, sufficient of itself to raise

That name, unless an age too late, or cold

Climate, or years damp my intended wing

Deprest; and much they may, if all be mine,

Not Hers who brings it nightly to my Ear. (9.41-7)

The loss of control that results from the inability to speak is not the poet-narrator's primary concern. He is more threatened by the disempowering of voice that results, paradoxically, from the projection of a single perspective, or from the possibility of failed dialogue that would otherwise have made him less vulnerable to the identified external conditions--"an age too late, or cold / Climate, or years."²⁷

The kind of authority that the poet-narrator achieves becomes at times difficult to detect when it moves us without provoking the resistance we otherwise experience in reference to an omnipresent voice. The narrator moves between moments of acute self-consciousness and anonymity. Yet anonymity or the displacement of identity, in turn, calls attention to the identity that has been displaced. Milton's very mastery consists in

the denial and deconstruction of his own mastery. We cannot ignore the fact that it is the poet-narrator who ultimately hides behind the mask of the other, while in some way creating and orchestrating the voices of the various interpreters--the "mouthpieces" (Cyr 309), and permitting them to speak. In the seventeenth century, toleration and democratic representation were allowed, after all, only insofar as the government determined. In the poem, then, the demarkations between the voices are often blurred. The primary speaker, moreover, intrudes unexpectedly throughout, giving the impression of ubiquity.

But it is the absence or silence that particularly implicates him, if we trust Barthes, or Booth who argues for the complete artificiality of authorial objectivity or impersonality. Direct addresses to the reader, obstructive commentary, shifts in point of view among the characters, inside views, the presentation of reliable statements by dramatized characters are all suspect and testify to the author's manipulating presence. "But why stop here," Booth asks again: "the author is present in every speech given by any character who has had conferred upon him, in whatever manner, the badge of reliability" (18). But why stop here? Every recognizably personal touch, distinctive literary allusion, metaphor and symbol becomes for Booth a sign of evaluation. Even the choice to expunge the authorial voice completely betrays a decision and an authorial voice (20).

Charles' staged and monopolized parliamentary debates, which I will examine in chapter 4, and the government-controlled conversations proposed in the Hobbesian commonwealth offer two seventeenth-century examples of the invocation and appropriation of multivocality for specific political purposes. The prevention of confusion and war is achieved through the (re)alignment of signifier and signified, Hobbes announces in Leviathan, and through "conversation"--"people keeping company with one another":

But the most noble and profitable invention of all other, was that of *speech*, consisting of *names* or *appellations*, and their connection; whereby men register their thoughts, recall them when they are past, and also declare them one to another for mutual utility and conversation; without which there had been amongst men neither commonwealth, nor society, nor contract, nor peace, no more than amongst lions, bears, and wolves. (4. 140-1)

In Hobbes' Leviathan, everyone speaks, but everyone speaks the same tongue; there is no allowance for dissent, that is, for refusing to participate in the "conversation" conducted by the civil state at the expense of the individual voice. While Milton attributed the fall of Babel to Nimrod's attempt to impose a stifling unity and control the native language, Hobbes, by contrast, laments the erasure of that original common language that made conversation and, thereby, political control possible:

But all this language gotten and augmented by Adam and his posterity, was again lost at the Tower of Babel, when, by the hand of God, every man was stricken, for his rebellion, with an oblivion of his former language.

(4.141)

There is no linguistic *felix culpa* or Pentecost for Hobbes. Society can only try to recover a common language or conversation, one that Milton would associate with the act of reconstructing the tower of Babel. That any breach or disruption of the conversation is defined as an act of rebellion and treason against the establishment suggests that the conversation is ultimately subject to the control of the sovereign, "the soul of the commonwealth" (21. 202), which is the unnamed King Nimrod in Hobbes's Leviathan.

In reference to any "multivocal" text, then, we must ask how the chorus of voices is actually orchestrated. That is, an author may presume to let others tell their own stories, but there remains the issue of the legitimacy of this democratic constitution. Is there a controlling, constituting agent behind the conversation, and what

is the extent of his control?²⁸ Milton, we could say on one level, both manipulates understanding and response, and actually inscribes his intended readers--the fit though few--into the text. By including numerous perspectives and subjectivities in the form of narrative voices, the author is in the end composing texts that are no more open than the classical works which were mediated entirely by a solitary speaker.

Milton's attempt at self-justification in the Apology, for example, prompts a distinction between the authorial voice and that of the Confuter--the Babler--(Hall) which the author impersonates in the act of ventriloquization: "he who was there *personated*, was only the *Remonstrant*; the author is ever distinguished from the person he introduces" (1.880). Jonathan Goldberg remarks on the artificiality of this distinction between the voices: "such a 'distinction' of person from the personated, as quotation-within-quotation suggests, with its ability to slide away from the stabilization of the referent, is a virtual impossibility" ("Dating Milton" 213).

The kind of approach to the text that recognized the tyranny of the narrative voice could certainly uncover the contradictions and tensions that would otherwise be ignored in a "public" text from which the author is seen to distribute his power, or to detach himself. However, it does not account ultimately for the fact that the author, a non-autonomous being, is largely determined by cultural influences which are as much resistant to textualization as they inform it, and are subject to it. The formation of an authorial voice is achieved not at the expense of, but in reference to a literary and a socio-historical context, and in the case of Paradise Lost, a period of dissent which the poem echoes in various ways. As the most belated of all epics, Paradise Lost exploits its disrelation to a contemporary setting as a means of assuring its sacred subject (Guillory 145). If the failure of this project is a poetic success, then it is precisely out of such a "failure" deeply rooted in an extrapoetic defeat that the various voices, including the poet-narrator's own dialogized voice, emerge.

The disappearance of the omniscient, controlling narrative voice that comments on the lives of all characters and knows their secrets coincided with the breakdown of colonialism, Mascia-Lees announces. Appropriation is inevitable under colonialism, though the effects of colonialism on language are never entirely absolute, as seen in Wilkins' "An Essay towards a Real Character and a Philosophical Language." Language and the process of history ultimately evade closure, and the differences in cultures and languages leave their traces. That aside, it is necessary to remind ourselves that colonialism is not a dead issue; it remains alive and well in racial, cultural, economic, political and gender struggles. And it remains a crucial concern in literary studies, and in critical literary approaches, no matter how liberal the attitude toward language, and the play of voices and signification.

If we choose to argue for the complete autonomy and equality among all the represented voices of the poem, the results differ little. Tyranny, the insolence of a despot, and unchecked democracy--the insolence of the unbridled commonality--both lead to anarchy, Milton, like Herodotus, reminds us. A more contemporary critical analogue needs to be addressed here as well. The modernist and postmodern transformation of fiction is characteristically multivocal and encouraging of ambivalence, ambiguity and multiplicity. The resulting equalization of voice that denies the existence of a hierarchy of discourse has become socially and politically oppressive rather than liberating. Such readings ignore or obscure exploitation and power differentials, and offer no ground for fighting domination and effecting change, or at least addressing the need and possibility thereof (Mascia-Lees 29).

The controlling voice does ventriloquize:²⁹ it reconstitutes and at once disempowers the represented voices, no matter how eloquently, experimentally or sympathetically it attempts to speak for the other. The appropriation is, of course, most dangerous and damaging when the others are the politically oppressed or culturally different. In this study, I will investigate further how the official voice and hierarchy of

discourse have been represented, and then discuss the imaginative possibility of conversation among the represented textual and nontextual voices. It seems at one level that the acknowledgment of the continued existence of power differential among voices--marking a difference not in the kind but the degree of persuasiveness--is a condition for effecting change, in a way that the denial of such variances cannot be.

Part of the answer, therefore, lies in invoking that hierarchy, and then in ensuring reciprocity in terms of how the constituting elements affect each other. My intention is to propose, as Milton did, a highly critical and self-conscious forum for exchange which takes into account the manner, methods and motivations behind its orchestration of voice, insofar as that is possible. Language, which demands compromise on the part of the user or author, and is itself an agent of appropriation, provides the medium for exchange, as well as for appropriation and exclusion.

Yet Milton himself continually deconstructs one hierarchy of discourse in his writings, only to establish another in its place. Can it really be argued, then, that he is interested in change or exchange, poetic or extrapoetic? Yes, if we acknowledge Milton's distinctions between the constructions of hierarchy and types of authority. If his poems are, on the one hand, concerned with the challenging and relinquishing of authority, they are, on the other hand, deeply involved in the representation and justification of an alternative kind of political arrangement. The narration of the war in heaven and the creation account by the divine interpreter Raphael inspires Adam's relation of his own creation story. Out of the dialogue between God and the Son, which elevated the latter on the basis of merit, the rebellion of one-third of the angels is precipitated. In reaction to the rebellion, characters like Abdiel find a voice and propose a dynamic unification that redefines their state: "how far from thought / To make us less, bent rather to exalt / Our happy state under one Head more near / United" (5.828-31). Similarly, Eve, who has the last word in the poem (12.609-23)--the narrator's description of the departure from Eden excluded--is born out of the dialogue between God and Adam. Milton's invoked

hierarchies of discourse, which I will consider in more detail in chapters 3 and 4, encourage individual expression.

A literary or socio-historical consciousness as much empowers as impairs the expression of voice. If, as Webber argues, the seventeenth-century cosmic personality probably gave rise to the future omniscient first-person author, then this same dramatized self-representation contained within it the seeds of its own undoing. As every discourse is itself a part of a larger discursive complex, so is the personal voice defined through its dialogue with an other. In Paradise Lost, there are a number of conversations taking place, despite and because of the overt presence of a primary narrative voice or voices, and despite the lofty style. It is these conversations between the speakers in the poem that connect the oral histories of the individual speakers to the narrative contexts that are established, and to each other.

Leslie Brisman argues that the conversational mode itself--which comforts by imitating human discourse--is sacrificed for the higher mode in the poem:

Conversation is the mode of antihierarchic equality, but in an epic equality does not stand a chance. Milton writes with "answerable style," answerable to his high argument and therefore necessarily above equivocation about authority of voice and above prosaic equity of sign and signification. (223)

There is, as we have seen, however, a tension between signified and signifier in the poem. Both are determined, moreover, by context, as is the authority of the "authorial" voice. Brisman's critical reading, like Bakhtin's analysis of the classical epic, does not account for the linguistic range of voices in the multigenre poem, or for the dialogized speeches of the individual speakers. Communication by and between the poet-narrator, the muse and the other speakers depends ultimately on accommodation and condescension, and on discursive reasoning--expression and interaction through the process of speech--which all assume a difference between signified and signifier.

Notes

¹The vital interaction between the oral tradition and print technology is, nevertheless, sustained in the seventeenth century. In fact, rather than displacing the oral tradition, print technology perpetuated the other through the publication of songs and ballads McKeon (51).

²For a commentary on the threatened position of Latin by the vernacular tongues, and its decline as a living language, see John Steadman's The Hill and the Labyrinth, 90ff.

³Later in this chapter, I challenge the claim made by Mascia-Less, Sharpe, and Cohen in "The Postmodern Turn in Anthropology" that the disappearance of the controlling narrative voice coincided with the breakdown of colonialism.

⁴Shelley claims in the Defence that "no nation or religion can supercede any other without incorporating into itself a portion of that which it supercedes" (496). Kenneth Burke contemporizes the proposition: "The role of the opposition is by no means negligible in the shaping of society. The victory of one "principle" in history is usually not the vanquishing, but the partial incorporation, of another" (Counter-Statement 71). Also see Greenblatt (9).

⁵Belsey discusses the promotion of the plain style and the mastery of language by the Royal Society (13).

⁶D.C. Allen refers to Milton's opposition to the methods of the philologists (7).

⁷Steadman, in turn, contrasts the philosophies of Agrippa, Montaigne, Pierre Charron and Jean-Pierre Camus to those of William Chillingworth, John Wilkins, Robert Boyle, Locke and Newton, who attempted to establish a middle ground between uncertainty and absolute certitude, the kind that would be proposed by Hobbes, as seen in the first epigraph. Kahn in Rhetoric, Prudence and Skepticism characterizes the difference between deconstruction and humanist skeptical pragmatism which ultimately transcends the epistemological dilemma (26).

⁸The threat of linguistic mutability is discussed by Thomas Green in The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry, 5ff. The effects of the "epistemological crisis" on language are considered by Steadman, 126-8. Milton mediates between an attraction to etymology--the natural language identified in The Art of Logic (8.294)--and to word play for which he was reprimanded by eighteenth-century commentators.

⁹Nimrod's boldness is featured in Milton's own poetic feats in Addison's early tribute to the poet: "he upward springs, and tow'ring high / Spurns the dull province of mortality" (1.25-6).

¹⁰The relationship of the voice to its echo is like that of the etymon to the current usage of the word (Hollander 63).

¹¹Lewalski discusses Paradise Lost as a multi-genre text in Paradise Lost and the Rhetoric of Literary Forms.

¹²Milton invokes but does not specifically endorse the Aristotelian preference in Samson Agonistes.

¹³Multiple narrative voices are not accommodated to the extent that they are in Paradise Lost in the uncompromisingly nationalistic works of epic proportion in the Renaissance which include Camoens' early Renaissance epic The Lusiads, the chivalric romance Orlando Furioso by Ariosto, Tasso's historical romance Jerusalem Delivered, and Spenser's The Faerie Queene. Paradise Lost anticipates the multivocal novel and the much democratized "epic" The Ring and the Book.

¹⁴For a discussion of the autobiographical digressions in the prose pamphlets, and Milton's creation of a sense of authority in the early stages of his writing career, see chapter 5 of John Guillory's Poetic Authority.

¹⁵Delany observes that enough autobiographical passages can be extracted from Milton's writings to fill a substantial book--see J.S. Diekhoff's Milton on Himself. The critic insists that Milton always used his self-revelations as aids to the fulfillment of some other aesthetic or controversial end. He never chose to write a complete and independent autobiography. By interweaving personal commentaries with other aesthetic or controversial matters, Milton, however, makes a crucial statement about himself and the act of self-formation: he emphasizes the importance of the relationship between the personal and political and their reciprocity. Delany assumes that the two ought to be severed, and decides not to treat Milton's autobiographical writings in his analysis because: "the problem of truth or sincerity in autobiography becomes hopelessly confused when an autobiographical statement is inextricably linked to some larger and extraneous aesthetic design, and the critic finds himself enmeshed in such

insoluble questions as the precise degree of identification between Milton and the hero of Samson Agonistes" (2-3).

¹⁶See Aers and Kress 293-4. In chapter 4 will offer various examples of how Milton draws other voices into his texts to imply consensus.

¹⁷Michael, who is equally moved by the account he narrates (11.453), offers a complementary post-lapsarian narrative that is also subjective.

¹⁸Hill draws a parallel between heavenly and worldly history: "The War in Heaven and the Fall of Man were not different in kind from the historical events recorded in Books XI and XII. Events which occur in time--those revealed or related by Michael, classical legends or modern English history--are examples of the archetypal happenings in heaven and hell before history began" (Milton 344)

¹⁹For Milton's commentary on Buckingham's history and relations with the King see Eikonoklastes 3.351-2.

²⁰The dialogues of the poet-narrator and Adam with their respective addressees are implied by each speaker's acknowledgment of his limited understanding, the tentativeness of his language, and by the complex characterization of the addressee as a sign for an imageless signified.

²¹Remembering and Repeating 54-5.

²²This verse is spoken by Prometheus and addressed to Zeus in Aeschylus' Prometheus Unbound 944.

²³Kerrigan in Prophetic Milton claims that though the poem begins with a dialogue between two narrative voices, they merge throughout the poem (140-2).

²⁴Bal distinguishes between the narrator and focalizer (118). Nevertheless, even description involves an element of perception and subjectivity.

²⁵In the Luciads, the prophecy of Portugal's future is revealed to Vasco da Gama by Venus from a castle high on a hill. The epic hero is shown how Albuquerque, Sampoyo, Noronia and others complete the conquest of Asia for their country.

²⁶If as Joan Webber explains in The Eloquent I, the Anglican writer turns himself into art whereby he becomes fully realized, since the world is the art of God, and the Puritan writer turns art toward life, using it for the benefit of life, then Milton's method of self-representation makes him both Anglican and Puritan in Webber's terms.

²⁷Kerrigan in Prophetic Milton lists explanations of the phrase "an age too late," that include political explanations (78-80).

²⁸Maurice Blanchot in "L'Absence de livre" distinguishes between the narratorial voice and the narrative voice, only to reveal the artificiality of that distinction and the control achieved by the latter. The former is the voice of a subject recounting something, remembering an event or a historical sequence, knowing who and where he is and what he is talking about. The latter is a neutral voice that utters the work from the "placeless place" where the work is silent. It is at once nowhere and ubiquitous, and its ghost-like presence haunts the narratorial text to prevent closure.

²⁹Coleridge refers to Milton to justify his own ventriloquism: "I regard truth as a divine ventriloquist: I care not from whose mouth the sounds are supposed to proceed, if only the words are audible and intelligible. 'Albeit, I must confess to be half in doubt, whether I should bring it forth or no, it being so contrary to the eye of the world, and the world so potent in most men's hearts, that I shall endanger either not to be regarded or not to be understood.' MILTON: Reason of Church Government" (BL 1.164).

Chapter III

CENSORSHIP, AUTHORITY AND THE IDOLATRY OF VOICE AND IMAGE

The deeds themselves, though mute [speak] loud the doer. (Milton,
Samson Agonistes)

The ultimate subversion (contra-censorship) does not necessarily consist in saying what shocks public opinion, morality, the law, the police, but in inventing a paradoxical (pure of *doxa*) discourse: *invention* (and not provocation) is a revolutionary act: it cannot be accomplished other than in setting up a new language.... It is in having invented a vast discourse founded in its own repetitions (and not those of others), paid out in details, surprises, voyages, menus, portraits, configurations, proper nouns, etc.: in short, contra-censorship, from the forbidden, becomes novelistic. (Roland Barthes, Sade/Fourier/Loyola)

He dug the soil in rows,
imposed himself with shovels.

He asserted
into the furrows, I
am not random.

The ground

replied with aphorisms:

a tree-sprout, a nameless

weed, words

he couldn't understand. (Margaret Atwood, "Progressive Insanities of a Pioneer")

We can now recognize that the fate of the soul is the fate of the social order; that if the spirit within us withers, so too will all the world we build about us. Literally so. What, after all, is the ecological crisis that now captures so much belated attention but the inevitable extroversion of a blighted psyche? Like inside, like outside. In the eleventh hour, the very physical environment suddenly looms up before us as the outward mirror of our inner condition, for many the first discernible symptom of advanced disease within. (Roszak, Where the Wasteland Ends)

Introduction:

The ecological metaphor

Having begun to consider in the first two chapters the rhetoric of authority and hierarchy in Milton's texts--a rhetoric self-consciously employed by Raphael, Satan and the poet-narrator in Paradise Lost--I will move in a slightly different direction to address the relationship between the narrative voices in terms of an alternative political model that the poem offers in its representation of nature and the myth of the creation. "Biology is just less important to Milton than hierarchy, than 'greater' or 'lesser,'" John Guillory explains ("Reading Gender" 72). In Paradise Lost, the account of the natural creation has political implications that involve the very issue of hierarchy. In

turn, the alternative systems of authority--including gender relationships, and the imaginative political communities Milton constructs--are modeled on his view of the creation and ordering of nature informed by the revolutionary Copernican view of the pluralistic universe. The questions of authority and the orchestration of voices in Paradise Lost can, then, be addressed in terms of an organic model of social development. The poem itself furnishes that (social) ecological metaphor which effectively illustrates both the view of polity Milton establishes, and the way that language works or meaning is conveyed.

To understand the inter-relationship of the constituents of any organic system, we must regard the parts in relation to the totality that they create. The individual parts operate in a collective expression. The sovereignty of the individual voice or of human expression must be protected without making the protectionism absolute. Nor can protectionism be absolutely denied. To do so would allow no means of determining or correcting cultural types. This kind of liberalism, originating from the liberal-democratic philosophy that had its roots in the seventeenth century, cannot accommodate systematic relationships.¹ It separates domains of experience and the private and public realms. It posits, furthermore--particularly in contemporary times--an adversarial and subversive relationship to nature.

The difference of each species much be acknowledged as significant, just as each voice must be granted partial claim to the truth. Ecology offers statements of unity in diversity, spontaneity and complementarity (Bookchin 60), as well as of intertextuality and democracy. Such statements, however, are historically conditioned. The medieval world view was hierarchical and hostile to reciprocity; it was represented by the scale of nature which upheld a vertical unity in the universe "from the Mushroom to the Angels." The contemporary construction, by contrast, speaks of a democratic relationship between all the parts of nature:

ecology recognizes no hierarchy on the level of the ecosystem. There are no "kings of the beasts" and no "lowly ants." These notions are the projections of our own social attitudes and relationships on the natural world. Virtually all that lives as part of the floral and faunal variety of an ecosystem plays its coequal role in maintaining the balance and integrity of the whole. (Bookchin 59-60)

Milton mediates between the two perceptions of (social) ecology by developing a dynamic hierarchy--modeled on his proposed commonwealth--whose constituents differ not in kind but degree from each other. Though the membership of the individual is equal in the community, it may not necessarily be equal in power, or in the case of voice, persuasiveness. Eve in Paradise Lost, for example, is equal to Adam in the democracy of grace and original righteousness, but below him in the hierarchy of creation.² The difference between the sexes is one of degree--biological divergence rather than of kind--internal *homology*. This subtle distinction reveals a close relationship between the genders in Paradise Lost, and marks a shift from the classical and Renaissance construction of gender (Guillory 70).

For Milton there are dominant species in nature, as there are controlling voices in society. Of course there are also perversions and aberrations in nature. Because it has a potential for excessive growth (cacophony), and for disproportions (8.26-8), nature cannot be defined in terms of a whole or coherent construct, nor as one consisting simply of contrarities. Instead, it is a forum for the dialectical play of its constituents. While Michael Lieb in The Dialectics of Creation defines dialects in terms of "systemic oppositions" (6), I am arguing that Milton's representation of nature and of voices in the end resists oppositions and absolutes. My account of the dynamics of the creation differs as well from Lieb's reading of Burke, whose definition of dialectic he refers to in developing his own (6). Burke himself, however, recognized that opposites break down

in their interplay and become dialectical (Counter-Statement 71; Grammar of Motives 403).

As he disparaged the methods of the philologists, so Milton reacted against attempts to control nature, including the control achieved through scientific interpretation.³ The poet addresses instead the dynamic relationship between its constituents. On what basis domination in nature or in society and politics is justified becomes a crucial and problematic issue. While the election of representatives who speak for the masses is necessary, it is imperative to recognize that in nature the survival of the dominating species depends on the survival of the weaker, so that authority becomes a dialectical matter. The Elect, then, must first merit and seek election. The kind of political arrangement that is in turn constructed in imitation of nature, resembles what is paradoxically a dynamic reciprocal hierarchy.

The application of a social ecological metaphor to the multivocal text, necessitates first an examination of how the garden of Eden is characterized.⁴ The poet rejects the conventional representation of Eden as a *hortus conclusus*, a static tower of bliss, and offers instead a portrait of a fertile, regenerative garden which embodies "In narrow room Nature's whole wealth, yea more" (4.207). In book 4, the poet-narrator structures his account of Eden on the biblical Genesis story. He begins with a detailed description of the plant life, drawing attention to the varieties of vegetation. The flora and fauna are individually named (341-52). The most insignificant of life forms has a value equivalent to the greatest: "In these thy lowest works, yet these declare / Thy goodness beyond thought, and Power Divine" (5.158-9), Adam and Eve announce in their "unmeditated" orison, thus anticipating Raphael's description of the parsimonious emmet whose political significance I discussed in chapter I. The narrator then refers to the animals in the garden, and ends with a description of the newly created humanity whose differences are also outlined (205-324). At the same time, the interaction of Adam and Eve with the remainder of creation anticipates and imitates their own union:

they led the Vine

To wed her Elm; she spous'd about him twines

Her marriageable arms, and with her brings

Her down th'adopted Clusters, to adorn

His barren leaves. (5.215-19)

Gardening includes naming the flowers, animals and human inhabitants of Eden.

Edenic language is characterized in part by the self-contained significance of the individual name or word. Differences, then, are accommodated in the ecological, theological, political and linguistic contexts that the garden represents. Each animal, for example, receives its name from Adam who understands their individual natures (8.352-3). At the same time, though each kind of animal serves a particular function and was created at a particular moment during the six days of creation, they form a collective in the scale of nature.

Likewise, the significance of the single words is contingent on context. Milton, by repeating the words "wanton," "wild," "erroneous," "eccentric," "voluble," and "luxurious" in both a prelapsarian and post-lapsarian sense, makes us aware of their individual, even etymological, significances, as well as of the importance of language as system (*langue*). Language, moreover, develops in reference to the systematic creation of nature, so that, for example, similes arise on the third day, references to things crowd the fifth, and by the sixth, we reach into Adam and Eve's consciousness with all its attendant warnings (Broadbent 238-42). The formation of human consciousness and voice is explored much more extensively in book 8 in which Adam narrates his creation story.

Entering Eden, Satan violates the garden just as his oratory perverts Edenic language by rupturing sign and signified, image and object. Moreover, his gaze constructs an obsolete Ptolemaic view of a centralized earth (9.99-113), and, as we have seen, creates a *hortus conclusus* out of Eden. The devil climbs into the garden as a

hunter, as "a prowling wolf / Whom hunger drives to seek new haunt for prey" (4.183-4). At this point, Milton anticipates the tyranny of the mighty hunter Nimrod, who causes the confusion of language and represses the post-lapsarian pastoral society that had been organized into familial and tribal groups. Thereafter, by adopting the various animal guises, "as their shape serv'd best his end / Nearer to view his prey" (398-99), the devil perverts "their Nature" for his own intents (395-410). In doing so, Satan, the first "Artificer of fraud" moves down the scale of nature until he images in the end the serpent itself. Satan is, however, inferior to the serpents which Raphael describes as originally "Wondrous in length and corpulence involv'd / Their Snaky folds, and added wings" (7.488-9).

The violation and enclosing of Eden leads to the fall which implicates and reflects as well the corruption of the social and political orders "outside" the poem. The involvement of these systems is suggested by Milton's decision in the poem not to restrict the consequences of the fall to the sublunary heavens only which would have proclaimed their untouchability.⁵ He chooses instead to indicate the universal effects of the fall by describing its impact on the whole ecosystem--a microcosm of the universe. Through the fall, the ecosystem is disrupted, and becomes the scene of what the poet-narrator calls "fierce antipathy":

Beast now with Beast 'gan war, and Fowl with Fowl,
 And Fish with Fish; to graze the Herb all leaving,
 Devour'd each other; nor stood much in awe
 Of Man, but fled him, or with count'nance grim
 Glar'd on him passing. (10.710-14)

The uniqueness and difference among the animals is obscured at the same time that it is intensified, in the way that Eve's relationship to Adam also changes after their transgression. Arriving to pronounce the judgment in book 10, the Son mercifully clothes Adam and Eve "with Skins of Beasts, or slain, / Or as the Snake with youthful

Coat repaid" (217-8). The hunted now more tragically than triumphantly bear the seals of the hunter. The skin is an emblem of their new antithetical connection with the animal world, just as their language becomes a sign of their association with Satan.

The violation of the pastoral continues as Michael invites Adam to behold a field, "Part arable and tilth" where the murder of Abel by Cain, "a sweaty Reaper [who] from his Tillage brought / First-Fruits" (11.434-5) takes place. Michael explains that the "bloody Fact" was committed out of envy for Abel's favour from heaven; Cain is unwilling to accept the terms of his brother's relationship to God. The crime anticipates the wars which turn the field--the one first defiled by Satan (4.186)--into a military battleground. The cities "with lofty Gates and Tow'rs" are ravaged:

One way a Band select from forage drives
 A herd of Beeves, fair Oxen and fair Kine
 From a fat Meadow ground; or fleecy Flock,
 Ewes and thir bleating Lambs over the Plain,
 Thir Booty; scarce with Life the Shepherds fly,
 But call in aid, which makes a bloody Fray;
 With cruel Tournament the Squadrons join;
 Where Cattle pastur'd late, now scatter'd lies
 With Carcasses and Arms th'ensanguin'd Field
 Deserted. (11.646-655)

The clamour and confusion of the cruel Tournaments are reminiscent of the war in heaven, and confirm that the earth is a shadow of heaven "and things therein / Each to the other like" (5.575-6). Book 11 appropriately concludes with the prediction of Eden's destruction (829-39). The pastoral and the eco systems are divinely sanctioned and ordained, but humanity is responsible for their maintenance: "God attributes to place / No sanctity, if none be thither brought / By Men who there frequent, or therein dwell"

(836-8). The act of iconoclasm, whereby Eden is transformed into a wasteland by God, is provoked by humanity's own irreverence for the place or image.

There is a close connection between generation, fertility, "fruitfulness" and voice that is contained in the Renaissance term "conversation." The word "conversation" appears most often when Adam is expressing to God his unsatisfying communication with the animals, and consequently, his desire for a consort. Milton speaks of the "chiefest and noblest end of marriage" as "a meet and happy conversation" (The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce 2.246). Through conversation, the seed of Eve becomes the Word that is propagated through the speech, and democratized by the poem's various interpreters. Georgia Christopher in Milton and the Science of the Saints describes God as a character whose speech is a unity interpreted by a multiplicity of creaturely responses (60), responses that include the impotent Satan's perversion of the 'Word' which he consistently misquotes and finally denies altogether.

The field becomes after the fall a moral and allegorical landscape of a different kind. At the end of book 10, the tears of the penitent couple water the ground, as dialogue is restored. However, the land will produce "weed, words" (Atwood 18): "the Field / To labour calls us now with sweat impos'd / Though after sleepless night" (PL 11.171-3). Direct communication with either God, angel, humanity or nature is no longer possible. Eden is a transformed paradise within, making *internal* dialogue a prerequisite to and part of the effort at communication and articulation.

Alternative and female voices

The application of this ecological-political metaphor and the part-whole dialectic which it offers, is particularly appropriate for explaining the construction and arrangement of voice in a fallen world, a world the poem reflects. We recognize first of all that each of the narrators begins his story by first acknowledging his difference

within the given yet fluctuating contexts. Difference is determined as well by the individual's relationship to God and the other characters, and through the speaker's relationship to the other interpreters, including the poet-narrator. However, there are various ways of perceiving the distinctions between the speakers, and neither the words of God nor of the other interpreters are absolute or all-encompassing, as language itself is not. The diverse stories in the poem are critiqued by the authoritative commentaries. However, just as sovereignty is held over subjects who may choose not to be ruled, so can the voices in the poem be heard both because and in spite of the poet-narrator's voice. Through their attempts at self-definition, the characters find a voice and create a space for themselves in the narrative, and at the same time alter the narrative structure. Subsequent speeches and accounts echo and rely on the previous, thereby emphasizing the importance of exchange. It is the means by which the alternative or lesser characters engage in collective self-fashioning, and express themselves in the hierarchy of discourse which they establish.

Like verbal expression, self-fashioning does not occur in isolation. How is self-fashioning possible, then, when individuals are denied access to the public sphere? The question has been asked in reference to a variety of muted individuals and groups, cultural and political minorities and in particular to women. As Joan Kelly-Gadol explains in "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" the newly established division between the public and personal sphere relegated females to the private sphere, thereby denying them a public voice. Cultural rituals, particularly marriage, provided a means for acquiring an identity, but it was one that ultimately only reconfirmed their relegation to the domestic sphere. A woman's experience of wider horizons than domesticity often came from identification with her husband's careers and interests--at best, a second-hand participation (Delany 158). Though it was not until the late seventeenth century that women began to express publicly sentiments that have been labeled truly feminist, an alternative medium for subjectivity was sought in writing, and expressed in what

Elaine Showalter, echoing Bakhtin, calls in "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness" "a double-voiced discourse." The impulse to create a coherent structure of selfhood on a suppressed and contradictory identity found expression in the literature of introspection, particularly the genre of autobiography.⁶

Milton's support of the bourgeoisie, as well as the male poet's "crimes against women" by textual deed and by intellectual and cultural association ought to have made him more unpopular among socialist and feminist critics. Yet critical analyses that do characterize Milton as politically conservative or as misogynist are themselves often ahistorical.⁷ Some Marxist and feminist critics have in fact found an ally in Milton for the political and cultural attitudes, and even the ambiguities, he espouses in his poetic representations of seventeenth-century society. Moreover, the poet-revolutionary, having been silenced by the failed revolution, was exiled to the private sphere, and thereby is aligned in various ways with the lesser voices he represents. Diane McColley in "Eve and the Arts of Eden," presents Eve as a speaking portrait of the artist. Eve performs a great many acts that Milton attributes to poetry and to himself as poet. Her dreams represent the function of the imagination, her songs, the legendary Arcadian origins of poetry, her temptation and fall, the abuse of poetry and divorce of verse from truth.

In Paradise Lost the poet-narrator plays with gender and the demarcation between the private and public voices by appropriating the female voice. He calls on the Holy Spirit--the artificially named and bisexual Urania who impregnates the vast abyss--to inspire him also:

Thou from the first
Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread
Dove-like satst brooding on the vast abyss
And mad'st it pregnant: What in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support. (1.19-23)

Later, of course, it is the Holy Spirit who provides the disciples with the ability to speak all tongues. The Word, like the language of the poet, must be democratized, and the voice speaking within the private sphere, dramatized. The psychological is the political. All voices must have representation if the collective and the conversation are to be justified.

Cut off from established forms of identity or centres of power, the individual finds a voice in language and artistic representation. Nevertheless, subjectivity emerges through the recognition of cultural difference and a shared social world, in which there is a sense of a being-for-otherness, and a variety of perspectives. Identity is shaped in reference to surrounding constructs, and locates itself in linear narrative or in the discursive "process of speech." Writing or self-inscription becomes a liminal act which makes the personal political, and suggests an effective connection between the private and public spheres. The muted groups in a dominant system create origins or literary genealogies for themselves, often making claims to inspiration or prophecy,⁸ as I will explain further in chapter 4 in reference to several voices in Paradise Regained. They also generate a symbolic language that participates both in their own reality, and in the shared reality engendered by the more powerful elements of society, elements that are continually challenged by political upheaval. The text then provides a forum for exchange, and invites examination of the manner, methods and motivations behind the orchestration of the collective and individual voices that recount the autobiographical histories.

In this chapter, I will examine the individual oral histories of the poem's characters who speak, intervene in and shape the dynamic ecological context and their narratives established by the poet-narrator, the angelic interpreters and Satan. I will as well consider the literary and political significance of the speeches and the dialogues between the autobiographers who echo each other, and the effects produced by the retrospective and anticipatory accounts as they interrupt the linear narrative. The

remembered and the prophetic stories do not merely suspend the historical process represented by the narrative; they provide us with a new means of understanding how we read and how we interpret history. The hybrid accounts offer us different vantage points from which to read historical events; but more than that, they actually change those events:

at least in the case of human actions and changes, to know an event by retrospection is categorically, not incidentally, different from knowing it by prediction or anticipation. It cannot even, in any strict sense, be called the "same" event, for in the former case the descriptions under which it is known are governed by a story to which it belongs, and there is no story of the future. (Mink 546)

By intervening in the narrative, the oral histories are both defined by the larger narrative context(s), and help define it. Our discursive and retrospective reading of history shapes our understanding of narrative; Barbara Hardy explains that "narrative, like lyric or dance, is not to be regarded as an aesthetic invention used by artists to control, manipulate and order experience, but as a primary act of mind transferred to art from life" (Mink 557). Ricoeur recommends that we consider not only the effect of history on constructions of narrative, but as well the reciprocal relationship between narrativity and temporality. Because it is interrupted by dialogue and shaped by retrospective and prophetic voices, the poetic narrative challenges linearity in narrative and in history or time itself (170). The act of intervention is at once a literary and political strategy for critiquing the hierarchy of discourse.

Inscribed Speeches

In their stories, the speakers communicate through verbal images. Inevitably we are dealing with voices inscribed on the page as written words. However, though

writing in an elevated style, Milton did choose to mark and play with the distinction between speech and narrative description in his highly dramatic poems:

Speeches in Milton's epics are remote from the syntax and vocabulary of everyday mid-seventeenth-century conversation, in so far as we may reasonably guess at those norms. We have, so far as I am aware, no direct evidence in the form of unmediated transcriptions of such dialogue, but it is, of course, absurd to imagine it to have been characterized by the sorts of traits we find in Milton. Modern oral modes of discourse--even quite structured kinds--are sharply differentiated from written modes: we may suppose that similar markers are contemporaneously obtained. Yet in the high incidence of short sentences, we have one formal differentiation, inscribed in the fabric of the poetry, of differences in discourse. Milton is not naturalistically simulating how men and women (and God and his angels, for that matter) speak: but he is formally marking off some parts of his poem as the (poetic, elevated, epic) representation of dialogue. (Corns 33)

Despite Brisman's comment that the conversational mode is sacrificed for the lofty style, oral modes of discourse are employed throughout the poem. Variations in word-order are used to represent thought becoming speech, as is the play of speech rhythms in the poem (Sherry 255).⁹

The use of colloquialisms, exclamations, expressions of an imperative, interrogative or declarative nature, and repeated and variant sound patterns heighten the verbal and dramatic quality of the poem. They serve to distinguish the narrative from the non-narrative passages of the poem. Very short sentences and sentences of less than ten syllables are much more a feature of the non-narrative passages (Corns 32). But more than that, they betray a distinct voice in the speeches, speeches that otherwise serve as much to conceal as reveal voices. The poet-narrator's announcement of his

change from elevated discourse to post-lapsarian speech is characterized by the "laconic audacity" (Ricks 36) of the introductory words "No more of talk where God or Angel Guest..." (9.1). Many other lines have the same directness: "Can it be death [to know]?" Satan asks about humanity's potential experience of the tree of knowledge (4.518). "If thou beest hee; But O how fall'n," is Satan's broken remark upon seeing the fallen Beelzebub (1.84). "See with what heat these Dogs of Hell advance" (10.616), God remarks after the successful temptation by Satan, Sin and Death.

The non-narrative sections of the poem are sharply distinguished by the high incidence of subordinate clauses which depend on other subordinate material rather than main clauses. Such complex structures permit "the representation of controversy, allow the expression of reservations, qualifications, explanations, and admit arguments to be pressed through skeins of subordination to ultimate conviction or confutation" (Corns 35-6). The discussion of issues in the poem thereby resembles that in the prose tracts. Enjambment and the narrative effects of word order (Ricks 41), which contribute to the text's "double linearity" (Bal 52),¹⁰ also add a prosaic quality to the poetry which, at the same time, resists linear readings. While poetry (*versus*) involves reflection and contains the idea of regular return, prose (*provorsa*) in contradistinction suggests a forward-directed movement and linear narrativity (Jakobson 25). In Milton's poem which conflates the effects of poetry and prose, voice and narrative description as well as cyclical and linear time again converge.

Part 1
The Oral Histories:

i:
Sin's story

Sin's story is an intertextual account of the creation of echoes, images of voice, and signs, of which she herself is one (2.760-1). The relation of her history is provoked by and at once interrupts the self-reflecting and controlling gaze of Satan. Upon viewing the image of himself, Satan becomes enamored by his creation--Satan loves Sin--and they engage in incest.¹¹ Sin begins her autobiography--which, like herself, is created out of rupture or rape, and which represents a break in the controlling narrative--with an acknowledgment of the dialectical relationship to her sinful "author" Satan. Yet her first question displays her reluctance to accept this difference: "Hast thou forgot me then, and do I seem / Now in thine eye so foul, once deem'd so fair / In Heav'n" (746-8), Sin asks Satan who fails to recognize her. The perceived difference is one she evades in the attempt to convince Satan of her individuality, that is, of her oneness with him: "Thou art my Father, thou my Author, thou / My being gav'st me; whom should I obey / But thee, whom follow?" (2.864-6). The words will later be echoed by the newly created Eve who recalls how God warned her away from her artificially constructed self-representation.

In recounting her history to Satan, Sin makes the first reference to the Narcissus myth in the poem: "full oft / Thyself in me thy perfect image viewing / Becam'st enamor'd" (764-5). The account she relates consists of intertextual voices that include those of the myths of Narcissus and of Scylla and Glaucus in the Metamorphoses, of which Sin's narrative is a demonic counterpart. The Ovidian story of Narcissus is prefaced by

an account of Cephisus' ravishment of Liriope who gives birth to Narcissus. Milton's Satan, who literally fathers and perpetuates narcissism, images Cephisus. In the Ovidian account there is as well an exchange in which Liriope asks Tiresias whether her son Narcissus will live to a ripe age. "Yes, if he does not come to know himself," is the response (3.347-8). In Paradise Lost, Satan also represents Narcissus. Having denied the changes within himself, Satan, upon meeting Sin, does not recognize this image of himself. Sin serves as the agent and the voice that draws him into an encounter with his other self, an encounter experienced by each character in the poem. Her story forces him to reconsider the "dire change / Befall'n" (820-1) them both, and to confront a part of his history that he has from the start been denying or rewriting. Moreover, by being introduced to the image of himself, Satan, like Narcissus, literally comes to know Death, the anti-creation of Satan and Sin.

In The Faerie Queene, the account of Error--to which Milton is also indebted for his episode of Sin, Death and Satan--includes a heavily allegorized description of the dragon. The dragon later reappears as the Blatant Beast, Chance, and Rumour who threatens the whole poetic enterprise. In book 1, Error vomits forth poison in the form of books and papers upon being attacked by Red Cross Knight (1.1.20).¹² In Paradise Lost, the den of Error and the scene of the perversion of language is hell--the womb and tomb of Sin. Sin breeds the yelling creatures that consume her, creatures that include Death who defies imaging. Penetrated by Satan, Sin, in turn, uses the fatal key, the "Sad instrument of all our woe" (872) to open the way for Death and Satan into confusion, chaos, and the wild abyss, "The Womb of nature and perhaps her Grave" (911) where the mixture of unruly elements remains unshaped by the Creator.

Sin's story is one of incest and an on-going rape that prevents her from leaving the caves of hell, the womb from which she never emerged. The snaky sorceress is initially described in terms of Ovid's Scylla. The hell hounds that surround Sin, as they do Scylla, torment Sin unceasingly through their noise, which, if disrupted, would turn

them back "into the Womb / And kennel there, yet there still bark'd and howl'd / Within unseen" (2.657-9). The hounds in the poem are her offspring, the product of an incestuous act, whereby Satan penetrated "the op'ning" (777) to the closed gates, for which Sin alone possessed the key. The word "womb" in the subsequent line is juxtaposed with "op'ning" to suggest a connection between the ravaging of hell and the rape of Sin.

Like the story of Narcissus, the myth of Scylla is rewritten in Sin's account of her origin. The images of birth and metamorphosis in the Ovidian story contribute to our understanding of Sin's perverse creation. The account describes the transformation of Scylla into a monstrous double-formed creature at the hands of the jealous Circe. One day as Scylla descended into a pool of water up to her waist, she witnessed the disfigurement of her loins by barking monsters which surrounded her. Not believing them to be part of her own person, she attempted in vain to drive them off. The virgin fights the urge to give birth. However, the desire to step outside the process of metamorphosis results in a more terrible metamorphosis. The wild beasts become the support for her truncated thighs and for the womb which emerges from the mass (14.62-72). Thereafter, Scylla, like Sin, becomes responsible for bringing death into the world.¹³

In Paradise Lost, the adapted story of Scylla is both an account of the birth of an imageless Death and of the echo which has no referent. Unlike Eve who is later created through dialogue, Sin, the product of Satan's monologue, cannot invent for herself an origin or language that might liberate her from her author. Like her offspring and like Echo who is also fated to haunt the caves, Sin is merely an image of voice, an echo, and a "sign / Portentous" (2.760-1). Nevertheless, she is at the same time a character who is, "in ways too numerous and closely layered to spell out, a sign" (Quilligan 92). Philip Gallagher suggests that Sin signifies the commandment "*noli me tangere!*" and is "the only sign of [the angels'] obedience left / Among so many signs of power and rule"

(4.428-9) (92). The rule, of course, is violated. Death, the result of the violation, becomes the sign of a sign, and is first identified by his mother: "I fled, and cri'd out *Death*; / Hell trembl'd at the hideous Name, and sigh'd / From all her Caves, and back resounded *Death* " (787-9). By providing the shapeless creature (2.667) with a name--appropriately echoed in the verses--the voice Sin gives birth to a language whose correspondence between word and signification is lost. The echo from the caves or wombs of hell continuously reenacts the birth and naming of Death. As the son and the image of the narcissistic Satan, Death, like Satan, seeks to overshadow and destroy its creators. A demonic parody of Narcissus who fed on his own image to the point of death, the infernal trinity consumes itself. Like the howling monsters which literally feed on the bowels and womb of their mother, Death would devour her completely, Sin realizes, but "he knows / His end with mine involved" (806-7).

In contrast to Gallagher's reading, it is possible to interpret Sin as a sign of rebellion, which is the meaning of the Hebrew word for Sin--*pesha*. Satan's incestuous affair with rebellion foreshadows that of the followers of Nimrod, the "rebel," who likewise create anarchy in their search for a name. Sin "opens" the way further into confusion which Satan, in turn, "penetrates." The "universal hubbub wild / Of stunning sounds and voices all confus'd" (951-2), anticipating the "hubbub strange" at Babel (12.60), is the afterbirth of the odious offspring created in Satan's image. As Sin's offspring torment her, so do the confused voices assault Satan's ear "With loudest vehemence" (953-4), and his attempts at revenge "recoil" (9.172) back upon him. Satan's encounter with "*Rumor next and Chance, / And Tumult and Confusion all imbroil'd, / And Discord with a thousand various mouths*" (965-7) in the Dantean intestines of hell recalls the swarming of assembled devils in Pandemonium prior to the council in hell (1.759-98). It also anticipates the noise of the war in heaven, and ultimately, the return of Satan to hell. In expectation of "high applause," Satan would ironically hear

from the "innumerable tongues / A dismal hiss, the sound / Of public scorn" (10.507-9).

ii:

Creating dialogue

In the presentation of his biblical-historical poem, Milton provides each character with the opportunity to serve as narrator. Milton too, then, was guilty of the charge levied against Sidney by Ben Jonson: he allows his characters to speak as well as himself. If each speaker as speaker represents a kind of authority, then the distinctions between the narrators in Paradise Lost derive from comparable distinctions between false and true kingship. Miner, who excludes the official narrative voice from his inquiry, goes on to announce that only God himself can be considered the "fully authoritative, truly omniscient narrator." God's narrative, would nevertheless pose some problems of reliability for the critic (Miner 9). Credibility is certainly contingent on the identity of the speaker. In the case of Paradise Lost, reliability is also at least in part dependent on the proximity of the speaker's words to Scripture. The broad definition of narrative reliability must include the Protestant sense of the assumed literalness of the Bible. On the other hand, God's crucial speech in book 3, which aggressively defends the free will of his creatures, has no biblical precedent. God's words are constantly appropriated by the other characters, who change, repeat or just echo them. The poem thereby establishes a basis for the comparison of the different voices.

While Satan fails to recognize his son, and Death does not know his father whom he images, their heavenly counterparts are fully self-conscious and other-conscious. "Only begotten Son" is God's first address in Paradise Lost. In his opening speech, God describes in unequivocal language, the nature of foreknowledge and free will, and his

disappointment with the creatures made in his own image who would choose to estrange themselves from him. However, when he first announces the sentence that will be conferred on humanity after the fall, he also speaks of mercy and redemption. The divine words of the sentence will be echoed and reinterpreted in various ways by the characters throughout the poem, and help characterize the speakers accordingly.

The narrator thereafter describes the Son as the substantial expression or image of God. Father and Son are not distinguishable until the latter addresses God, and repeats that part of the sentence most appropriately delivered by the voice of Mercy. At this moment, the dialogue becomes a seventeenth-century counterpart to the medieval Justice-Mercy allegory:¹⁴

O Father, gracious was that word which clos'd
Thy sovran sentence, that Man should find grace;
For which both Heav'n and Earth shall high extol
Thy praises. (3.144-7)

The Father's restorative words, which are commended by the Son, contrast with the defiant words of Satan, whom Death fails to recognize as his father when he accuses:

Art thou that Traitor Angel, art thou hee,
Who first broke peace in Heav'n and Faith, till then
Unbrok'n, and in proud rebellious arms
Drew after him the third part of Heav'n's Sons
Conjur'd against the highest. (2.689-93)

Denying their own dialectical nature, and failing to identify each other, Satan, Sin and Death constitute a trinity as Father, Son and Holy Spirit do not.

The distinction between birthright and merit, and the emphasis on the merited position of the Son in reference to God (3.309, 319) point to a difference between Son and Father. Milton's heretical anti-trinitarian stance, which paradoxically understands the differences of the personalities in their similarity, makes dialogue between the

members possible, and, as we find in the creation story, constructive. In the poem's genesis account, God represents himself as speaker and the Son as speech or the articulation of the Word (3.170): "thou my Word, begotten Son, by thee / This I perform, speak thou, and be it done" (7.163-4); "to what he spake / His Word, the Filial Godhead gave effect" (174-5). The act of creation depends on the correspondence between the divine idea and the medium through which it is expressed (557). In the biblical Genesis story, the Priestly source provides the following description:

Furthermore God said, Let us make man in our image according to our likenes, and let them rule over the fish of the sea, and over the foule of the heaven, and over the beastes, & over all the earth, and over everie thing that crepeth & moveth on the earth. (1:26)

The plural form of the name of God may represent a plural of majesty; Elohim traditionally did not take the singular form. On the other hand, the plural form might also imply a discussion between God and his heavenly court. For Milton, however, the embodiment of the great idea or foreconceit of creation is dependent on dialogue. In the poem there is no mistaking that it is a dialogue, and specifically between Father and Son:

th' Omnipotent

Eternal Father (For where is not hee
Present) thus to his Son audibly spake.

Let us make now Man in our image, Man
In our similitude, and let them rule
Over the Fish and Fowl of Sea and Air,
Beast of the Field, and over all the Earth,
And every creeping thing that creeps the ground. (516-23)

The product of the dialogue on the creation is another matter. The biblical Priestly source, primarily a narrative account, does not distinguish between the creation of man and woman. "Man" is humankind (1:27). However, the far more

dialogic Yahwistic account speaks of gender distinctions, and of the woman's secondary, derivative relationship to the image of God. By uniting the two biblical accounts, Calvin can point simultaneously to "the common worthiness of the whole of nature" that includes man as mankind, and to the creation of woman in the image of God, "though in the seconde degree" (Nyquist "Gynesis" 180). In Paradise Lost, the acts of God, as recounted by God, and the creation of male and female both appear simultaneous. However, in interpreting the event through the process of speech, Raphael describes first the creation of Adam, whom he addresses, and then the creation of Eve to which he briefly refers. The poem thereby conflates the Priestly with an abridged Yahwistic account in which dialogue both draws out and sustains the narrative.¹⁵

iii:

Eve's story

Voice and action which voice initiates, are contingent on the recognition and acknowledgment of difference, as Eve's story demonstrates. Eve's retrospective history is located in the middle of book 4, and thus, like the story of Sin, interrupts and defers the narrative of Satan's classical epic journey, to which the narrator returns at the conclusion of the book. The account is by no means separate from the context out of which it arises; Satan is of course the voyeur and audience, roles in which the fallen readers are implicated by their gazing.

At the same time, Eve's attempts at self-representation through voice and image-making resemble both those of Satan, and of the poet-narrator. Eve creates for herself a space within the narrative which she defines as her own. Her story comes unsolicited and is of her own making, while it also describes the experience of self-encounter, entailing initially a penetrating gaze at a reflection which she creates, though not consciously. It is not that dialogue is entirely evaded in her account, though Adam's and

certainly Satan's presence seems for a time to be a non-issue. Leaving the issue of narcissism aside for a moment, since most of the narrations in the poem consist of recounted experiences, some of the spontaneity associated with direct dialogue is inevitably lost. However, in its place is the conversation between past and present readings of events, in which each of the narrators engage. Eve by the end of the account becomes a judge of her past actions and perceptions.

After repeating the words by which Adam first identified her--words she will pronounce again at the end of her story--she recalls her experience upon first awaking. Eve remembers that a "murmuring sound / Of waters issu'd from a Cave and spread / Into a liquid Plain, then stood unmov'd / Pure as th'expanse of Heav'n" (453-6). The syntax of the verses suggests that it is the sound that issues from the cave and stands unmoved, thereby indicating the sterility of the sound, and anticipating Eve's experience of the echoes as well as the reflections which she reads uncritically and passively. The liquid plain and the sky appear identical; there is no reason for Eve to shift her line of vision from the plain to the sky, or away from the reflection she sees.

These descriptions of the scene connect the landscape to that in the Narcissus myth. The reference to the cave recalls the story of Echo, whose disembodied voice in the myth dwells in the lonely caves. If Eve images Narcissus in some ways, she voices Echo. Eve's words echo the experience of viewing the image, though the process of speech or narrative shatters the illusion of simultaneity:

As I bent down to look, just opposite
 A shape within the watery gleam appeared
 Bending to look on me: I started back,
 It started back, but pleased I soon returned
 Pleased it returned as soon with answering looks
 Of sympathy and love. (4.460-65)

difference--the awareness of various perspectives, and the impetus to effect change--has been momentarily denied in this private sphere. Image and model express the same desire in the same fashion. The imaging, which in a post-lapsarian context will be regarded as narcissism, should not be conceived "as simply visual, but as a representation activating various facilitations corresponding to the sonorous ones."¹⁶ The image becomes for Eve an acoustic mirror, one which responds with "answering looks" by which she for the first time both sees and hears herself. The actual identification, however, will require Adam's intervention.

Milton does not go quite as far as Ovid in completely eradicating all difference. Narcissus discovers for himself that the image he loves is himself. This image becomes for him an absolute. Eve, on the other hand, is told by the warning voice about the identity of the image she sees. By making her self-conscious, or by introducing her to subjectivity, the voice simultaneously distances Eve from herself. It compels her to acknowledge with "experient thought" that her experience is not absolute. The authority of the "fixt" eye or the gaze is undermined as voice takes precedence. Following the voice, as it requests (496), Eve becomes a kind of echo, but only to be shown that she is no echo. The voice also calls her an image (472), in order that she might learn to distinguish herself from the smooth wat'ry image which she must abandon, though reluctantly. Moreover, the voices of Adam and God call upon Eve to participate in dialogue, which is her actual origin, as we discover in Adam's retrospective account in book 8 (357-498). The relation of Eve's story before Adam's in the poem suggests the necessary education of Eve, as well as of the poet and reader, about the dialectical nature of the individual's creation, history and being, and about the "origination" of the individual voice from the collective with which it remains in dialogue.¹⁷

Subjectivity is from the very outset dependent upon the recognition of a distance separating the self from the other, an object whose loss is simultaneous with its

apprehension.¹⁸ The personal voice and sphere is as much informed and reformed by surrounding voices as it shapes the latter. Self-fashioning is prevented by narcissism, that is, by the projection of an image or facade that cannot withstand interrogation; inquiry, then, begins with self-consciousness. Subjectivity and the recognition of one's relative difference is a primary experience of each of the interpreters: Satan, Sin, the poet-narrator, Christ, Raphael, Eve, Adam, Raphael and Michael. The denial of difference ends the dialogue, and thereby, any possibility for self-expression.

Echoes of the myth of Narcissus are as evident in this account as in Sin's. Christine Froula and Janet Halley in particular address the story from this perspective by arguing that Eve's actions are implicated in vain desire, that she is "indoctrinated" into her own "identity," and that Eve is compelled to yield to the dominating Miltonic voice. In fact the colonization by the patriarchal authority is so successful that Eve, like Sin, literally becomes its voice (Froula 329; Halley 248), echoing the divine warning to abandon the smooth wat'ry image. "What there thou seest fair Creature is thyself" (4.468), Eve repeats now to Adam. The reflection is not of Eve, according to the voice; it *is* Eve, Halley announces, in agreement with Froula. The subsequent verses in the poem qualify this reading, however: "With thee it came and goes: but follow me, / And I will bring thee where no shadow stays / Thy coming" (469-71). If it is true that Eve is an image, it is also true that she is much more than that. Verse 469 distinguishes between "thee" and "it." In the subsequent line, "it" is placed in apposition to "shadow," which Eve both associates and dissociates from the image she first sees. If anything, the account indicates that Eve is more substantial than the disembodied voice of God, who invisibly leads her off, and more so at this point than Adam who had previously provided her with substantial Life, in body and name. Eve, as a substantial creation formed in dialogue, becomes the mother of life, whereas Sin, born in soliloquy, propagates the echo, shadow and the "shapes" of Death.

Eve becomes particularly aware of her corporeality not only when Adam tells her she is flesh and bone (as well as soul), but also at the moment when Adam touches her for the first time. Combining gentleness and firmness, Adam brings Eve to him again: "thy gentle hand / Seiz'd mine." Adam's treatment of Eve is not subtle, and does qualify what Nyquist identifies as her "voluntary submission" to the paternal voice ("Gynesis" 203). Yet at the same time, it cannot be called "a violent appropriation" (Halley 248). This is especially apparent when we compare the episode with Satan's relationship with Sin, who as an echo and image of Satan, cannot but submit to her author: "Whom should I obey / But thee, whom follow?" (2.865-6).

Catherine Belsey suggests that marriage in the Renaissance was perceived as a realm above the brutal market place (14). The space or private sphere that Eve creates for herself--one she wrongly believes to be uninhibited and autonomous--as she describes her initial encounter with Adam, is, however, constituted by and interconnected with the "public" world outside of it (Nyquist "Gynesis" 194). The relationship of the part to the collective is a crucial concern, if the collective is to be justified. Eve, then, must tell the story about her decision to enter into the contract with Adam; her own voice must be represented. In the oral autobiography, she describes her seemingly voluntary acceptance of Adam's hand, an act that corresponds with Milton's espousal of agreement in marriage as stated in The Christian Doctrine:

The first and most important point [in marriage] is the mutual consent of parties concerned, for there can be no love or good will, and therefore no marriage, between those whom mutual consent has not united. (6:368)

However, while the religious treatise presents the issue unequivocally, the poetic rendering does not. Here we must account not only for the paradoxical seizure by the gentle hand, but also for Eve's echoing of the two patriarchal voices to whose commands she submits, but which also make her aware of the dialectical nature of her being, as I have suggested.

The "conversation" in which Eve engages with the two voices, that of God and Adam, is not much of a dialogue, at least not in Eve's retrospective account. The two authoritative voices interrupt her self-encounter. "What could I do, / But follow straight" (475-6), Eve asks, though she then turns away to indicate the possibility of an alternative action. Yet she ends her account by acknowledging her submission, a seemingly unfortunate and antifeminist admission.¹⁹ The words of Adam, which she briefly echoes at the start of her history, have led her to compliance:

with that thy gentle hand

Seiz'd mine, I yielded, and from that time see

How beauty is excell'd by manly grace

And wisdom, which alone is truly fair. (4.488-91)

Sin's attractive graces (2.762) blinded Satan to her difference from himself and provoked the rape. Eve's sweet attractive Grace (4.298) is distinguished from Adam's contemplation and valor (297) by the poet-narrator, and now from "manly grace" by Eve herself. The yielding is an act of submission, but also speaks of the dialectics of the individual herself and of her relationship to the other. The experience is a liminal one that represents Eve disengaging from one role without having fully assumed the new one. The indeterminacy, however, does not necessarily suggest moral ambiguity.²⁰

Eve's voice is created through her acknowledgement of gender differentiation and a need to interpret her experience. Of course it cannot be denied that Eve has a lower position in the scale of nature than Adam. But Milton's hierarchy of creation does not qualify responsibility, nor impinge on freedom or worth; Adam and Eve are unequal, but equally free (4.294-6). Though they do not have the same relationship in their interaction with God or the angels, Adam and Eve speak almost an identical number of poetic verses before the fall. Moreover, in the above passage, the verse which describes Eve's submission (489) does not conclude with "yield" but with "see." Providing a hermetic reading of the passage, Stevie Davies argues that "The 'seizing' of Eve's hand

leads to her 'seeing' a higher truth than she had known before. She is rapt, or enraptured" (216). Just as speaking and listening are mutually dependent, so is understanding both subject to limitations and contingent on limitations, including the restriction of appetite, as Raphael later warns Adam (8.126-30). Redefining the terms of submission, Joseph Wittreich comments on the scene at the end of the poem, when Adam awakens Eve upon finding all "her spirits compos'd / To meek submission" (12.596-7):

the submission is less to a husband than to a fate that befalls Adam and Eve alike. It's submission to mutual cooperation, service and understanding - a selfless submission to that expression of love in accordance with the Blakean adage that the sublimest act is to put another before you. (106)

The act is even less one of submission than Wittreich claims, than the argument to book 12 alludes, or than Michael himself realizes. Adam does not in fact wake Eve; she is already awake, and goes on to silence Adam while speaking the last words of the poem.

After the fall, the double significance of "yield" for Eve becomes even more apparent. Eve responds to Adam's lamentation on death and on the corruption of womankind (10.845-909) by offering to die for him. The proposal to carry the sentence on her own head to save Adam's life inverts her initial narcissism. When the offer is rejected by Adam, who for the first time acknowledges his guilt, Eve proposes abstinence, which, she suggests stoically, must be realized through death or suicide (992-1006). Adam again denounces this submission to death and suggests a constructive use of their relationship. Rather than agreeing to yield to willful barrenness, Adam reminds Eve that it is only through their cooperation, their labour, that death will be overcome. As the boughs once yielded fruits (4.332-3), the earth yielded food (5.401), and the vines in Eden yielded nectar (5.428), so will Eve yield forth, though in labour, the "Fruit of [her] womb" (10.1053). Hereafter their submission and confession to God expressed in a renewed dialogue as prayer produces

what Christ calls the "first-fruits on Earth" (11.22) and the "Fruits of...pleasing savor" (26). The conversation that Eve proposed to end through abstinence must continue.

The example of the fallen Eve was often used as evidence for the argument that women ought to be confined to the domestic sphere, and "nat medle with matters of realmes or cities. Your own house is a cite great inough for you" (Jordan 193). In Paradise Lost, however, if the purpose of depicting the fall were to justify the relegation of women to the private sphere, then Adam, as the superior being, should not have fallen in the way he did by submitting to the voice of Eve (10.145-6). But if Eve ought not to be restricted to the study of "household good" (9.233), self-rule or complete independence in the public world is also not the answer. Eve is deceived by her claims to full autonomy in the way that Milton was duped by the prospect of a society or nation independent of government. Eve is of course taken from her private sphere soon after her creation. Her work in the garden does not differ considerably from Adam's labour prior to the fall. We are also led to believe that she receives the same education, though by a different medium. The division of labour and the creation of separate private and public spheres is, in the context of the poem, a product of the fall. Yet even after the fall, Eve is not cut off from the public world, to the surprise of Adam and the ignorance of Michael, as we discover at the end of the poem.

The suggestion that Eve is under the complete authority of Adam prior to the fall must be qualified by virtue of the fact that God's sentence subjects her to Adam's absolute control, to which she now submits unwillingly. In Genesis 3:16, the curse reads

Unto the woman he said, I wil greatly increase thy sorowes, & thy
conceptios. In sorowe shalt thou bring forth childre, and thy desire shal
be subject to thine housband, and he shal rule over thee.

In Paradise Lost, God declares to Eve:

Thy sorrow I will greatly multiply

By thy Conception, Children thou shalt bring
 In Sorrow forth, and to thy Husband's will

Thine shall submit, hee over thee shall rule. (10.193-6)

In the poem, "In Sorrow forth" modifies both the manner in which children are brought forth, and the nature of the subjection of woman to man. The sentence that is conferred redefines the nature of the conversation by compelling Eve to submit to her husband painfully and unconditionally. Post-lapsarian submission is coercive, and coercive claims have been made on that basis. Yet as woman must yield to man after the fall, so the latter loses his ability to engage in direct dialogue with God. He is also denied control over nature and over the fruits of his labour.

iv:

Adam's story

The lengthy episodes of the characters occasionally allow us to lose sight of the audience in the poem, particularly when exchanges between the listener and speaker are scarce. Nevertheless, dialogue in Paradise Lost does more than merely frame the speakers' individual narratives, as it does in the Canterbury Tales, for example. In the twelve-book edition of the poem, Milton creates more space and opportunity for Adam's speeches, and for dialogue generally, through the addition of books 8 and 12 in which Adam intervenes.

Adam creates his own private space within narrative through the relation of his retrospective (remembered) account. Memory, not documentation, is the recorder of history in Paradise Lost. Raphael fulfills Adam's request to know what was done "before [his] memory" (7.637) by relating the creation story. The angel's own account will be in turn "honour'd ever / With grateful Memory" (8.649-50), Adam responds at the end of book 8. Ricoeur explains that memory "repeats the course of events according to an

order that is the counterpart of time 'stretching-along' between a beginning and an end" (180). Repetition, however, is in the Heideggerian sense more than a reversal of future happenings: "it means the retrieval of our most basic potentialities inherited from our past in the form of personal fate and collective destiny" (Ricoeur 180). The act of memory, on which reading depends, is never linear, and therefore resists a successive reading of historical events.

In book 8, Adam establishes an affinity both with Raphael whose narrative preceded his, and with Eve whose story is complementary, not just oppositional to his own. His retrospective account follows hers in the chronological narrative, but precedes and includes Eve's in the biblical history that is recounted from memory by the poem's various speakers. As Adam follows Eve (508) in his creation account, so she would follow him (4.475-6). Adam gives birth to Eve, who assumes a substantial form when she hears the voice of God (8.486) and that of Adam (8.491-9), as she recalls in her own autobiography (4.467-88). In this section I will briefly discuss the dialogue between Adam and Raphael, and then concentrate on the creation of Eve through the conversation between Adam and God.

In her discussion of the conversation between Raphael and Adam in book 8, Barbara Lewalski concludes:

The dialogues with Raphael thus reinforce what Adam's first direct encounter with God taught him: that dialogue is the means to the happy resolution of difficulties, and that God himself honors human argument based upon right reason and true self-knowledge. The emphasis Adam places upon this dialogue in his autobiography indicates that he understands the importance of dialogue for the georgic and comedic life of Eden. (214)

Dialogue at this point and hereafter is as much responsible for the "happy resolution of difficulties" as it is for creating unresolvable tensions in the poem. Exchanges between

speakers reveal their differences, as well as the gaps in their knowledge, and their mutual need for conversation. Since Adam knows Eve's history, and Raphael knows Adam's, the real purpose of these discourses is delight in discourse for its own sake, according to one critic.²¹ However, while conversation in Paradise Lost certainly serves to delight (8.210-14), it also both teaches and moves the listener to speak which involves and leads to action. In the case of Adam's history, as in Eve's, the audience in the poem is largely ignorant of the details of the related events. Responding to Adam's offer to present his autobiography, Raphael explains that he has in fact little knowledge of humanity's creation, a comment that casts some doubt particularly on the completeness of the genesis story which he just finished recounting (7.519-547):

say therefore on;

For I that Day was absent, as befell,

Bound on a voyage uncouth and obscure,

Far on excursion toward the Gates of Hell. (228-31)

While God was ordering the chaos, Raphael was pursuing a spy, who was intent on mixing destruction with creation. Satan's voyeurism is thereby associated with anti-creation. Raphael's remark, nevertheless, confirms his own as well as Satan's absence on the sixth day of creation. As Eve's story in book 4 is not superfluous for Satan, who is in the audience as she recounts it, so is Adam's story not superfluous for Raphael.

Teaching is reciprocated and language serves as a social mediator, both in terms of how Adam images the Word externally, and how he communicates it verbally to a character of higher status. Each character is an image of voice, an acoustic mirror. Raphael remarks on how the divine image has been manifested in Adam both inwardly and outwardly: "Speaking or mute all comeliness and grace / Attends thee, and each word, each motion forms" (8.222-3). The words Adam speaks reveal their speaker's relationship to God; therefore, Raphael announces "we inquire / Gladly into the ways of God with Man: / For God we see hath honour'd thee, and set / On Man his equal Love: say

therefore on" (225-8). The angel ends his plea by commenting, "for I attend, / Pleas'd with thy words no less than thou with mine" (247-8).

The dialogue between Adam and Raphael, with which book 8 begins and ends, is suspended by Adam's retrospective narration. Still, the history is dialogic. Adam introduces his story by mentioning his expectation of a response from Raphael: "How subtly to detain thee I devise, / Inviting thee to hear while I relate, / Fond were it not in hope of thy reply" (207-9). Moreover, Adam's narrative consists of implied internal dialogues and of the conversations between himself and God. When we return to the framing dialogue at the end of book 8, Adam's account is not relegated to history, but is re-presented and extended by the conversing voices, as I will discuss at the end of this section.

Adam's autobiographical narrative both echoes and responds to that of Eve. While Eve peers into the smooth lake, Adam upon awaking, gazes at the sky (8.258). Nevertheless, the "murmuring sound / Of waters" associated symbolically with maternity, as critics have pointed out (Nyquist, "Gynesis" 198), is referred to by Adam (8.262), as well as Eve. Adam creates an other self, which like Eve's image, has a narcissistic quality. Nyquist observes how Adam's narcissism is "sparked, sanctioned, and then satisfied by his creator," while Eve's self-encounter is condemned ("Gynesis" 196).²² Adam more than Eve, however, is imbued with the desire for self-knowledge that is achieved through and not at the expense of dialogue. He attempts communication with the Maker whose existence he intuits. The response he receives from God is not immediately provided (285); it is given thereafter in sleep. The disjunction between question and answer indicates a difference between the speaker and the addressee, a difference on which dialogue depends. Adam's comment on the belatedness of the reply provides a contrast with Eve's imaging and echoing Shape, the acoustic mirror, which responds immediately "with answering looks / Of sympathy and love" (4.464-5), thus creating an artificial or "vain" dialogue.

In Eve's account, Adam's "gentle hand / Seiz'd" hers so that she might shift her "fixt" eyes, and come to know her dialogic nature in order to "see" properly (489). Both God's and Adam's voices call Eve to self-consciousness which is in some respect a "more sustained and comprehensive narcissism," for which Milton is indebted to the Gnostic and Platonic traditions (Davies 215). At the same time, the experience distances her from herself. Similarly, in order for Adam to begin to achieve self-understanding, and answer some of the questions he initially raises, he must identify himself with the other, and simultaneously redefine the terms of that relationship. Some loss of self or compromise is necessary for dialogue to occur. Just as Adam would later gently seize Eve, so now sleep paradoxically "with soft oppression seiz'd / [Adam's] drowsed sense" (288-9). The unidentified voice of God, then, likewise announces itself as the guide of Adam, who would otherwise have continued "wand'ring" (312). When he dreams thereafter (8.306-9), Adam experiences the same temptation of which Eve dreamt in book 5. Upon awakening, however, he immediately discovers the dream to be true. The images of life created by Adam through his conversation with God are as substantial as the images of life that Eve will nurture through her *conversation* with Adam.

"The first born of dialogue"

While naming the animals, Adam discovers through his own "sudden apprehension" that all the creatures immediately "understood / Thir Nature" (352-3). Yet because a dialectical relationship is denied, little conversation is possible or satisfying here, Adam complains:

Among unequals what society
Can sort, what harmony or true delight?
Which must be mutual, in proportion due

Giv'n and receiv'd; but in disparity
 The one intense, the other still remiss
 Cannot well suit with either, but soon prove
 Tedious alike....
 Much less can Bird with Beast, or Fish with Fowl
 So well converse, nor with the Ox the Ape;
 Worse then can Man with Beast, and least of all. (384-89, 395-7)

The terms "converse," "communication," "communion," "company," "accompanied," and "colloquy" are used in the succeeding verses to refer both to intercourse--that between two individuals speaking a common language--and to the act of procreation, sexual intercourse. God engages Adam in dialogue that he might learn to recognize for himself his difference from the being with whom he holds the conversation; Adam observes:

in thee
 Is no deficiencie found; not so is Man,
 But in degree, the cause of his desire
 By conversation with his like to help,
 Or solace his defects. No need that thou
 Shouldst propagate, already infinite. (415-20)

God likewise places Adam in the company of creatures inferior to him to teach him of his difference from them--to "see how [he] couldn't judge of fit and meet" (448)--and then articulate his desire for an equal.

Individual attempts at voicing are not self-sustaining, productive or meaningful outside of conversation. Adam must determine through reasoning and dialogue with God his need for conversation. Human discourse does mediate between unequals, but in doing so, it also makes the speakers aware of their differences. Adam, as we have seen, is frustrated by his futile discussion with the animals, and, on the other hand, cannot

sustain a conversation with God in that "celestial Colloquy sublime" which causes him to swoon:

As with an object that excels the sense,
 Dazzl'd and spent, [!] sunk down, sought repair
 Of sleep, which instantly fell on me, call'd
 By Nature as in aid, and clos'd my eyes. (8.456-9)

In the movement from verbal to visual communication in book 8, Eve is born. Through internal sight and dreams, Adam witnesses the creation of Eve, of whom he discovers a real counterpart upon waking. Though the transition from dreaming to waking is ruptured when Eve momentarily disappears and leaves Adam in the dark (478), she appears at once an embodiment of the fanciful shapes Adam experienced in his dream, and an incarnation of God's verbal promise to Adam. Adam and Eve, become not only as in the Genesis tradition, one flesh and one bone, but also one soul (498):

thou hast fulfill'd
 Thy words, Creator bounteous and benign,
 Giver of all things fair, but fairest this
 Of all thy gifts, or enviest. I now see
 Bone of my Bone, Flesh of my Flesh, my Self
 Before me. (491-96)

In the conversation between God and an unfallen Adam, there is a correspondence between the individual desire and the expression thereof, as well as between a creating fancy and a shaping reason. Eve represents the first covenant between humanity and God. Her own conversations with the angels and God will take place largely through dreams. Because they are found to complement rather than evade truth or reality, dreams, like inspiration, are not an inferior mode of communication, but offer an alternative mode of dialogue.

Milton suggests that while reason is the authority within the individual and among individuals, it is not adverse to, but works in conjunction with "will," choice or freedom, and with imagination or fancy. Will allows for choice, but reason, God announces, "is also choice" (3.108). Raphael had indicated with an analogy that, like conscience, reason sits as guide and umpire (3.194-5) among the faculties:

so from the root

Springs lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves
 More airy, last the consummate flow'r
 Spirit odorous breathes: flow'rs and their fruit
 To vital Spirits aspire, to animal,
 To intellectual, give both life and sense,
 Fancy and understanding, whence the soul
 Reason receives, and reason is her being. (5.479-87)

Though Raphael thereafter differentiated between discursive and intuitive reason, he suggested not only that angels possess some aspect of the former, and humankind of the latter, but that the two kinds of reason are "in degree of kind the same" (490). In a previous account of the intellectual faculties in book 5, Adam focused on their dynamic relationship:

But know that in the Soul
 Are many lesser Faculties that serve
 Reason as chief; among these Fancy next
 Her office holds; of all external things,
 Which the five watchful Senses represent,
 She forms Imaginations, Aery shapes,
 Which Reason joining or disjoining, frames
 All what we affirm to what deny, and call
 Our knowledge or opinion. (5.100-108)

This hierarchy of the intellectual faculties reveals their interaction, one that complements the relationship between dreaming and acting in the outside world. Commenting on Eve's dream, Adam describes the "misjoining shapes" and "wild work" produced by mimic fancy which is unchecked by reason. Adam thereby dissociates mimic fancy from fancy which holds her office next to reason. Imitation and the misjoining of shapes result in the mismatching of speech and action, words and deeds, Adam suggests (113). However, in conjunction with the shaping power of reason, what is imagined can potentially be realized. Eve's dream, as a result, is not "but a dream," as she first believes (5.93); nor is Adam's, as we have seen.²³

Returning to the dialogue that frames Adam's story in book 8, we are reminded again that the narrative is the product of a particular vision that is articulated and interpreted in retrospect. Adam proceeds to comment on the two different representations of Eve that he has experienced. The first is based on an impression arrived at through his conversations with God and Raphael:

For well I understand in the prime end
Of Nature her th'inferior, in the mind
And inward Faculties, which most excel,
In outward also her resembling less
His Image who made both. (540-44)

Because Eve embodies the image of God imperfectly, Adam is superior at one level. However, at the same time, Eve appears from another perspective absolute. Adam ignores Eve's difference from God and himself by prioritizing the image over what it represents in the hierarchy of creation:

yet when I approach
Her loveliness, so absolute she seems
And in herself complete, so well to know
Her own, that what she will to do or say,

Seems wisest, virtuous, discreet, best. (546-50)

Adam thereby re-enacts the misguided encounter with the image of Eve from which Eve herself was initially called away by the voices of God and Adam.

In his response, Raphael reprimands Adam for his misinterpretation of Nature's role in the creation of Eve. The remainder of the lecture is directed at Adam's idolatry of Eve. Raphael explains that the other can be known only through greater self-understanding: "weigh with her thyself; / Then value: Oft times nothing profits more / Than self-esteem, grounded on just and right / Well manag'd" (570-3). The grammatical construction of verse 570 juxtaposes "her" with "thyself," thereby complementing Raphael's invitation to Adam to draw comparisons between himself and Eve. At the same time, Raphael encourages a hierarchical view of the relationship, believing incorrectly that Adam's admiration of Eve is based exclusively on beauty and sexual attraction. Adam corrects his initial interpretation and that of Raphael, to whom he has disclosed his inward feelings (607-8), and reassures the angel that he has not after all forgotten Eve's difference from himself. Still, the ladder of love includes physical love for Adam, who draws on his own experience and qualifies the angel's assumptions. Adam's judgment is not distorted by the senses which represent objects "variously" (609-10). The distinction between Eve and himself that he does acknowledge can nevertheless be accommodated in his announcement that there is unity in diversity, and that the couple is of one mind, one soul, "Harmony to behold in wedded pair" (604-5).

The conversation ends interestingly with an erasure of gender difference that Raphael himself describes at Adam's request:

if Spirits embrace,
Total they mix, Union of Pure with Pure
Desiring; nor restrain'd conveyance need
As Flesh to mix with Flesh, or Soul with Soul. (626-9)

Provoked by his interaction with Adam to address this aspect of angelology, Raphael uses both material and spiritual terms to portray the act of conversation among the angels and depict their bisexual ability to move between antithetical poles. The portrait is not a uniform androgyny, but "an internalization of difference itself, a sexual otherness within the self-same" (Belsey 66). The Renaissance cultural representation of women as inferior beings is biblically and historically justified through the legitimization of patriarchal control by Raphael. At the same time, Belsey draws attention to how strange it is that this culture, which polarized male and female stereotypes to the extent that it did, should, in the poetry of Milton or in the paintings of the Italian Renaissance, represent a higher form of life as transgressive and endorsing of sexual indecidability (67). Belsey goes still further, and denies gender difference and power differential in Milton's heaven entirely:

In Milton's heaven there are no gender stereotypes, no antithetical voices, masculine and feminine, no opposition affirmed as privilege. There can be no consequence, no sexual rule and no submission, no authority grounded in anatomy. (67)

While it is true that gender may not be an issue in Milton's heaven as it is in Eden, there is nevertheless a hierarchy of gender and of discourse. Though the voices of God and the Son are in dialogue with each other and the angels, it is problematic to suggest that they are unprivileged, even if privilege is based on merit. The distinction between male and female voices is, however, more difficult to determine than the difference in the portrayal of the male and female characters which manifest the divine image to a greater or lesser extent. The representation of voice in the poem is in that sense more democratic than the imaging. Both voice and image, however, have the potential to serve as instruments of domination, even tyranny, as the account of the fall will suggest.²⁴

Part 2
Post-lapsarian Voices

i:

Fallen language

In book 9, it is Eve who for the first time initiates the dialogue between the couple (Fowler 868 n9.204; Nyquist, "Reading the Fall" 210) when she comments on the great abundance of Eden where the work of Adam and Eve "outgrew / The hands' dispatch of two Gard'ning so wide" (9.202-3). Eve acknowledges that she is threatened by this excess. The erroneousness, eccentricity, wildness and wantonness--a term used in reference to Eve herself--now acquire a different significance:

till more hands

Aid us, the work under our labour grows,
Luxurious by restraint; what we by day
Lop overgrown, or prune, or prop, or bind,
One night or two with wanton growth derides
Tending to wild. (9.209-12)

Eve proposes that the couple separate for the sake of efficiency, for the sake of controlling or restraining difference in the garden which she reduces to a "narrow circuit" (323). Later she uses a similar line of argument to propose abstinence as a means of preventing the continued propagation of a corrupt human race. Eve decides that nature should be tamed (215-19), and therefore Adam and Eve must divide their labour lest "th' hour of Supper comes unearn'd" (225). She thereby offers her own way of governing the garden, and introduces what Georgia Christopher calls a mercantile element into the theological equation to tend Eden (154). I will read the above passage in

a political context in part 3 of this chapter. Eve is not alone in her misreading of nature's overgrowth. Adam too expressed his confusion about the "disproportions" created by the "superfluous hand" of an otherwise "wise and frugal" nature (8.26-28). Raphael explains that the vastness and complexity of the universe do not undercut God's authority, but serve on the contrary to confirm it. Near the conclusion of his dialogue with Raphael in book 8, Adam again faults nature for its overgenerosity in bestowing "Too much of Ornament" on Eve (8.537-9). "Accuse not Nature, she hath done her part; / Do thou but thine" (561-2), Raphael corrects him.

My concern in the second half of this chapter is with the relationship between language and nature, more specifically, with the censorship of alternative voices and of "superfluity" in the garden itself. The monopolization of voice, like the enclosing or violation of the garden, precipitates the fall--a fall, as I suggested, in which the social and political orders are implicated. Adam responds to Eve's proposal for divided labour by reminding her that the couple was not placed in Eden to dominate nature absolutely, not through intellectual comprehension nor physical domination: "These paths and Bow'rs doubt not but our joint hands / Will keep from Wilderness with ease, as wide / As wee need walk, till younger hands erelong / Assist us" (244-6). Though they dominate the hierarchy of creation, Adam and Eve cannot control the process of nature's growth. Their world is processual and not product-oriented. Moreover, Adam reminds Eve that God never intended that the couple be prevented by their labour from engaging in conversation:

Yet not so strictly hath our Lord impos'd
Labour, as to debar us when we need
Refreshment, whether food, or talk between,
Food of the mind, or this sweet intercourse
Of looks and smiles. (235-39)

The dialogues on gardening in books 4, 5 and 9 are particularly interesting in light of the commentaries on language and poetry that the poem itself offers. In many texts of poetry composed in Renaissance and seventeenth century, the art of poesy was in fact troped by the art of gardening (McColley 104). The significances and resonances of poetic language cannot be restrained, but must be allow to speak through the numerous voices of the text. Like gardening in Eden, the acts of criticism, interpretation and poetic creation are complementary activities, in which the individual might engage for a limited time, and then leave the conversation "vitaly still in progress," as Burke had suggested, that others may also intervene and resume the work.²⁵

After reassuring her of his trust, Adam warns Eve several times about the possibility of temptation. The danger lies within (348-9), and will take the form of deceit through speech rather than force, Adam explains: "Nor thou [the Enemy's] malice and false guile contemn; / Subtle he needs must be, who could seduce / Angels, nor think superfluous others' aid" (306-8). Echoing and appropriating Raphael's commentary on nature (8.561-2), Adam ends by declaring "For God towards thee hath done his part, do thine" (375). Though recognizing the danger of complete independence from authority,²⁶ Adam cannot and does not prevent Eve's departure. Both are responsible for failing to keep the conversation going. Eve leaves, withdrawing her hand from her husband's (385-6), a gesture that speaks many verses.

The temptation does take place subtly, through speech and the appropriation of voice and gesture. Though the narrator provides the description of Satan's encounter with the estranged Eve, Satan serves as the focalizer, while also assuming verbal control over the narration at this point:

He sought them both, but wish'd his hap might find
 Eve separate, he wish'd, but not with hope
 Of what so seldom chanc'd, when to his wish
 Beyond his hope, Eve separate he spies,

Veil'd in a cloud of Fragrance, where she stood
 Half spi'd, so thick the Roses bushing round
 About her glow'd. (9.421-7)

The sound patterns and repeated words "hope," "wish" and "spies" create and anticipate the net that Satan weaves to trap the veiled Eve. Both the narrative effect of the word order and the tyrannical Satanic gaze described in the verses suggest the extension of his control and the gradual fulfillment of his wish. "Eve" and "hope," which are at opposite ends in verse 422, are juxtaposed at the centre of verse 424 when Satan spies Eve. This passage in turn anticipates that in Paradise Regained which describes the disguised Satan's first address to and gaze upon the Son, and signals the beginning of the temptation scenes (1.314-20). I will explicate this counterpart passage in the next chapter.

Absolute control by the singular voice and by the gaze of Satan is achieved immediately. Satan's apostrophe addressed to his own thoughts (473-93) becomes a sign of the end of prelapsarian conversation between Adam and Eve, and the start of the largely one-sided "exchange" between Satan and Eve. It is a conversation that begins and ends in silence, and consists of oratorical strategies, rhetorical play, and the recontextualization and censorship of the divine Word. Satan begins the temptation "Proem" after managing to attract attention to "His gentle dumb expression" (527). He attempts first to transform Eve back into that object-image from which the voices of God and Adam, now absent, managed to call her away. The Satanic voyeur repeats the words "beheld," "discern," "sees," "seen," and above all "gaze," a word that rhymes with "amaze" and the description of Satan "blazing with delusive Light" (639). The rape that occurs through speech takes place through the corruption of speech. "Glozing" (9.549) is the verbal counterpart to "glossing." Both acts, like gazing, deny difference and prevent dialogue by appropriating and idolizing the subject. Eve's failure to assert her own voice which is muted by her echoing of Satan's absolutist language suggests her

entrapment and fallenness. Her failure to read Satan's words and gestures critically or to create alternatives to the propositions he makes results in the fall.

"Gaze" recalls Eve's account of her enchantment by the tree of life provoked by the Satanic voice in her dream (5.47, 57). Eve's ravishment experienced in her fanciful dream now threatens her reason. The temptation in the dream and that in the garden in book 9 anticipate and echo respectively the temptation to participate in political rebellion. Satan's words to Eve in the dream were "Why sleep'st thou Eve? now is the pleasant time, / The cool, the silent, save where silence yields / To the night-warbling Bird" (5.38-40). Later in the same book, Satan seduces his cohort with the words:

Sleep'st thou Companion dear, what sleep can close
Thy eye-lids? and rememb'rest what Decree
Of yesterday, so late hath past the lips
Of Heav'n's Almighty. (673-6)

The former temptation experienced in dream actually takes place after the latter, thus lending it a political significance. In the address to Eve, Satan glosses the divine decree in order to make her forget it, and thereby prompt an act of disobedience. In the words of awakening to Beelzebub, Satan glosses the divine command to stimulate remembrance and thereby rebellion.

Satan initially fell because in "affecting all equality with God" (5.763), he refused to acknowledge his difference from God, and from the Son who acquires Lucifer's position in heaven. Now Satan plans the fall of humanity by enticing Eve to renounce her difference or her status in the hierarchy of creation. Raphael had explained to Adam and Eve that prelapsarian humanity has the potential to ascend progressively to an angelic state without first falling. Satan, who denies all sense of process, tempts Eve to do the same by proposing an artificial and unmerited ascent:

in this enclosure wild, these Beasts among,

Beholders rude, and shallow to discern
 Half what in thee is fair, one man except,
 Who sees thee? (and what is one?) who shouldst be seen
 A Goddess among Gods, ador'd and serv'd
 By Angels numberless, thy daily Train. (9.542-48)

Eve is first "amazed," not by her own difference which she has come to accept, but by the voice she hears, one that should betray the status of the speaker. Eve reflects:

What may this mean? Language of Man pronounc't
 By Tongue of Brute, and human sense exprest?
 The first at least of these I thought den'd
 To Beasts, whom God on their Creation-Day
 Created mute to all articulate sound. (553-57)

Her education seems to have been deficient in failing to have introduced her to such incongruities in nature. By communicating through human discourse, the creature she encounters causes her interpret this language as a sign of authority and to doubt her own knowledge. The serpent's speech conceals the voice of the speaker who prepares cunningly for the insinuation that human understanding is deficient. The devil's contrived autobiographical account, that explains how he turned from his occupation with food and sex to acquiring the power of speech, is endowed by Eve with historical credibility and thereby with political power. This control allows Satan at once to gloze as well as gloss Eve (611).

Burke claims that persuasion involves choice and will; it is directed to the individual only insofar as she is free. Satan takes great pains in effecting his oratory, and the fact that Eve does respond intelligently to him confirms her freedom. Nevertheless, speech can serve much to reveal the independence and empowerment of the speaking voice as its submission to the dominant discourse. Eve initially shows herself to be an active interpreter when she acknowledges that the intricacy and fertility of the

garden makes its inhabitants all the more free and at the same time obligated to act responsibly: "in such abundance lies our choice" (620). Moreover, she suspects the oversimplification and flattery in the serpent's temptation speech: "thy overpraising leaves in doubt / The Virtue of that Fruit" (615-6). Her rhetoric, even at this point, however, is infected and infiltrated with the Satanic voice: "overpraising" is Satan's word. The tempter thereafter glosses over the problems of interpretation by responding with further attempts at simplification. The style and subject of his rhetoric smooths out or paves over the troubled way to the tree by denying the complexity of language and voice, the differences between God and his creation, and the theological and legal implications of violating the command. "Empress, the way is ready, and not long" (626); though rolling in tangles, Satan "made intricate seem straight" (632).

The straightforward, on the other hand, is made increasingly intricate. Eve at first recognizes the "irrationality" of God's command:

God so commanded, and left that Command

Sole Daughter of his voice; the rest, we live

Law to ourselves, our Reason is our Law. (9.652-54)

Eve understands that unlike "the rest" of her experiences, this command is not subject to reinterpretation through discursive reasoning. The mandate itself is cited at several points, beginning 4.419-27. The violation of the rigid interdiction is punishable by death, Adam remembers: "for know, / The day thou eat'st thereof, my sole command / Transgrest, inevitably thou shalt die" (8.328-30). The verses are taken from Genesis 2.16-17: "Thou shalt eat frely of everie tre of the garden, / But as touching the tre of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for "whensoever thou eatest thereof, thou shalt dye the death." In book 9, Satan quotes the divine word before Eve does, but restates it in an interrogative sentence (656-8). Eve in response echoes the interdiction, but provides the clause that Satan left off: "Ye shall not eat / Thereof, nor shall ye touch it, lest ye die" (662-3), taken from Genesis 3:3. Eve at once adds to

Satan's partial recitation of the command the condition "nor shall you touch it," and extenuates the command itself, replacing "inevitably thou shalt die" with "lest you die."²⁷ The extenuation leaves Eve "yet sinless" (659). Though he does not repeal the death sentence, God himself would eventually recontextualize and provide alternative interpretations of the consequences of violating the command.

Eve's rewording provides Satan with similar opportunities for glossing. Satan, with tremendous oratorical skill, provides Eve with several readings of the interdiction, until, "ill match[ing] word and deed," he abruptly rejects the Word: "ye shall not die" (9.685; Genesis 3:4). Adam in the soliloquy after the fall (10.720-844) would also attempt to interpret the meaning of death announced by the command. Adam, unlike Satan, however, is not able to dismiss the command, no matter how he addresses death; he ultimately cannot deny the Word with which he remains in dialogue. Satan, who refuses to accommodate the command in any way, excludes it altogether as the emphatic "ye shall not die" indicates. His tyranny extends to speech which allows no room for dialogue. The same denial of the Word was heard in Satan's first apostrophe in which Satan announces "Evil be thou my Good" (4.110). Again, the anti-creation is declared by a monological voice.

As Adam "still stood fixed to hear" the voice of Raphael even after the narration had ended (8.1-3), so Eve is eventually rendered motionless after hearing the "preface" of the orator. All sense of contradiction and difference is lost on her:

Fixed on the fruit she gazed; which to behold
Might tempt alone, and in her ears the sound
Yet rung of his persuasive words, impregn'd
With reason, to her seeming, and with Truth. (735-8)

Whereas the dialogue began for Adam after the moment of suspension in book 8, it ends here for Eve. She fails in the end to recognize the tyranny of Satan's voice or to read his theatrical performance critically, and thus begins to soliloquize and employ the

rhetorical strategies of the orator-actor himself. The Word of the Author is replaced by the censoring language of Satan whom she now characterizes as an "author unsuspect / Friendly to man, far from deceit or guile" (771-2).

In her soliloquy immediately following the fall, Eve engages in idolatry. The tree, once a mysterious sign of obedience, is transformed into an object of worship by her "glozing." Eve, who addresses the tree with an elaborate epic epithet, can no longer name God. By directing her orisons at the tree rather than at God, Eve, in her apostrophe, ironically deprives the tree of its history and its significance:

and thy fair fruit let hang, as to no end
Created, but henceforth my early care,
Not without song, each morning, and due praise
Shall tend thee. (798-801)

The tree acquires the qualities outlined by Satan in his temptation speech. Eve's reverence for the newly created icon reminds us as well of the image of herself in book 4, on which she remained fixed until redirected by the voices of God and Adam her Guide (4.442). In this earlier episode, Eve *follows* Adam, and recognizes "How beauty is excell'd by manly grace / And *wisdom*, which alone is truly fair" (490-1, my emphasis). After the fall, Eve can no longer distinguish between her voice and Satan's, or between her "experience" and the one recounted by the tempter. Echoing her prelapsarian statement of contract to Adam, Eve, now intoxicated by the fruit, announces:

Experience, next to thee I owe,
Best *Guide*; not following thee, I had remained
In ignorance, thou open'st *wisdom's* way,
And giv'st access, though secret she retire. (807-10)

Experience is the means to wisdom, Eve believes; however, when experience provides access to wisdom, wisdom "retires," just as Fancy "retires" in the absence of Reason and

Nature (5.108-9). Eve's experience is isolated, unlike that referred to by Abdiel (5.826-8), or Adam (8.190). It produces nothing because it is based on nothing but the misleading words of Satan, who spoke "with serpent Tongue / Organic, or impulse of vocal Air" (529-30). Eve thereafter invites Adam to "taste freely," as Satan, using the same words, had invited her (730). She extends the invitation on the basis of what she calls her own "experience" (988). In this context, the "experience" resembles the "experience of this great event" to which Satan refers in attempting to persuade Beelzebub of the possibility of a counter attack (1.118).

There are in the Renaissance, and particularly for Milton, various kinds of liberties and definitions of equality, which I examined in chapter 1. The paradoxical relationship between liberty and equality--the notion, for example, that freedom is not contingent at one level on one's ranking in the hierarchy of creation--is explored extensively throughout the poem. After the fall, Eve is no longer able to understand the paradox. In this soliloquy, she indicates for the first time, a feeling of inadequacy as a female. She considers keeping the knowledge she has from Adam "so to add what wants / In female sex" (821-2). Eve then proposes to invert the power differential she has discerned, a differential that renders her not only unequal, but less than superior:

the more to draw his love,
 And render me more equal, and perhaps,
 A thing not undesirable, sometime
 Superior. (822-25)

"For inferior who is free," Eve adds, asking the Satanic question. She decides at this point to involve Adam in her sin. Adopting the pose and words of a performer--"the prologue, and apology to prompt" (853-4)--Eve imitates the theatricality of Satan (2.670-6). Believing that a "Different degree / Disjoin[s]" her from Adam, Eve in her subsequent speech attempts to convince Adam to join her in what she, who is unable to accept her difference, now calls an "equal lot," "equal joy, as equal love" (883-4).

ii:

Fruitless conversation

The soliloquies of Adam and Eve that reveal the thoughts of each character contemplating the fall in book 9 come at parallel moments, thereby challenging the conventional patriarchal reading which charges Eve for the fall of humanity. Though the characters themselves do not engage in dialogue, the language of Satan is echoed by Eve, and by Adam, who imitates both their verbal performances. Pronouncing the judgment after the fall, God asks Adam, "Was shee thy God, that her thou didst obey / Before his voice, or was shee made thy guide, / Superior, or but equal" (10.145-7). In listening to the voice of his wife (198), Adam had of course been listening to the words of the serpent, for which Eve had made herself a vehicle. Adam, breaking inward silence (9.895), engages in the same idolatry as Eve had in reference to the serpent and the tree.²⁸ He calls Eve the "fairest of Creation, last and best / Of all God's Works" (896-7), and decides that he cannot forgo conversation nor love with her, nor ignore the "Link of Nature" that draws him.²⁹ Ironically, conversation is the first casualty of the fall.

In Adam's speech that reveals his intent to join Eve in the fall, we nevertheless no longer hear any reference to the "soul" that joins them. "Sole" was Adam's first word to Eve (4.411), a word given particular emphasis when it is added to the Genesis passage in the poem that Adam otherwise quotes (8.495-99). "Soul" is lost in his words, and "sole" loses its connection with "soul," thus reminding us of Satan's curse directed at the Sun in his first apostrophe. Adam continues his speech, which, though directed at Eve, permits no response. In this apostrophe, Adam denies the validity of the divine interdiction, though not quite as emphatically as Satan had: "Perhaps thou shalt Die, perhaps" (928). He then reflects on Eve's "experience" of Satan, "he yet lives / Lives, as thou said'st" (932-3). Eve's words, based on her sole experience, are given

precedence over the words of God. Her acts are likewise idolized; Adam would later declare in his defense: "Her doing seem'd to justify the deed" (10.142).

Awakening after the fall, *they find themselves* weakened like Samson, who was shorn of strength upon rising from the lap of Dalilah (1059-62). The moral lapse is reflected in the muteness of Adam and Eve: "They destitute and bare / Of all their virtue: silent, and in face / Confounded long they sat, as struck'n mute" (1062-4). When Adam finally utters "words constrain'd," he laments that communication with God and angel will now no longer be possible (1080-82). The failure of conversation threatens interaction among the individuals who are unable to recognize the dynamics of their relationship to the remainder of creation. That verbal communication is the means for establishing society among the diverse members in the hierarchy of creation is particularly evident in book 10 when the Son appears in the garden after the fall to inquire about the reluctant approach of the couple: "My voice thou oft hast heard, and hast not fear'd, / But still rejoic't, how is it now become / So dreadful to thee?" (119-21). Adam's subsequent accusation of Eve is "fruitless," as is Eve's blaming of the serpent (162). That the "mutual accusation" of the couple after the fall (9.1187) is also "fruitless" suggests that a conversation which gets out of hand and denies listening is as counterproductive as the evasion of dialogue. After the Son's pronouncement of the sentences, the narrative gives way to the voices of Sin and Death (10.235-271).

The connection between conversation and fruit, while played out throughout the poem, is most often suggested in the portrayal of the fall and its after-effects. In Josephus' *Antiquities*, the association is especially apparent. All living creatures before the fall communicated through one language that allowed humanity to live with God and nature in harmony (41). God later reminds Adam,

I had before determined about you both, how you might lead a happy life, without any affliction, and care, and vexation of the soul; and that all things which might contribute to your enjoyment and pleasure should

grow up by my providence, of their own accord, without you own labor or painstaking. (46)

Envious of the couple's living happily in obedience of the commands of God, the serpent tempts the woman to eat of the tree of knowledge. Eve then persuades Adam to make use of it also (43). When God thereafter comes into the garden, Adam, "who was want before to come and converse with him," is reluctant to receive him. God inquires why he "that before delighted in that conversation," now chooses to ignore it. Adam, aware of having transgressed against God, remains silent. "Thy silence is not the sign of thy virtue, but of thy evil conscience," God judges (16). Adam, in response, lays the blame on Eve, and Eve in turn accuses the serpent.

Having given into the temptation by submitting to the counsel of Eve, Adam, in the Antiquities, is judged by God. The sentence becomes an external sign of his corrupted nature (also anticipating the third epigraph of this chapter): "the ground should not henceforth yield its fruits of its own accord, but that when it should be harassed by their labor, it should bring forth some of its fruits and refuse to bring forth others." Eve is cursed with the "inconveniency of breeding, and the sharp pains of bringing forth children" (49). The strained conversation or yielding of words is represented by the difficulty of labour which restricts the yield of fruit, both that of the ground and that of the body.

In Paradise Lost, the connection between the body and the earth from which humanity was formed--*Adamah* means "red," metonymically associated with red clay--is emphasized in the conferred sentence Having defiled nature through their transgression, humankind adopts an antithetical relationship to nature, one that is articulated by the judgment: "Curs'd is the ground for thy sake, thou in Sorrow / Shalt eat thereof all the days of thy Life; / Thorns also and Thistles it shall bring forth / Unbid" (201-4). The sentence jars with the divine words that once celebrated the marriage between humanity and nature:

**This Paradise I give thee, count it thine
 To Till and keep, and of the Fruit to eat:
 Of every Tree that in the Garden grows
 Eat freely with glad heart; fear here no dearth. (8.319-22)**

The sentence compels Adam and Eve to confront their own condition:

**In the sweat of thy Face shalt thou eat Bread,
 Till thou return unto the ground, for thou
 Out of the ground wast taken, know thy Birth
 For dust thou art, and shalt to dust return. (205-9)**

The sentence in various ways echoes the one conferred on Satan. Humankind is condemned to eat of the ground all the days of its life (202), as the serpent is condemned to eat that ground or dust all the days of its life (178). Satan thereafter is also reduced to dust.

To confirm once more that the fall is caused by the perversion of language, and the denial of the Word, God deprives the serpent of speech. He then inserts poison on its tongue (50), as a sign of its malicious act which poisoned conversation thereafter. The curse that falls on the serpent is conveyed in "mysterious terms" (10.173), terms that will gradually be interpreted as the narrative proceeds. Satan, however, denies the figurative sense of the prophetic words, and literalizes them. The devil assumes, first of all, that the sentence pertains to a future rather than a present time (344-5). In the speech delivered to his peers upon returning to hell, he announces that he has severed the relationship between God and humankind through fraud. The seduction was accomplished "the more to increase / Your wonder, with an apple" (487), to which Satan reduces the fruit. Though God's curse extends not only to the serpent but to Satan in the serpent, Satan dissociates himself from the serpent (494-6), and ignores the first half of the sentence that reads:

Because thou hast done this, thou art accurst

Above all Cattle, each Beast of the Field;
 Upon thy Belly groveling thou shalt go,
 And dust shalt eat all the days of thy Life. (175-8)

Addressing the latter half of the prophecy, which he does apply to himself, Satan again provides a literal interpretation:

that which to mee belongs,
 Is enmity, which he will put between
 Mee and Mankind; I am to bruise his heel;
 His Seed, when is not set, shall bruise my head:
 A World who would not purchase with a bruise,
 Or much more grievous pain? (496-501)

The doom takes immediate effect when Satan, "punisht in the shape he sinn'd" (516), is metamorphosed into a serpent whose image and nature he appropriated to corrupt that of Adam and Eve. Voice complements image: Satan's final word "bliss" (503) is transformed into a "hiss," that serves ironically, yet appropriately, as applause greeting Satan's return. Cacophony renders meaning invalid, so that the punishment complements the crime (544-5). The curse, then, anticipates the confusion of tongues that would serve as the punishment for the inwardly-divided followers of Nimrod, who attempted to literalize and institutionalize their particular truth at the expense of all others.

The hiss already sounds in the temptation speeches of the "spirited sly Snake" (613) long before God declares the curse. Consider the "s" sounds in the opening words of Satan's first address to Eve:

Wonder not, sovran Mistress, if perhaps
 Thou canst, who are sole Wonder, much less am
 Thy looks, the Heav'n of mildness, with disdain,
 Displeas'd that I approach thee thus, and gaze

Insatiate. (9.532-6)

The doom Saian inflicts upon Eve is one he simultaneously inflicts upon himself. By deceiving Eve, Satan deceives himself. The "Serpent Tongue / Organic" is actually impotent; the impulse of vocal Air, which inspires the words of temptation, only creates more "unctuous vapor" (635). The words do provoke Eve to accept the serpent's "conduct" "Beyond a row of Myrtles, on a Flat, / Fast by a Fountain, one small Thicket past / Of blowing Myrrh and Balm" (627-9). Nevertheless, as she announces, "we might have spar'd our coming hither, / Fruitless to mee, though Fruit be here to excess" (647-8). The speaker of babble who fails at *conversation* is himself impotent.

As the author of Death, and as one who denies the Word or the "Seed," Satan speaks a language that contains the seeds of his own destruction. The Satanic voice parodies the prophetic words of God which conflate the past, present and future. Satan's words also speak of his past, present and future doom, though the devil denies its implications. Through the process of speech or narrative, the significance of Satan's judgment, mysteriously worded by the Son, becomes clearer. The poet-narrator describes both Satan's attempt to evade the sentence, and his failure to recognize that the future is informed by the past and present, which are conflated in the passage:

but when he saw descend

The Son of God, to judge them, terrifi'd

Hee fled, not hoping to escape, but shun

The *present*, fearing guilty what his wrath

Might suddenly inflict; that *past*, return'd

By Night, and list'ning where the hapless Pair

Sat in their sad discourse, and various plaint,

Thence gather'd his own doom, which understood

Not instant, but of *future time* . With joy

And tidings fraught, to Hell he now return'd. (337-346; my emphasis)

Past, present and future also come together in the narrative at the moment of Satan's prophesied transformation, when he embodies the sin of the past by being reduced to the shape he assumed in the original temptation scene.

Adding insult to injury, God, in punishing the devils, tempts them with the bait used by Satan himself. The grove, resembling the one in Eden, is planted in hell, and the forbidden tree is multiplied through the distorted vision of the perceivers. Deluded by the fruit which evades their reach, they consume ashes, or dust, which they mistake for fruit. The doom conferred on the Serpent thereby falls on the remainder of the devils (178). Moreover, the devils' fall is continually repeated in their literal re-enactment of the original temptation to which they themselves now fall prey. However, the scene is also repeated verbally--again by way of mouth--but this time in the form of a fable, which becomes the heathen or mythological counterpart to the Genesis story of the fall. This devilish literary creation is probably a sequel to the partial song invented by the devils that recounted "Thir own Heroic deeds and hapless fall / By doom of Battle" (2.549-50). Again the fruit is bitter, for the myth of the Titans Ophion and Eurynome ends with the expulsion of these first Olympian rulers by Saturn and Rhea (10.578-84). Speech wounds the speakers, so that it is the devils who are ultimately responsible for their self-mockery.

iii:

Re-remembering the Word

If the denial of the Word results in the fall, then the re-remembering of the Word through the re-generation of dialogue, provides the means to social and moral healing. But the movement of Adam and Eve toward conversation occurs very slowly after the declaration of the sentence. From fruitless mutual accusation, Adam and Eve voice their sad complaints, a mode of discourse which continues to prevent communication. In his

complaint, Adam reinterprets the curse in various ways. The generations he begets will all be anti-incarnations manifestating the doom; he laments:

All that I eat or drink, or shall beget,
Is propagated curse. O voice once heard
Delightfully, *Increase and multiply*,
Now death to hear! for what can I increase
Or multiply, but curses on my head? (728-32)

As the words of the curse are repeated throughout Adam's lament, so does the sound of the word "curse," particularly the "r," echo throughout the verses which he invents and speaks:

as my Will
Concurr'd not to by being, it were but right
And equal to reduce me to my dust,
Desirous to resign, and render back
All I receiv'd, unable to perform
Thy terms too hard. (746-51)

The curse is self-inflicted through the recited verses which denounce Adam's creation. The repetition of the "r" sound in Adam's lament reminds us as well of the barbarous dissonance of Bacchic revelry which threatened the poem, drowning both Harp and Voice (7.34-5).

Adam turns on himself, on the event of his own creation, a birth he celebrated in his dialogue with Raphael. Now the poem is sustained by his meditation on death, whose "tardy execution" exposes a dialectic that torments him even more: "But I shall die a living Death?" (788). "Can he make deathless Death?" (798), Adam agonizes, having cast himself into a self-made "Abyss of fears / And horrors" (842-3) that resembles Satan's own inner hell. As the distorted vision of the devils multiplied the forbidden tree and increased their torment, so now Adam's conscience represents "all things with

double terror" (850). The memory of the divine voice only multiplies his present agony, in the same way that the voices he formerly lent to nature now haunt him: "O Woods, O Fountains, Hillocks, Dales and Bow'rs, / With other echo late I taught your Shades / To answer, and resound far other Song" (860-2).

Adam thereafter accuses Eve, cursing the being he first created. He transforms her verbally into the serpent. Having named her Eve, "substantial Life," Adam offers a different etymological basis for the name; "Eve" was also thought to be cognate with the Hebrew term for serpent. The renaming contrasts significantly with the former epic epithets and addresses. The fact, however, that Milton's Eve had been given a name before the fall, rather than being named as a result of falling, suggests a more complex understanding of her nature in the poem than in the biblical Genesis story. Adam, however, reduces her to "a Rib / Crooked by nature," thereby engaging in Satan's own literalization of language.

The literalization prevents both Adam and Satan from recognizing the "mysterious terms" of the sentence, which, though unretractable, offer room for negotiation. The partial recollection of the sentence by Adam is Faustian. Faust, who recalls that "The reward / of sin is death" (1.1.39-40), despairs, and because of his despair, forgets the latter portion of the scriptural passage: "the present given by God is eternal life" (Rom. 6:23). Likewise, Adam neglects that part of the sentence which promises retaliation against his enemy (179-181). The sentence itself is prophetic, and the poet-narrator includes a typological reference to Eve as Mary second Eve (183), who gives birth to the "Oracle." However, Adam and Eve's fallen self-conception prevents them from seeing themselves in any kind of future role except one that propagates the curse rather than the Word.

In response to the curse Adam invents for her (888-908), Eve, out of desperation, makes a plea for negotiation both with Adam and with God. She suggests to Adam that in their remaining time, they join forces against their common enemy. She

then offers to return to the place of judgment, and asks that the sentence be levied against her alone. Adam dismisses the proposed gesture as futile, but agrees to a truce between himself and Eve as they await "a long day's dying" (964). Eve responds with another suggestion of how the couple might deal with its fallen state. Having been deceived by Death, Eve proposes that they now attempt to deceive Death (989-90). This is done though abstinence--reminiscent of Satan's impotence--from conversing, looking and loving (993-4), a condition both synonymous with death, and one sought through suicide. Still, Eve suggests that the sacrifice is the means for delivering both the couple and their seed or progeny from an endless death.

Eve's argument for suicide is unreasonable, Adam responds; it is an argument for contumacy, rebellion and "Reluctance against God" that will only perpetuate death. It is not by denying conversation that death will be defeated, but rather by engaging again in conversation. Adam, therefore, argues against violence and "wilful barrenness," and at the same time provides an alternative interpretation to the pronounced sentence. Conversation, in both senses, must continue. "To better hopes his more attentive mind / Laboring had rais'd," (1011-12), the poet-narrator explains, as he compares Adam's sudden hopefulness to Eve's despair. The "Labor" consists of recollection and re-engagement with the Word or the terms of the conferred judgment. The greater implications of the sentence become gradually more evident to Adam:

Then let us seek

Some safer resolution, which methinks

I have in view, calling to mind with heed

Part of our Sentence, that thy Seed shall bruise

The Serpent's head. (1028-32)

The prophecy can only be fulfilled through the cooperation of Adam and Eve, who now recognize Satan in the serpent:

to crush his head

Would be revenge indeed; which will be lost
 By death brought on ourselves, or childless days
 Resolv'd, as thou proposest. (1035-8)

For the first time Adam focuses on a different aspect of the sentence (1048-85). The evolution of the epiphanic moment is difficult to explain.³⁰ Adam suggests it is inspired by his recollection of the past, including the Son's merciful proclamation of the judgment (1046-8). But that does not sufficiently explain how the seed that he cursed in his previous lament (965) acquired the significance that it now has for him. Adam's memories served up until this moment only to torment him.

In fact, it is Adam's interaction with Eve that inspires his renewed dialogue with God. Eve shows Adam an example of forgiveness and mercy, on which Adam later models his own behaviour. Eve's words and gestures of reconciliation move Adam to forget the curse that he had just pronounced on her and on their marital bond:

soon his heart relented
 Towards her, his life so late and sole delight,
 Now at his feet submissive in distress,
 Creature so fair his reconcilment seeking,
 His counsel whom she had displeas'd, his aid;
 As one disarm'd, his anger all he lost,
 And thus with peaceful words uprais'd her soon. (940-46)

Reunion is not immediate though Eve is raised by Adam with a gesture that God will later repeat with the couple. Eve, "nevertheless / Restor'd" (970-1), though obviously still fallen, advises childlessness and suicide, thoughts that are complemented by her speech that is broken off (1008-9). The narrator suggests that Adam was unmoved by such counsel, having been preoccupied with more optimistic alternatives. Many of his own ideas, however, were implanted by the words of Eve. What Adam does without realizing it, is recontextualize them, and in doing so, he echoes the female voice. Eve

asks that the sentence may be transferred onto her (934-6), and ironically, it is; Adam recalls the promise: "thy Seed shall bruise / The Serpent's head." The Seed is again released into the conversational air by Eve, whose second complaint focuses on the woeful Race. Her plotting the destruction of humanity, "both ourselves and our Seed at once to free," is misguided. Yet again the liberation of humanity through the Seed is a possibility if Adam and Eve defeat rather than submit to death. If Adam, then, is inspired to reinterpret the sentence and the significance of the Seed, it is Eve who implants the images and words within his mind. Put simply, reason adds a shape, a local habitation and name, to the images initially produced by fancy or the poetic imagination.

Evidence of Eve's influence is also apparent in Adam's resolution that the couple return to its judgment place to plead for mercy from God. Adam's words (1086-92) echo those of Eve (932-5), which Adam, still in despair, had dismissed beforehand (952-57). Eve's subsequent gesture of reconciliation, which causes Adam to lose his anger toward her, suggests the possibility for forgiveness, of which Adam speaks (1046-8). The poet-narrator repeats Adam's words that Eve had first provided in an abridged form (1098-04). The repetition is a classical convention, but at the same time, the verses confirm in the context of the poem, the reunion of voice and meaning, and speech and action, connections that Satan had disrupted through his oratory.

The couple's prayers--the first indication of the restoration of dialogue--communicate more effectively than the Satanic rhetoric:

Prevenient Grace descending had remov'd
 The stony from their hearts, and made new flesh
 Regenerate grow instead, that sighs now breath'd
 Unutterable, which the spirit of prayer
 Inspir'd, and wing'd for Heav'n with speedier flight
 Than loudest Oratory. (11.3-8)

The prayers directed at heaven attain their destination, and are not misdirected "by envious winds / Blown vagabond or frustrate" (15-16). The envious winds are reminiscent of the Aerial vapours (445) that constitute the outside shell of Milton's universe through which Satan passed. Located there is the Paradise of Fools where the builders of Babel plan with vain design the construction of new Babels (3.430-475). The vanity of the fame-seekers produced empty deeds (454) and a hollow language out of which Satan would construct his temptation speeches.

The "sighs though mute" and the unsophisticated words of prayer offered by Adam and Eve (11.31-2) become the morning orisons of their fallen state. Whereas the prelapsarian orison was both unmeditated (5.149) and unmediated, the post-lapsarian prayers require an interpreter. Dialogue between humanity and God now demands intercession. It is the Son who offers himself as advocate to speak on behalf of humanity, to perfect its works through his own merit, and to take the doom upon himself, thereby yielding humankind to a better life (42). It is through the Word that "God with man unites," as Adam later announces (12.582). The Word incarnate does not appear hereafter to Adam and Eve. Rather, other interpreters are sent to begin the process of preparing the way for the Word. When the Son finally is born, his voice is suppressed. The words that remain are dispersed among the people by the fit though few, the apostles who are inspired to speak in all tongues. In the poem, Michael, as warrior archangel and as the trumpeter at the Last Judgment, serves as a translator of the Word that he brings to Adam in his prophecy of the tragic future which humanity constructs in the post-lapsarian world.

With the repossession of paradise by Michael comes Adam's doubt about the effect of prayer: "But prayer against his absolute Decree / No more avails than breath against the Wind / Blown stifling back on him that breathes it forth" (11.311-13). In response to Adam's lament over his lost communication with God, Michael explains that direct verbal exchange has been replaced by signs that continue to manifest and confirm

God's presence in the world (351-54). Michael himself is one of those signs (355-8); his words and revelations, in turn, demand interpretation. Michael's task to explain the significance of the "Cov'nant in the woman's seed renew'd" (116) is appropriately accomplished through dialogue. Both the act of outlining the terms of the covenant and the act of fulfilling those terms are dependent on humankind's cooperation and involvement in history. However, as the covenant between God and humanity is achieved through much trial, so is the dialogic exchange rigorous. Dialogue as sharp corrective replaces the venial discourse between Raphael--the affable "sociably mild" angel--and an unfallen humanity.

Part 3
Michael's Story

i:

The visions of post-lapsarian history

History is a dialectical process that is as much informed by as it informs the present. The closure of history has political consequences, so that when Milton adds his voice to the anti-monarchical and anti-prelatic movements, he denounces all those who uphold "the right of the past to control the present" (Masson 2.242). In the final books of Paradise Lost, it is a typological interpretation of the past that reveals what was finished as embryonic and challenges the teleological imperative. While literalist readings of the past artificialize and idealize it, making it impervious to intervention, Michael's corrections of Adam's misreadings of human history rupture the closed system he constructs.

Nietzsche would associate the egotistical perpetuation of a mass-produced historical continuum with Satan, as we found in The Use and Abuse of History. In Paradise Lost, Satan, upon returning triumphant to hell, announces his reign over the narrative of history which he has rewritten by precipitating the fall:

Him by fraud I have seduc'd
From his Creator, and the more to increase
Your wonder, with an Apple; he thereat
Offended, worth your laughter, hath giv'n up
Both his beloved Man and all his World
To Sin and Death a prey....
True is, mee also he hath judg'd, or rather

Mee not, but the brute Serpent in whose shape
 Man I deceiv'd: that which to mee belongs,
 Is enmity, which he will put between
 Mee and Mankind; I am to bruise his heel;
 His Seed, when is not set, shall bruise my head:
 A World who would not purchase with a bruise,
 Or much more grievous pain? (10.485-501)

By inscribing and controlling the course of history, Satan ensures that the present and future can hold no surprises. The bruise inflicted by the Seed, to which the prophetic sentence refers, offers no threat to Satan. The mystery dissipates when Satan literalizes the doom by capitalizing in this way on the absoluteness of the divine Word.

The interpretation of the sentence is, however, open to negotiation. In the act of intervening in the course of history, Adam and Eve, as readers of the prophecy, determine their roles in that process. Books 11 and 12 offer numerous examples of the variety of courses that human history takes. The one aspect of history that must be maintained, however, is its organic or processual nature. Inevitably, there will be individuals who attempt to capitalize on, or end the process by representing one voice as dominant, or by reifying the past. The fall in particular was provoked by such an attempt to bring history to its conclusion.

The revolutionaries themselves were guilty of attempting, even after their defeat, to end the historical process by establishing their kingdom on earth. In book 11, Michael criticizes not only the conquerors who sought to achieve fame, high titles, power and wealth (787-96), but also their victims who eventually attempted only to achieve personal gain:

The conquer'd also, and enslav'd by War
 Shall with their freedom lost all virtue lose
 And fear of God, from whom their piety feign'd

In sharp contest of Battle found no aid
 Against invaders; therefore cold in zeal
 Thenceforth shall practise how to live secure,
 Worldly or dissolute, on what their Lords
 Shall leave them to enjoy; for th' Earth shall bear
 More than enough, that temperance may be tri'd:
 And all shall turn degenerate, all deprav'd,
 Justice and Temperance, Truth and Faith forgot. (797-807)

In a historical context, the Puritan drive for reform and the glorious cause of the people of God had come to look too much like self-seeking under a shell of piety. The Puritans who declared they were fighting the Lord's battles found themselves in positions of power and profit.³¹ The iconoclasts were guilty of having created new idols and icons.

The first revelation that Michael shows Adam from the Visions of God is, therefore, that of the earth's kingdoms and empires--historical monuments to political power. The empires (386-411) are not individually described, nor does Michael or Adam comment on the vision thereafter. The sound of the names in the catalogue, like that of the devils' names in book 1 (392-521), echoes the barbarous dissonance that accompanied the construction of the "Empire tyrannous" (12.32) and the tower of Babel. Still, it is the reader, not Adam, who hears the names of the kingdoms, since it is the poet-narrator rather than Michael who repeats them. The empires are lost in the dissonance of the verses, and remain outside the conversation that constitutes the narrative of history in the poem.

The wide prospect from the Hill is one that would also be viewed by the second Adam, as the poet-narrator explains, using a pronoun that makes the identity of the viewer deliberately ambiguous. The Hill of Paradise which Adam and Michael ascended was not higher

nor wider looking round,

Whereon for different cause the Tempter set
 Our second Adam in the Wilderness,
 To show him all Earth's Kingdoms and thir Glory.
His Eye might there command wherever stood
 City of old or modern Fame. (381-6; my emphasis)

The moment is rendered as a timeless one in several ways. First, the present viewer of the sight, and the future viewer are grammatically connected. Secondly, the identification of the Son as the second Adam suggests a typological relationship. It also validates the Son's humanity and history by representing Adam as his descendent. Thirdly, Adam's ability to command the whole of the scene renders him momentarily omniscient by letting him behold past, present and future simultaneously. Moreover, Adam's enhanced vision allows him as well to overcome space, since it is otherwise impossible to see the whole earth from any hill. Fourthly, the monuments to fame that were constructed over the course of history are suddenly presented by Michael all at once. Even those empires that might be viewed only in spirit (406) appear before Adam's eyes.

At the end of the epic catalogue, the revelation is again contextualized in the greater narrative when we are reminded of its illusory nature and the limited perspective of the viewer:

but to nobler sights
Michael from Adam's eyes the Film remov'd
 Which that false Fruit that promis'd clearer sight
 Had bred. (409-12)

Michael's removal of the film bred by the false fruit which had promised clearer sight refers to the literal act of purging the visual nerve with the herbs, rue and euphrasy. However, it also suggests Michael's act of removing the images of the empires from Adam's view. These constructions had promised clearer sight as well to their builders

and rulers, rulers who attempted to contain history in a temporary monument to their own glory. Later it is Satan who tries to tempt the Son with the vision of the transitory kingdoms (PR 4.25-108). The devil, moreover, associates the power to rule with control over history:

Aim therefore at no less than all the world,

Aim at the highest, without the highest attain'd

Will be for thee no sitting, or not long

On David's Throne, be prophes'd what will. (4.105-8)

Christ responds by prophesying his own endless reign, which "shall be like a tree / Spreading and over-shadowing all the Earth," and which will cause the destruction of all empires or monarchies throughout the world (4.146-153). How this will be achieved is part of Adam's education in Paradise Lost, but is kept from Satan in Paradise Regained (152-3).

The visual scenes and images Michael offers are complemented by verbal interpretations provided by Adam, and in turn corrected by the angel who intervenes in and challenges linear history. The first "noble sight" depicts the murder of Abel by Cain. Michael, also moved by the revelation" (11.453), elaborates on the shapes of death which Adam associates with murder alone (466-495). Adam, in response, makes the same proposal as Eve had after the fall, "Better end here unborn.... who if we knew / What we receive, would either not accept / Life offer'd, or soon beg to lay it down, / Glad to be so dismiss in peace" (502, 504-6). Michael's answer, recalling Adam's reply to Eve, is two-fold. He explains that humankind is responsible for the perversion of its state and that of nature; at the same time, humanity can also learn how best to contend with and improve the life it has created (530-37). Death is not absolute; it can neither be represented in a single image, nor defeated by a single blow, as Adam later proposes. Adam, too, literalizes the "bruise" referred to in the sentence, a misreading of which Satan was first guilty (12.384-5).

The second vision shows the further corruption of the pastoral landscape that began with the murder of the shepherd Abel. The various parts of the depicted scene are viewed through the eyes of Adam who blends them indiscriminately. The harp music of Jubal, who tends the herds, complements rather than jars with the "soft amorous ditties" of the harpists who entertain the bevy of women. The ritual is interpreted as a "happy interview and fair event / Of love and youth not lost, Song, Garlands, Flow'rs, / And charming Symphonies" (593-5). The lesson Michael subsequently provides is one that attempts to teach Adam of the difference between appearance and reality in nature. The inventors of the arts that polish Life, and the fair female Troop which dances to the harp are committed only to frivolity and to a life of pleasure, to which the world itself would eventually succumb. Commenting on Michael's verbal explanation, Adam again over-generalizes, stereotyping women, and blaming them for humanity's corruption. Michael challenges this interpretation of the female by reminding Adam of his male successors' own contribution to humanity's downfall (634-6).

Dissonance suppresses all contending voices. The following scene, one of war and human slaughter, initiated by attempts at achieving renown on earth, ultimately leaves "what most merits fame in silence hid" (699). The one virtuous man who "spake much of Right and Wrong, / Of Justice, of Religion, Truth and Peace, / And Judgment from above" (666-8) is seized and silenced. Michael intervenes in the recounted narrative to speak for him (700-10).

Though serving as a witness, Adam participates as a character and speaker in the narrative of history. Human suffering provides him with a voice--in the same way that tragedy inspired the composition of Paradise Lost by the poet-revolutionary--and compels him to recount his own tragic history. Adam's position resembles at this point God's own relationship to his defiant children. The tone of God's defensive speech in book 3 (80-134) deserves reconsideration and justification in light of Adam's lament:

O Visions ill foreseen! better had I

Liv'd ignorant of future, so had borne
 My part of evil only, each day's lot
 Enough to bear; those now, that were dispenst
 The burd'n of many Ages, on me 'light
 At once, by my foreknowledge gaining Birth
 Abortive, to torment me ere their being,
 With thought that they must be. Let no man seek
 Henceforth to be foretold what shall befall
 Him or his Children, evil he may be sure,
 Which neither his foreknowing can prevent,
 And hee the future evil shall no less
 In apprehension than in substance feel
 Grievous to bear. (763-76)

The tragedy of history is informed and intensified by the knowledge of the future. The timeless moment of the fall, signalled by images and changes in voice--is historicized in this passage. Unable to intervene on the behalf of his children, Adam despairs, believing that all are destined to succumb to the destruction, even those who would escape the famine and anguish (777-8). Again Michael interprets the scene by recontextualizing the prophecy; he explains that human history would neither end at this point, nor continue its tyrannical course uninterrupted.

ii:

The censoring voice

It is undeniable that the voice of Michael is a censoring one that continually restricts Adam's interpretations of the depicted scenes. Nevertheless, though presenting his official view as fully developed, Michael suggests by its apocalyptic nature that it is

fully developed only for the time being, and that it is open to infiltration by alternatives. Moreover, Michael through his censorship serves as an iconoclast, dismantling stereotypes, and demystifying the images that Adam fixes. Adam offers a one-sided perspective first on death, then on the fallenness of women, and lastly on the totality of history. It is Adam, then, who in fact casts a censoring eye on the visions he is shown, and whose idolatry is reflected in the commentaries on the visions in the poem.

The representation and idealization of a single view is more tyrannical than forbidding any at all. In Sade/Fourier/Loyola, Roland Barthes provides the following definition of censorship, which he thereafter contrasts to the invention of an alternative symbolic language:

true censorship, the ultimate censorship, does not consist in banning (in abridgment, in suppression, in deprivation), but in unduly fostering, in maintaining, retaining, stifling, getting bogged down in (intellectual, novelistic, erotic) stereotypes, in taking for nourishment only the received word of others, the repetitious matter of common opinion. The real instrument of censorship is not the police, it is the *endoxa*.... social censorship is not found where speech is hindered, but where it is constrained. (126)

In his treatise against censorship, Milton denounces conformity of opinion in a similar fashion:

Well knows he who uses to consider, that our faith and knowledge thrives by exercise, as well as our limbs and complexion. Truth is compar'd in Scripture to a streaming fountain; if her waters flow not in a perpetuall progression, they sick'n into a muddy pool of conformity and tradition. A man may be a heretick in the truth; and if he beleeeve things only because his Pastor sayes so, or the Assembly so determines, without knowing other reason, though his belief be true, yet the very truth he holds, becomes his

heresie. There is not any burden that some would gladlier post off to another than the charge and care of their Religion. There be, who knows not that there be of Protestants and professors who live and dye in as arrant an implicit faith, as any lay Popist of Loretto. (2.554)

What is true of reading applies to any kind of interpretive or imaginative activity: the process is crucial. In this case, the authorities, the church prelates and the assembly--the promoters of tradition--are engaged in censorship. Yet so is the individual who passively accepts the symbols and perpetuates the image-making and idolatry.

Returning then to Paradise Lost, it is Adam rather than Michael who possesses the more obviously censoring voice. It is he who confirms stereotypes and fixes the images, those of death, of nature, of women and of history, which time has now reified. Travelling through the ages, Adam perpetuates the symbolic language and the evil which he first introduced. Michael, on the other hand, becomes the iconoclast. The repetition of specific words fixes images, but can also serve to defamiliarize them. The intervening voice of Michael is heard even in those passages in which Adam serves as focalizer.

Describing the second vision, the poet-narrator states:

on the hither side a different sort
 From the high neighboring Hills, which was thir Seat,
 Down to the Plain descended: *by thir guise*
Just men they seem'd, and all thir study bent
 To worship God aright, and know his works
 Not hid, nor those things last which might preserve
 Freedom and Peace to men: they on the Plain
 Long had not walkt, when from the Tents behold
 A Bevy of fair Women, richly gay
 In Gems and *wanton* dress; to the Harp they sung
 Soft amorous Ditties, and in dance came on:

The men though grave, ey'd them, and *let thir eyes*
Rove without rein, till in the *amorous Net*
 Fast caught, *they lik'd, and each his liking chose*. (11.574-587; my
 emphasis)

Through his participation in the scene, Adam is, like the seemingly just men, deceived by what he sees. Correspondence between appearance and the inner moral condition has been lost. Yet the uninterrupted verses and Adam's vision which also "roves without rein" link the series of scenes in this vision, so as to discourage judgement and the individuation of specific images. Nevertheless, the voice of Michael, though subtle, penetrates the vision, and can be detected in the poet-narrator's descriptive accounts. The references to the men who by their guises seem just, and whose studies are seemingly "bent" on knowing God's works "Not hid," as well as the description of the wanton dress of the women which entrances the gazers, jar with the scene as viewed by Adam. The "bent" of Nature is to admit delight, the poet-narrator claims (596-7). It is this tendency that makes the idealization of Nature--Adam's conclusion that "Here Nature seems fulfill'd in all her ends" (602)--particularly dangerous, Michael warns (603-06).

Through his verbal corrections and interventions, Michael is ultimately engaged in what Barthes calls "contra-censorship." Barthes defines this opposition to the establishment of stereotypes as follows:

The ultimate subversion (contra-censorship) does not necessarily consist in saying what shocks public opinion, morality, the law, the police, but in inventing a paradoxical (pure of any *doxa*) discourse: *invention* (and not provocation) is a revolutionary act: it cannot be accomplished other than in setting up a new language.... it is in having invented a vast discourse founded in its own repetitions (and not those of others), paid out in details, surprises, voyages, menus, portraits,

configurations, proper nouns, etc.: in short, contra-censorship, from the forbidden, becomes the novelistic. (126)

Like Hill³² and Quint (130-1), Annabel Patterson suggests that the creation of a symbolic and ambiguous language is an act of contra-censorship. Announcing that her argument on censorship is hospitable to, and indeed dependent upon a belief in authorial intention--which can nevertheless not be reduced to a positivist belief in meanings that authors fix--Patterson maintains that authors build a "*functional ambiguity*" into their texts, though they ultimately have no control over what happens to the text thereafter (18). Ambiguity becomes thereby for Patterson one message that the author has managed successfully to convey. Though ambivalence is certainly one means of challenging censorship, not every multifaceted literary subject is necessarily a response to an author's politically and culturally oppressed environment. I cannot dismiss the possibility that Milton's ambiguities were also very much informed by indeterminacy in language of which the poet was perhaps not fully conscious.³³

Patterson decides not to apply her theory of functional ambiguity to her brief analysis of Milton. Yet she does suggest that a potential application would have to address the ambivalent political content which she identifies in Milton's three post-Restoration poems. Patterson reminds us that we do not know whether Milton turned to biblical reinterpretation in order to transcend his political experience, or whether he was still operating in the tradition articulated by James 1 before he became king, that matters of the commonwealth "are to grave materis for a Poet to mell in" (20). The latter is a tradition which Milton would have to confront by resorting to functional ambiguity. An apolitical interpretation would not necessarily rid the texts of all ambiguities and presume a monological voice and clarity of meaning, though that has been the tendency in New Critical approaches to Milton, as we discovered in chapter 2. In this study, I concur with Patterson and Hill that political censorship is a factor in accounting for the complexity of the issues and the plurality of those issues in Milton's poem. At the same

time, I recognize that Milton was also responding to a whole range of collective categories and traditions to which he claimed an ambiguous relationship, or at least, that is the suggestion of his multivocal texts.

Michael in book 11 defamiliarizes stereotypes, breaks fixed images, and then begins the construction of a new set of images, a paradoxical discourse. After elaborating on the dialectical nature of death, of Nature--including the nature of women--and of patterns of history, which Adam fails to recognize, Michael describes the destruction of Eden by the flood. The iconoclastic act by God at the end of this book--which is also an attack on Catholic idolatry promoted by Renaissance theological commentaries that maintained the existence of paradise³⁴--anticipates the destruction of the tower of Babel at the opening of the subsequent book. The significance of both constructions is dependent upon how they are received. As a place or image that derives importance from its past associations with innocence and fecundity, Eden is lost to history. The significance of the image does not remain fixed. God breaks the external structure to indicate that he "attributes to place / No sanctity, if none be thither brought / By Men who there frequent, or therein dwell" (836-8). In the place of the icons, Michael offers a different set of images that speak again of a correspondence between the sign and the signified. Like Abdiel and Enoch, Noah--the one just Man (819) who provides the only example of righteousness in "a world devote to universal rack"--does manage to intervene in the historical process: "One Man except, the only Son of Light / In a dark age, against example good, / Against allurements, custom, and a World / Offended" (808-11). For Milton, Noah--as well as Enoch and Elijah, who in the Catholic commentaries are granted refuge in Eden--must internalize paradise and remain in history to struggle in this world. Elijah, in anticipation of the Son, remains to struggle in the desert, Eden's shadow (PR 1.353, 2.268, 277). The other image that Michael introduces at the end of book 11 is that of the rainbow, a sign of the new covenant between God and humanity, that promises the historical interpreter a different course to future time.

iii:

From vision to voice

The five opening lines of book 12 were introduced by Milton with the creation of the twelve-book edition. The narrative is redirected at this point in the poem. The archangel pauses "Betwixt the world destroy'd and the world restor'd" (12.3), marking the transition from book 11 to 12, and indicating the point reached in the historical and narrative account. The transitional moment also draws attention to the presence and involvement of the audience--Adam. Michael pauses between worlds to provide the opportunity for Adam to interpose (4). A similar interruption of the narrative took place at the start of book 8, which also became a separate book with the creation of the twelve-book edition. Book 8 is devoted to Adam's own story, but by book 12 the personal has become the political. How that happens is an issue that book 12 continues to address. That it happens is reflected in the double-voiced structure of the narrative. Though Michael provides the verbal descriptions of the course of human history that is set into motion by Adam's actions, the prophetic account is amplified, even provoked, by Adam's own readings of the future events.

The beginning of book 12 marks another transition: that from revelation to narration, or vision to voice. Leonard Mustazza suggests that the move from image-narrative to verbal-narrative is progressive, as it announces the start of the internalization process (110). This reading, however, does not account for Michael's explanation of the change to narrative. The angel is compensating for Adam's inadequate vision rather than appealing to his insight: "I perceive / Thy mortal sight to fail; objects divine / Must needs impair and weary human sense" (8-10). In book 12, the correspondence between and translation from the visual to the verbal, and then from word to word is imperfect. Manifestations of divinity are reduced to signs (11.351) and

mediated words. By book 12, Adam's idolatry and inability to distinguish between image and model--the cause of the original sin--now wholly impairs his external vision. The images too are deprived of significance, just as the garden of Eden itself has no value, other than that attributed to it by its inhabitants. In the place of revelation is a new language, a process of speech. Truth can no longer be manifested in a single image, or expressed by a monological voice. Instead, multifaceted truths are created and become gradually evident through the process of speech, on which self-understanding and the formation of identity is also contingent.

The potential for idolizing words or a certain language is the same as it is for images. Book 12 begins with such an example of idolatry, as Michael's revelation in book 11 had begun with the series of images commemorating fame. The account of the fall of Babel reveals the consequences of the attempt to institutionalize a particular truth at the expense of others. God confronts the builders as an iconoclast, and prevents the completion of the tower, while displacing the privileged native language. As we found in chapter 1, language and politics are intricately connected, and both can be systemized and tyrannized. The account also confirms the association between the personal and political: political tyranny has its roots in the original act of idolatry, and in the loss of government over the self. Adam has some understanding of the connection, as his response indicates: "Man over men / He made not Lord; such title to himself / Reserving, human left from human free" (69-71). Michael thereafter outlines the psychological implications of political oppression in much greater detail (79-96). Discipline and authority must first be developed from within before they can be applied.

In the next scene, Michael personalizes the political, and offers an example of historical intervention by narrating the story of Abraham--the former idolator called by God to institute the new covenant between God and humanity. Michael uses the opportunity to denounce idolatry:

O that men

(Canst thou believe?) should be so stupid grown,
 While yet the Patriarch liv'd, who scap'd the Flood,
 As to forsake the living God, and fall
 To worship thir own work in Wood and Stone
 For Gods! (115-120)

Though "Bred up in Idol-worship" (115), Abraham obediently forsakes his birthplace, and trusting in providence, leaves for an unknown land. The story of the patriarch provides an example for Adam of an individual who renounces idolatry--previously associated with Nimrod--and who follows on faith the ambiguous voice of God. Michael paraphrases God's calling of Abraham

into a Land

Which he will show him, and from him will raise
 A mighty Nation, and upon him show'r
 His benediction so, that in his Seed
 All Nations shall be blest. (122-26)

The verbal promise was one also delivered to Adam and Eve. Through active participation in history, both in terms of critical engagement with the course of events, and in terms of their continued labouring, Adam and Eve gradually learn the significance of the words of promise. After presenting the story of Abraham, Michael invites Adam:

This ponder, that all Nations of the Earth
 Shall in his Seed be blessed; by that Seed
 Is meant thy great deliverer, who shall bruise
 The Serpent's head; whereof to thee anon
 Plainlier shall be reveal'd. (147-51)

The promised Seed refrain is one that Adam is asked again to consider, and through faith and time, arrive at a greater understanding of. Moreover, Adam joins his successors in the act of interpretation, one that continues indefinitely. Even when word and image are

joined again in the Incarnation, the failure of the people to attribute any significance to the divine intervention--the union of God with man (382)--means that its impact in the historical continuum is undercut.

Michael's narration proceeds only to address the lack of historical and political progress. In the subsequent account, the angel describes the ten plagues in Egypt created by God as "Signs and Judgments dire" (175) to the lawless Tyrant. Pharaoh, fearing an assault on his power, takes action against the expansion of the people of Abraham, in a manner reminiscent of Nimrod. Joseph, who is made leader of the Israelites on the basis of merit--his "worthy deeds / Raise him to be the second in that Realm / of Pharaoh" (161-3)--guides the people to Egypt, where, after Joseph's death, they are met with oppression:

There he dies, and leaves his Race
 Growing into a Nation, and now grown
 Suspected to a sequent king, who seeks
 To stop thir overgrowth, as inmate guests
 Too numerous; whence of guests he makes them slaves
 Inhospitably, and kills thir infant Males. (163-8)

The tyrant's opposition to the expansion of the Israelites is indicated by the repetition of the word "grow" in line 164 as "overgrowth" in 166. Michael thereby contrasts the leadership of Joseph to that of the sequent king, who fails to heed the word of God (173-4).

At the point, we are reminded of the account of Adam's and Eve's different responses to the excessive growth of the vegetation in the garden. In book 9 the poet-narrator recounts the couple's conversation on the subject of "how that day they best may ply / Thir growing work: for much thir work outgrew / The hands' dispatch of two Gard'ning so wide" (201-3). Again the reference to "growing" at the beginning of verse 202 and "outgrew" at the end contrasts two opposing attitudes towards the idea of

organic development that extends beyond the control of a single individual. Superfluity in language, nature and politics is connected, and proves a threat to absolutism and a blessing to the promoters of change. As we recall, Eve, in the speech that introduces the separation scene, decided that "excess" must be contained:

the work under our labor grows,
 Luxurious by restraint; what we by day
 Lop overgrown, or prune, or prop, or bind,
 One might or two with wanton growth derides
 Tending to wild. (208-12)

Of course the couple is expected to perform its share of the work in Eden. However, using the image of the garden, Adam attempts to convince Eve, though in vain, of their involvement in a larger historical process whose ends cannot be determined or met by individual efforts. The ecological metaphor that addresses the different significance and contribution of individual members in a dynamic community extends to organic social development.

Guiding the Israelites out of bondage from Egypt is Moses, who serves as mediator between God and humanity at a time when the voice of God had grown "dreadful" to the mortal ear (235-6). The ordain'd Laws constitute the covenant between God and a corrupted humanity. The laws are given to the people "to evince / Their natural pravity" (287-8), thereby compelling them to distinguish between rightful and transgressive behaviour. Furthermore, the laws pertain both to civil Justice and to religious rites (230-1). Moses, who is temporarily responsible for their institution, serves, in turn, both as a political and religious leader. Though denouncing the association between civil and ecclesiastical power in his political treatises, Milton offers Moses's government as an example in the poem of how the two realms can constructively be joined again. This philosophical statement is part of Milton's greater attempt to apply the religious statements on free will to social and political issues both

in and outside of the poem. The kind of government that Michael describes at this point is a type for the commonwealth Milton proposes for the future of the nation, as I explained in chapter 1.

Through Adam's questioning, we learn that the laws are not ends in themselves, but components of a larger process (280-84). Michael ruptures the fixed system of history to represent what was determined as embryonic, and to suggest thereby that his own voice will give way to that of future interpreters. The Old Testament laws Michael describes form a language of types and shadows that speak of the destin'd Seed (232-5), who establishes a new covenant "disciplin'd / From shadowy Types to Truth, from Flesh to Spirit," and from "works of Law to works of Faith" (300-06). Moses, who introduces and foretells of One Greater (242), assumes the high office of mediator of God. The typological model of political leadership, as well as the law, and the types and shadows of language will be fulfilled by the infinite reign of Christ, the living Word, who predicts his ascension to the position of the last of kings on the basis of merit (329-30). The Son's example and "God-like act" of offering his life annuls the doom (12.428), while fulfilling the prophecies spoken throughout the poem (429-30), so that word and deed might again be joined at the end of worldly time. This too is the premise of the poem, whose staging of the multiple voices, and whose language and exemplary social and political models offer the types and shadows for the establishment of the English commonwealth that remains deferred.

The incarnation itself does not bring about the end of history; it is, rather, an intervention into the course of history which humanity itself perpetuates. Though fulfilling the Old Testament prophecies, the Anointed King Messiah is barred from his right to rule (359-60). Again, Milton emphasizes that authority is in the hands of the people, and must be recognized by them in order to be instituted. It is allotted no sanctity if given none by those for whom it is intended. Ecstatic at the prospect of finally understanding the significance of the prophetic words and the identity of the Seed, Adam

mistakenly assumes that both the narrative and the historical process in which he participates have reached their conclusion:

Virgin Mother, Hail,

High in the love of Heav'n, yet from my Loins

Thou shalt proceed, and from thy Womb the Son

Of God most High; So God with man unites.

Needs must the Serpent now his capital bruise

Expect with mortal pain: say where and when

Their fight, what stroke shall bruise the Victor's heel. (379-85)

It is imperative that Adam achieve for himself understanding of his future role. At the same time, he must come to know the context in which that role will be effective. The Son's ascension to power and his place in history must be comprehended in similar terms. Adam is guilty, as Satan was, of literalizing the significance of the capital bruise, which is prophesied for Satan as a "local wound" (387). Michael explains to Adam that the Son will participate in human history and confront Satan, but "Not by destroying Satan, but his works / In thee and in thy Seed" (394-5). As the second Adam, the incarnated Christ experiences Adam's own history and temptation. By overcoming his temptation, he shows that he merits his authority.

The incarnation begins another phase of history which the redemption perpetuates. The redemption derives significance from the redeemed who recognize their indebtedness to the Son for having paid their ransom by his death. However, the individuals also participate in that very act, as the poem indicates. Michael explains that the Son will die that all might be eligible to "embrace" the benefits of the redemption by

faith not void of works: this God-like act

Annuls thy doom, the death thou shouldst have di'd,

In sin for ever lost from life; this act

Shall bruise the head of Satan, crush his strength

Defeating Sin and Death. (426-31)

"This God-like act" refers both to the voluntary death of Christ and, by juxtaposition, to the "embracing" of its value by faith and works. After the ascension of her Master, Truth is hewn into a multitude of pieces, Milton explains in the Areopagitica (2.519). The faithful few who choose to follow the Son, begin the reassembly of Truth by imitating the redemption in word and deed. The Son

them shall leave in charge

To teach all nations what of him they learn'd

And his Salvation, them who shall believe....

and in mind prepar'd, if so befall,

For death, like that which the redeemer di'd. (439-45)

Again, the juxtaposition of the disciples' death with Christ's own emphasizes the similarity of the God-like speech-acts, and thereby suggests the possibility for further interventions in the course of history.

Concluding this portion of the narrative account, Michael discusses how at the time of the world's dissolution, reward and punishment will be conferred on the basis of merit. Heaven and Earth will be united to form a paradise "far happier place / Then this of Eden, and far happier days" (464-5), an indication that history will continue, though in a manner different from worldly history. Adam's response is his proclamation of the *felix culpa*, which has him reconsidering the moral consequences of the fall:

full of doubt I stand,

Whether I should repent me now of sin

By mee done and occasion'd, or rejoice

Much more, that much more good thereof shall spring. (469-78)

Michael directs Adam's attention away from the end of worldly time in order that he might focus again on the process in which he is involved, a process very much influenced

by the ill effects of the fall. Thereby Adam might correct for himself his misconception of the *felix culpa*. Rather than looking to that ultimate "Paradise, far happier place / Then this of Eden," Adam must concentrate on the creation of a paradise within, happier far than the one he leaves (586-7). Adam's participation in world history involves the development and possession of an individual paradise, the culmination of Eden, yet a type for the Paradise to be created outside of worldly time.

In the meantime, however, Adam's successors will continue to attempt to establish monuments to absolute power through the appropriation of language, a tyrannizing of the Word. Wolves will succeed as teachers, and, in order to meet their own political ends, will literalize and pervert the sacred mysteries given "To all believers." Again rupturing word and deed,

they seek to avail themselves of names
 Places and titles, and with these to join
 Secular power, though feigning to act
 By spiritual, to themselves appropriating
 The Spirit of God, promised alike and given
 To all believers; and from that pretence,
 Spiritual laws by carnal power shall force
 On every conscience. (515-522; my emphasis)

Milton's account of human history had opened in book 11 with an unexplicated vision of the numerous monuments to power established throughout history. Michael's narration concludes with the description of the attempted *appropriation* of language and titles for political purposes. In the middle of the narrated history in books 11 and 12 is the account of Babel that addresses both kinds of tyranny, the idolatry of the image and word. In contrast to Nimrod's oppression and that of the builders of the future babels (515-524), are the Apostles who, having been endued to speak all tongues and perform all

miracles "As did their Lord before them," offer the message of redemption to the diverse nations in their individual languages.

Michael began the post-lapsarian narrative with the intent to reveal to Adam the political implications of the personal. At its completion, Adam acknowledges, inversely, the value of individual efforts in the greater political context,

by small

Accomplishing great things, by things deemed weak

Subverting worldly strong, and worldly wise

By simply meek; that suffering for truth's sake

Is fortitude to highest victory. (566-570)

If individual acts have dire social consequences, then they might also be the means for effecting constructive social change. Instruction and knowledge must be complemented by action. If the poem is greatly concerned with psychological issues, it is so because it is intensely socially and politically oriented.

Having attained the sum of wisdom about the cosmos, and having been given the power to name nature's works (12.575-80), Adam must learn again to internalize and apply that control in developing the paradise within himself. The internal paradise shapes and is shaped by actions or deeds, which receive particular emphasis in the passage recited by Michael (581-5). "Deeds" is separate from and yet encompasses knowledge, faith, virtue, patience, temperance and love or charity. Michael's list of the Christian virtues is taken from 2. Peter 1:5-7:

Therefore give even all diligence thereunto: joyne moreover vertue with
your faith: and with vertue, knowledge: / And with knowledge,
temperance: and with temperance, pacience: and with pacience, godlines: /
And with godlines, brotherlie kindenes: and with brotherlie kindenes,
love.

The climactic gradation of the qualities is challenged in several ways in the poem. First, as Michael advises Adam to add deeds to his knowledge, so Milton literally adds the word "deeds" to the hierarchy of Christian virtues. Michael highlights the word by isolating it from the other virtues. Though he identifies the virtues individually, he uses few words to separate them from each other. The structure of the passage suggests that "deeds" incorporates the remainder of the virtues:

only add

Deeds to thy knowledge answerable, add Faith,

Add Virtue, Patience, Temperance, add Love,

By name to come called Charity, the soul

Of all the rest. (581-5)

Offering an alternative reading of the passage, Fowler suggests that "virtue" is placed in the centre to lend it prominence as the heart of the structure. Yet at the end of the list, Milton conflates love and charity, which together comprise the soul of the rest, so that a reading of the virtues in terms of a gradation is also a possibility.

Adam himself perpetuates the process of evangelization, when he is asked by Michael to waken and recount to Eve the content of the historical narrative. He finds her, however, already awake, and it is she who addresses Adam with words that constitute the last speech of the poem, excluding the poet-narrator's final description. By the end of the narrative, Adam moves temporarily into the private world, the paradise within. The connectedness of the private and public sphere is indicated by the discovery of Eve's knowledge of human history presented to her in the alternative medium of dreams. Though apparently having been confined to the private sphere of dreams, Eve, to the ignorance of Adam and Michael, simultaneously participated in the public, political realm, which she now suggests the couple enter together. Eve carries the Word with her: "By me the Promised Seed shall all restore" (623). The poem ends with the promise of continued conversation (598, 624-5).

Notes

¹See C.B. Macpherson, The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke.

²Anthony Yu, "Life in the Garden: Freedom and the Image of God in Paradise Lost," 247-71.

³Hill comments on humanity's increasing ability to control its environment, including the social environment (God's Englishmen 237). For Milton the abuse of nature was also characterized by the kind of exorbitance of which Raphael warns Adam and Eve (7.126-30), or which is apparent in the descriptions of Comus.

⁴The encyclopedic nature of this garden of the East also has political implications for Milton, as the poet's anti-orientalist representation of its diversity suggests. Images of growth used in the account of Eden are invoked in book 12 in reference to the expansion of the Israelites, which I address in part 3.

⁵Hill reads the fall as a historical event (344), and suggests that Milton is the first to use the fall to explain the failure of the revolution (352). In reaction to Joseph Mede's account, Milton describes the universal impact of the fall (399).

⁶See Delany on female autobiographies of the seventeenth century (158-66). In his study, Delany characterizes the differences between male and female writings, for which he later also provides sociological explanations: "In general, female

autobiographies have a deeper revelation of sentiments, more subjectivity and more subtle self-analyses than one finds in comparable works by the men" (5).

⁷The largely ahistorical analyses of Marcia Landy, Sandra Gilbert and Christine Foula have been challenged by Barbara Lewalski, Mary Nyquist, Joan Webber and Diane McColley (see Halley 251 n2,3). Milton's statements on the culture's gender hierarchies are multi-faceted, making the efforts by Joseph Wittreich, Stevie Davies and Philip Gallagher to divest the poems of every vestige of antifeminism problematic.

⁸Berg and Berry argue that prophetic activity by women represented a significant site of resistance in the revolutionary period, a resistance against the acceptance of sexual difference and all that implied in the seventeenth century (51).

⁹In contrast to Sherry, Belsey suggests that the signifiers in the poem are effaced along with metre, rhyme and rhythm in favour of the individual struggling feeling voice (31).

¹⁰Each text is characterized by a double linearity, that of the *fabula*--the series of events in the story--and that of the *text* in reference to the series of sentences and the narrative effect of word order (Bal 52).

¹¹Satan also loves (his own) thought, as Knoespel explains (81).

¹²In his edition of Spenser, Thomas Roche explains that the books and pamphlets represent theological treatises which debate the nature of the one true church, a theological controversy which involves the debaters--whom would Milton identify as the infernal pamphleteers (YE 7.452)--in Error's den (1007 n206).

¹³For the Renaissance conception of Scylla, and the identification of Scylla's sin of lust with Sin's see Milton and the Renaissance Ovid.

¹⁴For an account of the tradition of the allegorical figures Mercy, Justice and Wisdom see The Sinews of Ulysses 81-3.

¹⁵See Nyquist's account of Milton's conflation of the two versions of Genesis in "Gynesis, Genesis, Exegesis, and Milton's Eve."

¹⁶Acoustic Mirror, 83.

¹⁷Nyquist in "Gynesis, Genesis, Exegesis, and Milton's Eve" addresses much more extensively the question of why Eve tells her story first (192-3).

¹⁸Acoustic Mirror, 78.

¹⁹This passage is conspicuous by its absence in Joseph Wittreich's analysis of feminist reactions to Paradise Lost in Feminist Milton.

²⁰Remembering and Repeating, 18. Also see Victor Turner, The Forest of Symbols, 97 and David Bevington, Action is Eloquence, 3.

²¹Leonard Mustazza, Such Prompt Eloquence, 73.

²²The Miltonic differentiation anticipates the Freudian distinction between the male overvaluation of the loved object and the female tendency toward self-love or "narcissism" (Nyquist, "Gynesis" 201).

²³In the dream, the yet unidentified voice of Satan manipulates the divine mandate in word and deed. The promised ascent to godhead ironically ends in a fall. The constructive shaping power of reason, on the other hand, creates the potential for action. Eve relates the experience of her dream, produced in part through mimic fancy, and determines both that it was a dream and that this particular event was unfamiliar to her. Adam reasons further, providing a shape to and explanation for the act of dreaming. He concludes that Eve will not participate in the dream-enacted scene which she herself has judged distasteful. Though dismissed at this point in book 5, the connection between dreaming and waking, as between imagination and reasoning, is suggested.

²⁴Though his companionlessness is a function of his perfection or completeness (8.427-9), Milton's God has the voice of a male. His speeches are echoed more than they echo the words of any other character. However, the relationship between Father and Son complements in various ways that between Adam and Eve; and in PR, the Son's voice can be characterized as feminine.

²⁵Commenting on his relationship with the "great elder writers" who include Milton, Coleridge describes how he and his contemporaries carry on their work: "to us there remain only quiet duties, the constant care, the gradual improvement, the cautious unhazardous labours of the industrious though contented gardener--to prune, to strengthen, to engraft, and one by one to remove from its leaves and fresh shoots the slug and the caterpillar" (The Friend No.4--Sept. 7, 1809; qtd. in Wittreich, Romantics on Milton 215).

²⁶A false sense of independence is achieved through the complete separation of the nation from any sense of government, as I discussed in chapter 1 and the beginning of chapter 2. From a theological perspective, the separation scene can be read in terms of Eve's "incipient voluntarist antinomianism" which causes her to break an actual positive law of paradise--her cooperation with Adam's governance. "Humanistic antinomian" Adam fails to provide the spirit that underlies freedom by giving the command "Go" to Eve, thus allowing her to reduce obedience to its merely logical, or legalistic meaning (Bennett 116).

²⁷See Cheryl Fresch, "Milton's Eve and the Problem of the Additions to the Command," 83-90.

²⁸The scene also echoes in various ways Satan's idolatry of Sin, thus suggesting Adam's greater culpability in provoking the fall, according to Gallagher (104).

²⁹Conversation is associated with constructive dialogue, and is not just the opposite of muteness. Milton warns in The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce: "Who knowes not that the bashful muteness of a virgin may oft-times hide all the unliveliness and natural sloth which is really unfit for conversation."

³⁰See Milton and the Science of the Saints for the corresponding epiphanic moment in the Aeneid (172).

³¹Hirst, Authority and Conflict, 362.

³²Hill explains that Milton was a marked man, fortunate to have escaped with his life; "censors would certainly be alert to anything written by him." He could not put his heresies or public opinions "into his last poems, except perhaps by a subterfuge wherein radically new interpretations are forged out of subtle reformulations of traditional materials" (Collected Essays 1.61). Also see Biographia Literaria 1.2.37 where Coleridge addresses Milton's persecution during his latter days.

³³Patterson suggests that "functional ambiguity frees us somewhat from more radically skeptical conclusions about indeterminacy in language and its consequences for the reader or critic" (18).

³⁴Though many Catholic as well as Protestant writers assumed the destruction of Eden, Protestants were ready to assail the views of those writers--Sixtus of Siena, Cardinal Bellarmine, Leonardus Lessius and Marius of Cologne--who still maintained its existence and its occupation by Enoch and Elijah as examples of popish error (Duncan 190-3).

Chapter IV

STAGING VOICES IN PARADISE REGAINED

He nothing common did or mean

Upon that memorable scene:

But with his keener eye

The axe's edge did try:

Nor called the gods with vulgar spite

To vindicate his helpless right,

But bowed his comely head,

Down, as upon a bed. (Marvell, "An Horation Ode" 57-64)

Licence they mean, when they cry liberty

For who loves that must first be wise and good.

(Milton, Sonnet 12)

Part 1

Contra-censorship and Prophecy

Various critics from Arnold Stein to Joan Bennett and Christopher Hill have attempted to dissuade us from reading Paradise Regained as a political allegory of Milton's post-revolutionary resignation to quietism.¹ Arthur Milner who connects the nondramatic quality of the poem with Milton's quietism (178) argues, nevertheless, that the endorsement of a withdrawal from politics should be regarded as a temporary

strategy that is only part of a long-term solution. The debate in which Satan and the Son engage is, however, not a substitute for political engagement; it relocates, without confining, that engagement in language, a highly dramatic and prophetic language in which alternative voices find expression.

In the poem, then, the Son can renounce temporal force, but his verbal criticism of an absolute and centralized governmental power is not the expression of a quietist attitude. The Son has only one internal monologue in Paradise Regained, one in which he speaks in several voices and in which others are accommodated as well. Without dominating the debate, he demystifies Satan's own voices² and his illusory stage settings. Moreover, the Son engages in contra-censorship by defamiliarizing images of authority, history and prophecy, and of martyrdom and kingship for which he himself provides an alternative example. The significance of the example he offers is gradually revealed³ as he comes to understand his own role in the historical process that Satan attempts to bring to an end.

In this chapter, I will address the relationship between language, politics and interpretations of historical progress by examining how each is represented in the debates of the poem that culminates in a tower of Babel scene. The confrontations occur as speech contests initiated by Satan's attempts to incarnate history by provoking the Son to respond definitively or to assert his absolute authority. In the poem, Satan hopes to persuade the Son that he is a character in a plot or narrative--a poem of history--whose events continually offer new opportunities to validate his power through an act of speech. Rather than presenting him with genuine possibilities, Satan, however, censors and gradually narrows the Son's choices in order to trap him. When he finally inquires "What dost thou in this World" (4.372), we recognize the limitations of his materialistic vision which prevents him from discerning alternatives to his proposals. Satan's failed temptations, like the voices he adopts, differ little from each other, and are ultimately implicated in an endlessly repetitive historical context or continuum.

The Son's responses, in turn, disrupt that continuum. They do so by demystifying the temptations that Satan makes, and by offering a language of paradox and difference that challenges Satan's oratory and his "smooth answers," and that suggests alternative means of engaging the world.

It is not that the Son fails to acknowledge that there is a plot or sense of history at all;⁴ rather, he recognizes that he can only intervene in the narrative and not control its outcome. His limited knowledge of his destiny and his use of evasive language suggest that he is not an author, as the majority of critics have characterized him, but a participant in the poem and in the processual course of history. Since the Christian view of the poem of history is that of a closed work, Satan at one level may not be out of order in demanding that the principles of closure be made known. At the same time, Satan is especially interested in placing the Son in the poem of history where he can be dealt with. If the Son writes the poem, he can write Satan out of it. But this is not the case; the debate between the two voices must be staged. The Son's use of human discourse and his engagement in debate with Satan rupture a closed sense of destiny, and reconstruct history and the poem itself as processual.

Each of the dramatic voices in the poem must have representation. None may deny the contribution of the other voices or assume absolute control over the narrative. A monological, hierarchical understanding assigns a fixed status to marginal voices which must, then, achieve their identity within that status. A process-oriented view, on the other hand, can leave the status of voices indeterminate, treating understanding as emergent and provisional rather than as the progressive inscription of some transcendental blueprint. The difficulty with talking about marginal voices in Paradise Regained is that hardly any are to be heard. With the exception of the prophetic voices of the fishermen and Mary, the poem is overwhelmingly a debate between two principal speakers, thus making its format hostile to multivocality. However, in the context of

this study, I am suggesting that one of the discourses (Christ's) is implicitly multivocal and objects throughout to the univocality of the opposing discourse.

In this unadorned epic or mock-epic, the Son defies both an absolute, literalist language, and a language that allows for the endless play of signification. Correspondingly, he challenges both a purely materialist view of history and a view which denies any pattern at all to the historical process. The Son's voice is iconoclastic, breaking the visual and verbal icons Satan offers him, and providing a language of alternatives which Satan's speeches cannot accommodate. The final scene, my primary consideration in Part 2 of this chapter, is a dramatization of the account of Nebuchadnezzar's reconstructed tower of Babel. Language and politics again complement each other; Satan's fall from the pinnacle signifies, I will argue, the imaginative death of the monological, negating voice and thereby of monarchy.

i:

Political exempla and negating and debating voices

In De Republica Anglorum, Thomas Smith expresses his disillusion with the sixteenth-century government's inability to accept social and temporal changes. By the next century, politicians were compelled to acknowledge that dissent resulted not from a deluded nation, but from the subjection of the people to a government unfit for their time and diverse interests. The discontented multitudes, in turn, began to hold the origins of political authority up for question. Society, as an organic whole, could no longer be artificially forced to worship a particular image, or be expected to conform to the decrees of a single voice. Nevertheless, the outrage of the crowd at the regicide qualified the radicals' assertion that the people believed in their right to unmediated representation. The need for strong authority was still intrinsic in the existing society.

Yet the king was dead, and for some the divine right of kingship which had denied for so long the right to political representation, had itself provided the impetus for political action. For many others, the regicide merely confirmed the legitimacy of kingship. Rather than defamiliarizing images of kingship, they were perpetuated through the martyrdom of Charles. C.V. Wedgwood claims that "Many, if not most, thinking men then in England felt the earth shake under them when a king was executed on a public scaffold" (102). Poem after poem addressed the regicide in terms of a second crucifixion. The testimony of Clarendon, and the poetry of Abraham Cowley and Bishop Henry King were among the texts that presented the event in this context. Marchamont Needham reports in the History of the English Rebellion:

The Adjutators stern and proud,
Said, He should have no Quarter
Because he is a King; and vow'd
To make the Said a Martyr.

Their Officers cry'd, Hail, O King;
The rest made mocks and scorns;
The Houses vinegar did bring;
And all did plat the thorns.

Thus crucifi'd, Great Charles did live
As dead, is gone away:
For Resurrection, God will give
A new Cor'nation day.... (Lamont 145)

Many of the royalists' poems and ballads that represented Charles as a martyr had to be circulated in manuscript because censorship by the Parliamentarians had made printing impossible. The opposition was also engaged in the censorship of ideas and images in

order to impose a specific interpretation of the historic event. On the day of the execution, there were advance copies of Eikon Basilike already circulating. The book, probably written by John Gauden, Bishop of Worcester, comprised what were claimed to be Charles I's reflections on his rule. Within one and one half months, there were twenty editions produced; by 1650, there were thirty-six.

Milton himself attempted to break both the idolatrous images and the connection between civil and ecclesiastic power that Eikon Basilike offered. Though he came to recognize its necessity and value, the poet-revolutionary espoused the democratization of authority, and relocated the origin of governmental power in the people themselves. In The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates, Milton addresses those kings, who, though claiming the divine right to rule, can not recall when God enthroned them; they can only remember the time when they were chosen by the people. On that basis,

if the peoples act in election be pleaded by a King, as the act of God, and the most just title to enthrone him, why may not the peoples act of rejection, bee as well pleaded by the people as the act of God, and the most just reason to depose him? So that we see the title and just right of raigning or deposing, in reference to God, is found in Scripture to be all one; visible onely in the people, and depending meerly upon justice and demerit. Thus farr hath bin considerd briefly the power of Kings and Magistrates; how it was and is originally the peoples, and by them conferrd in trust onely to bee imployd to the common peace and benefit; with liberty therfore and right remaining in them to reassume it to themselves, if by Kings or Magistrates it be abusd; or to dispose of it by any alternation, as they shall judge most conducing to the public good.

(3.211-2)

Milton's response to the images and voice of kingship embodied in pictures and words is recorded in Eikonoklastes. In the Preface, Milton criticizes the worship of this

iransubstantiated god of flesh and blood. He also reminds the readers of his treatise that the recounted words of Charles, which the royalists idolize, may in fact be subject to interpretation:

how much their intent, who publish'd these overlate Apologies and Meditations of the dead King, drives to the same end of stirring up the people to bring him that honor, that affection, and by consequence, that revenge to his dead Corpse, which hee himself living could never gain to his Person, it appears both by the conceited portraiture before his Book, drawn out to the full measure of a Masking scene, and sett there to catch fools and silly gazers, and by those Latin words after the end, *Vota dabunt quae Bella negarunt*; intimating, That what hee could not compass by Warr, he should atchieve by his Meditations. For in words which admitt of various sense the libertie is ours to choose that interpretation which may best minde us of what our restless enemies endeavor, and what we are timely to prevent. (3.342-3)

The Latin motto, not understood by the readers of the royalist text, leaves the king "a public contriver to bring about that interest by faire and plausible words, which the force of Armes deny'd him" (3.343). Ironically Milton himself attempted to achieve through words what he was prevented from otherwise carrying out in actions.

Moreover, his words anticipate future actions rather than compensating only for failed acts of the past. Ultimately, Milton claims that his iconoclastic text is the much needed response to the royalist treatise:

In one thing I must comment his op'nness who gave the title to this book, *Eikon Basilike*, that is to say, *The King's Image*; and by the Shrine he dresses out for him, certainly would have the people come and worship him. For which reason this answer also is intitt'd *Iconoclastes*, the famous Surname of many Greek Emperors, who in thir zeal to the

command of God, after long tradition of Idolatry in the Church, took courage, and broke all superstitious Images to peeces. (3.343)

A critical reading of textualized voices and images is a significant literary and political act, as the Son will emphasize in Paradise Regained (4.322-30).

Just as the royalists represented the institution of monarchy as impervious to change, and the voice of the king as dominating all exchange, so in challenging the rights and representation of kingship, the Parliamentarians and their supporters had to address not only the visual imagery but also the images of the privileged monarchical voice. Philip Hunton in A Treatise of Monarchie asks the king to "suspend the use of his *negative voice*, resolving to give his royall assent to what shall passe by the major part of both Houses freely voting, concerning all matters of grievance and difference now depending in the two Houses" (79). Henry Parker in Observations upon some of his Majesties late Answers and Expresses advises that Parliament "deny the King's negative voice" altogether (Collins 156-7).

In Eikonoklastes and the Defenses, Milton uses both exempla and the debate format itself to mock the kings and magistrates who abused their political power.⁵ In Eikonoklastes, Milton describes the negative voice of Charles as one that prevents democratic representation in the state and opposes Christian liberty. Christian liberty, purchased by the death of the Redeemer, is never again to be "fetter'd with a presumptuous negative voice, tyrannical to the Parliament, but much more tyrannical to the Church of God" (3.492). The voice of Parliament which attempted to promote religious tolerance and preserve civil liberty, and which "shal have labourd, debated, argu'd, consulted, and... *contributed* for the public good *all thir Counsels in common*" is denied by the solitary negating voice:

nothing can be more *unhappy* ...[than to be repulsed] by the single whiffe of a negative, from the mouth of one wilfull man; nay to be blasted, to be struck as mute and motionless as a Parliament of Tapstrie in the Hangings;

or els after all thir paines and travell to be dissolv'd, and cast away like
 so many Naughts in Arithmetick, unless it be to turne the O of thir
 insignificance into a lamentation with the people, who had so vainly sent
 them. (3.579)

It is the monarchical voice which ultimately prevents the reconstruction of the
 commonwealth: the "negative voice, which like to that little pest at Sea, took upon it to
 arrest and stopp the Common-wealth steering full saile to a Reformation" (3.501).
 Milton demystifies and seeks to break the verbal icon of the king's voice and the image
 into which both Parliament and the commonwealth had been transformed by that voice
 which rendered them mute and impotent. Milton makes the reader, and even the
 misguided people betrayed by monarchy, complicit in his iconoclastic arguments. The
 authorial voice is accompanied and supported by the many who oppose the "negative
 voice." The denunciation of dominating voice of the monarch becomes thereby a
 consensual act of voice.

The political treatises offer not only criticisms of, but also alternatives to,
 monarchy. Because of the reader's involvement, the fashioning of both the ideal
 governor and religious leader is at least rhetorically a composite act, one that begins as
 an iconoclastic performance. To pattern the virtuous man, Milton spurns the texts of
 antiquity and relies instead on the examples provided by Scripture (Animadversions
 1.699), as the Son will also do in response to the temptation of knowledge in Paradise
Regained. Milton then explains that the collective efforts of the nation can demolish the
 image of the king--here Nebuchadnezzar, who as the reconstructor of Babylon in
Paradise Regained, replaces Nimrod in Paradise Lost--and rebuke the monarchical
 control of history:

Wee shall adhere close to the Scriptures of God which hee hath left us as
 the just and adequate measure of truth, fitted, and proportion'd to the
 diligent study, memory, and use of every faithful man, whose every part

consenting and making up the harmonious *Symmetry* of compleat instruction, is able to set out to us a perfect man of God or *Bishop* thoroughly furnish't to all the good works of his charge: and with thi weapon, without stepping a foot further, wee shall not doubt to batter, and throw down your *Nebuchadnezzars* Image and crumble it like the chaffe of the Summer threshing floores, as well the gold of those Apostolick Successors that you boast of, as your *Constantinian* silver, together with the iron, the brasse, and the clay of those muddy and strawy ages that follow. (Animadversions 1.700-1)

The same biblical passage from which this quotation is derived is alluded to in Paradise Regained when the Son prophesies to Satan the destruction of all earthly monarchies (4.146-51), a passage I will address later in this study.

The composition of Paradise Regained, I suggest, was a response to the political representations of monarchy and martyrdom, and to the prophecies which view the Restoration as fulfilling worldly history. From a literary and political perspective, Paradise Regained is an iconoclastic text that provides alternatives to the singular voice and the images of kingship and martyrdom represented in the tradition of texts that influenced Eikon Basilike. The poem is itself indebted to, yet significantly deviates from, the humanist tradition of didactic manuals written in the Renaissance for the fashioning of the gentleman and the instruction or socialization of the courtier, aristocrat and prince. In Panegyricus, Erasmus explains that corrections are facilitated by "offering a pattern of a truly good prince under the guise to flatter them, for thus do you present virtues and disparage faults in such manner that you seem to urge them to the former while restraining them from the latter."

Included among these texts were The Prince, Utopia, A Mirror for Magistrates and The Book of the Governor. The compilation of instructive tragedies that constituted a

text like A Mirror for Magistrates offered a "looking glass," reflecting images of fallen rulers in which magistrates might recognize their own faults and seek to amend them. As I noted in chapter 2, Satan's first address to his fallen cohorts in Paradise Lost is modeled directly on the speech of the Duke of Buckingham in Sackville's "The Induction." Satan's political philosophy serves likewise as a negative example for the reader. The Book of the Governor was informed by more culturally influential texts like Castiglione's The Book of the Courtier, Patrizi's De regno et regis institutione, Erasmus' Institutio principis Christiani, and Pontano's De principe which were all known to Thomas Elyot. Elyot, in turn, influenced Roger Ascham's The Scholemaster which was recommended in The Courtier, and was a testament to humanism that built an educational, political and moral code on the study of Christ, religion, classical literature and the ancient philosophers. Texts of political and cultural instruction like these were written as highly stylized and rhetorical prose narratives, arguing by analogy and providing copious exempla, and in the case of The Scholemaster, incorporating numerous autobiographical digressions to mix instruction with delight. Texts which consisted largely of illustrations and "living examples" of the ideal courtier included Utopia and A Mirror for Magistrates.⁶ The Courtier went to greater lengths to represent and dramatize various voices in different kinds of conversations. Elyot's Of the Knowledge Which Maketh a Wise Man, written shortly after in 1533, took the form of a quasi-Socratic dialogue between Plato and Aristippus on the correspondence of knowledge and virtue. The edifying dialogue sought to formulate the uses of rational self-control toward an exemplary virtuous life.

In Paradise Regained, the representation of the Son as an ideal political and moral example of leadership and as an alternative to the courtier is both the subject and the product of the debate between the Son and Satan. The establishment of governmental leadership, like the formation of the commonwealth, depends on dialogue which it must continue to encourage. "The best way of approaching the truth is by conferences and

mutual debates not speeches or sermons," William Waiwyn notes in The Vanitie of the Present Churches (Haller 262-3). The debate format which Milton continued to defend even in his last pamphlet is most effectively dramatized in Paradise Regained.

The debate in the poem is, however, not merely a contest of power between opposites. Opposition cannot stand outside that which it opposes. It depends on similarity, but that similarity does not, on the other hand, reduce the debate to a one-sided Socratic dialogue. Satan's propositions are at one level quite rational and rhetorically well argued. Moreover, they genuinely appealed to the Son, as he acknowledges in his soliloquy. Milton does indicate the Son's very human attraction to the possibility of establishing an earthly kingdom.⁷ Still the psychological battle that takes place is one of the past, so that the Son remains largely unmoved by Satan's offers.⁸ Yet to argue that the temptation scenes are ultimately resisted with no great difficulty is not to imply that there is no debate. On the contrary, it suggests that the debate also occurs at another level, and draws particular attention to the conflict between the speakers that is manifested in language. The poem, then, focuses attention on the characters as voices. It is speech that incarnates the Son, and makes the debate itself a formidable contest. The debaters' common reliance on speech also allows Satan an equal opportunity and makes him a worthy contender.

Milton leaves open the possibility for other debates. The proposition of military action and of assuming control over the nation's history, which very much appealed to the Son in his youth, was also attractive to the revolutionaries and Milton himself prior to the Restoration. As such, Paradise Regained represents not only a dialogue between the voices conversing in the poem, but it engages as well in dialogism. It is the presentation of images of authority, both monarchical and republican, that creates a dialogue between this militant poem's ideas and images and its political milieu. The Royalists of the period branded the revolutionaries barbarians and compared them to the

Huns and Saracens who threatened the Christian empire. The revolutionaries, in turn, labelled the king as the great oppressive Turk. The image of the Turk represented an imperialist and autocratic government in which absolute rule by the one begot servile acquiescence in the many.⁹ In *Eikonoklastes*, Milton criticizes Charles for conferring on the people no privilege "above what the *Turks, Jewes, and Moores* enjoy under the Turkish Monarchy" (3.574). Again, Milton speaks of the king "preventing all reply" in the parliamentary debates by assuming absolute power through his "negative voice." This voice "smooths" (574) over all contradiction and difference, as Satan's voice will do throughout the poem:

We expect therefore something more, that must distinguish free Government from slavish. But in stead of that, this King, though ever talking and protesting as smooth as now, sufferd it in his own hearing to be Preacht and pleaded without controule, or check, by them whom he most favoured and upheld, that the Subject had no property of his own Goods, but that all was the Kings right. (3.574)

In a historical-biblical context, the representatives of the barbarian empire included Nimrod, Nebuchadnezzar and the Pharaoh. It is their self-referential images and their voices whose domination is continually challenged in Milton's texts. Addressing the rights of property which Charles instituted reluctantly or with "a negative will," Milton uses images of barbarism to describe the enslavement of the people:

these two heads wherein the utmost of his allowance heere will give our Liberties leave to consist, the one of them shall be so farr onely made good to us, as may support his own interest, and Crown, from *ruin or debilitation*; and so farr Turkish Vassals enjoy as much liberty under *Mahomet* and the Grand Signor: the other we neither yet have enjoyed under him, nor were ever like to doe under the Tyranny of a negative voice,

which he claimes above the unanimous consent and power of a whole Nation virtually in the Parliament. (3.575)

To complement the negative voice, Charles supplies a self-drawn and self-referential image which depends on an inscription for interpretation:

In which negative voice to have bin cast by the doom o' Warr, and put to death by those who vanquisht him in thir own defence, he reck'ns to himself more then a negative *Martyrdom*. But Martyrs bear witness to the truth, not to themselves. If I beare witness of my self, saith *Christ*, my witness is not true. He who writes himself *Martyr* by his own inscription, is like an ill Painter, who, by writing on the shapeless Picture which he hath drawn, is fain to tell passengers what shape it is; which els no man could imagin: not more then how a *Martyrdom* can belong to him, who therefore dyes for his Religion because it is *establisht*. (3.575)

Milton accuses the royalists of mistaking Charles' execution for an act of "martyrdom." The poet interprets the act, not as one of self-denial, but of self-proclamation that seeks to bring the nation's history to its conclusion. Foxe in the Acts and Monuments suggests that Charles' death represented the culmination of the tradition of martyrs which blasphemously associated Charles with Christ (Sandler 182-3), a connection Milton seeks to disrupt (YE 4.644-5). For the Parliamentarians, the idolization of Charles' staged death¹⁰ was a transgression comparable to participating in the ritual of transubstantiation. It was in fact this sensational image of the crucifixion that had served as a primary weapon of the Counter-Reformation.

Promoting Milton's iconoclasm, Paradise Regained is a political and dramatic poem about self-denial and the conversation that is achieved through the self-denying voice. The New Testament represents the crucifixion as the ultimate act of selflessness. Milton, however, aborted an attempt to portray the crucifixion in "The Passion," upon

deciding that manifestations of power were preferable to such acts of resignation. Later Milton would acquire strong political reasons for refusing to use the image of the crucifix in his works when Charles appropriated it as a means of justifying monarchy. As noted, Milton interpreted the "performance" of the execution as an attempt at aggrandizement, and in Eikonoklastes he reminds us of Christ's testimony: "If I beare witness of my self, saith Christ, my witness is not true" (5.283). The poet-revolutionary had little sympathy for martyrdom, or for superhuman or heroic feats of strength which could be revered only and not imitated.¹¹ In Paradise Regained, the Son insists then, "I seek not [my glory], but his / Who sent me, and thereby witness whence I am" (3.106-7). The Son's language of self-denial in the poem does not so much anticipate his eventual surrender of life¹² as it complements his philosophy of politics and history.

Both James and Charles had sought to control language and images of authority through an anti-rhetorical campaign that was perpetuated by the Royal Society, as explained in chapter 2.¹³ Later in the year of the Restoration, censorship was restored when the Commons petitioned the King to issue a proclamation ordering that Milton's two books denouncing monarchy be burnt by the common hangman. The ritual served as an extreme act of censorship, while confirming Milton's announcement that books are living things endowed with power by the promoters and, ironically, by opponents of their ideas. As a result of the monarchy's reintroduction of censorship--which had, however, by no means ceased during the Interregnum--images and voices of dissension were again suppressed.¹⁴ In turn, Milton in Paradise Regained, represents Satan as the Master of Revels, the censor, and the propagator of monarchy, who attempts to provoke the Son to assert his godhead and authority to fulfil the prophecy that declared his reign and the end of worldly history. The provocation takes place through a debate in which Satan asks the Son to participate, and in which he tries to bring history to an end by

tempting the Son to provide definitive and self-confirming responses to the issues he raises. In effect, Satan tempts him to establish an earthly kingdom or to raise Eden literally in the wilderness, an Eden that God had destroyed in an iconoclastic act in Paradise Lost. The Son's struggle, then, is to refuse to declare his own authority, that is, to control the desire to master language by adopting the singular voice of a monarch, and instead to develop an alternative mode of expression.

ii:

Images and voices of kingship in Paradise Regained

The prophetic warning voice of the Proclaimer, John the Baptist, announces the baptism of the Son of God, who arrives unobtrusively: "From Nazareth the Son of Joseph deem'd / To the flood Jordan, came as then obscure, / Unmarkt, unknown" (23-5). The poet-narrator recalls how the Father's voice declared his Son's identity, while the Spirit descended upon him "in likeness of a Dove" (30-2). God's pronouncement becomes a refrain throughout the poem, and the descent of the Spirit, a motif that is subject to various interpretations.

One voice gives play to the next in narrative. There is very little commentary by the narrator of the poem. "Nigh Thunder-struck" by the divine voice (35-6), as he is as well as the end of the poem (4.627), Satan thereafter addresses the council of hell and recounts the scene of baptism in his own terms. The doom of the devils is imminent, Satan acknowledges. As he literalized the significance of the "bruise" in Paradise Lost, so now Satan speaks in a similar manner of the devils' defeat. History is about to come to an end with the fulfillment of prophecy, Satan fears:

that fatal wound

Shall be inflicted by the Seed of Eve

Upon my head, long the decrees of Heav'n

Delay, for longest time to him is short;
 And now too soon for us the circling hours
 This dreaded time have compast, wherein we
 Must bide the stroke of that long-threat'n'd wound,
 At least if so we can, and by the head
 Broken be not intended all our power
 To be infring'd. (53-62)

"Wound" and "head" are repeated, and they are literalized in the verses, as the juxtaposition of "head / Broken" testifies. The circling hours mark the return of the past which haunts Satan, and simultaneously assures him that his temptation will produce identical results: "the way found prosperous once / Induces best to hope of like success" (104-5).

Satan's primary error is his conventional reading of kingship. Satan literalizes both the testimony of John the Baptist's and God's voices, and the sign or image that identifies Jesus as the Son of God:

on his head

A perfect Dove descend[ed], whate'er it meant,
 And out of Heav'n the Sovran voice I heard,
 This is my Son belov'd, in him am pleas'd.
 His Mother then is mortal, but his Sire,
 Hee who obtains the Monarchy of Heav'n,
 And what will he not do to advance his Son? (1.82-8)

Evidently, Satan still believes in the divine right of kings. Associating kingship with absolute political power, then, Satan fears that the Son might usurp the dominion which he had claimed for himself (98-9, 124-5). In turn, the satanic council is amazed by the oratory of "their great Dictator" to whom they unanimously entrust their fate. The response to Satan's commentary, however, comes not from them but from God who has

only this one speech in Paradise Regained. Addressing Gabriel, God sets the stage for the psychological and political drama that will be enacted, one that will redefine the terms of kingship. Contradicting Satan's perception of the relationship between the Father and Son (82-8), God's final words, constituting the poem's refrain, speak of merit: "I have chose / This perfect Man, by merit call'd my Son, / To earn Salvation for the Sons of men" (165-7).

Counterpointing the angelic voices which sing in harmony of the Son's future trials is the solitary voice of the Son himself whose "holy Meditations" are presented in a soliloquy (1.196-293). The Son's account of his inner turmoil and swarming thoughts appears at first to resemble Satan's final apostrophe in Paradise Lost (9.473-93). But Satan addresses his own thoughts to assist him in forgetting the past, and on that basis to justify his opportunism: "Occasion...now smiles" (9.480). These words are repeated by the devil throughout Paradise Regained. Satan's apostrophe, which denies his past, is locked in word play, and leads to the seduction of Eve, as I explained in chapter 2. The Son, on the other hand, deliberately traces his life from his childhood. Moreover, the monologue complements the external struggle rather than evading it: "far from track of men, / Thought following thought, and step by step led on" (1.1-2). The rhythm of the verses themselves imitates the forward motion of the Son's pilgrimage. The poetry, then, is suggestive of the processual course of history in which the Son participates. The soliloquy as a whole is reminiscent of the laments of Adam and Eve after the fall insofar as it dramatizes a struggle of conscience, anticipates further actions, and is the means to the restoration of dialogue.

Though presented in seclusion, the Son's speech nevertheless accommodates other voices. In the soliloquy are the prophetic words of Mary which interrupt and divide the Son's speech. Mary in fact speaks as if she were engaging in conversation with her son,

or as if she heard him speaking. At the same time, she speaks from within the Son. Her advice to him is to incarnate in a speech-act those words which he contemplates:

High are thy thoughts

O Son, but nourish them and let them soar

To what height sacred virtue and true worth

Can raise them, though above example high;

By matchless Deeds express thy matchless Sire. (229-33)

Though contained within the thoughts and speech of the Son, the words of Mary, an otherwise marginal voice in the poem, challenge that containment because they are prophetic. Mary's speech and her examples of prophecy--the visions of Anna and Simeon--mediate between thought and voice or vision and voice.

It is through the written and spoken words of the other characters whom he remembers that the Son moves toward greater self-understanding. The law and writings of the prophets and scribes who knew the Messiah, "partly" informed him of his role. John the Baptist announced his coming, and the Son thereby made the connection between himself and the figure whose birth was foretold in the prophetic texts. Twice, then, subject and object are juxtaposed as the Son recollects this development toward self-awareness; John the Baptist

with loudest voice proclaim'd

Me him (for it was shown him so from Heaven)

Me him whose Harbinger he was. (275-7)

The baptism is described in various ways by several of the characters in the poem, thereby affording each the opportunity to confer an identity on the Son; each interpreter of the event rebaptizes him. In the subsequent account of the baptism, the relationship between Father and Son is confirmed both by sign and voice. The Spirit descends on the Son "like a Dove" (282), the Son recalls, thereby prioritizing the significance of the action over that of the image which Satan had literalized (83). Both image and voice

must be internalized and reinterpreted in the context of the individual's experience. To literalize or materialize either, as Satan does, is to deny the individual act of interpretation. Thereafter, the voice of the Father announces the identity of his Son. The divine voice and sign do not mark the climax or completion of the Son's journey; on the contrary, they signal its commencement (288). The soliloquy which declares the Son's intent to prove his merit ends appropriately with a note of uncertainty:

I am led
 Into this Wilderness, to what intent
 I learn not yet, perhaps I need not know;
 For what concerns my knowledge God reveals. (290-3)

In a manner reminiscent of Spenser's Archimago and Milton's Comus upon his first appearance, Satan conceals his identity through his disguise as "an aged man in Rural weeds" (314), and through his language. Satan appears in the wilderness to tempt the Son to assert his full identity and his authority, and thereby end the pilgrimage and the process of self-discovery. In this first temptation, as well as in the subsequent ones, Satan at once challenges the Son's membership in the godhead, and appeals to his sense of charity for the oppressed:

But if thou be the Son of God, Command
 That out of these hard stones be made thee bread;
 So shalt thou save thyself and us relieve
 With Food, whereof we wretched seldom taste. (342-45)

In response, the Son denounces Satan's materialist preoccupations (347-50) and declares his godhead by refusing to declare it: "Why dost thou then suggest to me distrust, / Knowing who i am, as I know who thou art?" (355-6).

The Son's evasive words serve both to confirm his identity and that of Satan who is consequently "undisguis'd" (357). The scene foreshadows the "undisguising" and fall of Satan through the self-affirming words of the Son at the end of the epic.

Moreover, the scene recalls the undisguising of the "Artificer of fraud" by Uriel in Paradise Lost. In the earlier epic, the stripping is a visual act; in Paradise Regained, it is words that unveil Satan's pretense, and prompt a verbal confession in which Satan offers a brief account of his history. Satan's disguise had of course completely concealed his past up until this point.

The account speaks as well of Satan's conception of history which is largely synonymous with fate, and which thereby defines him as a "Spirit unfortunate" (358). Though having denied his free will even before the fall, Satan undermines the larger consequences of the fall, including his complete separation from God:

I enjoy

Large liberty to round this Globe of Earth,

Or range in th' Air, nor from the Heav'n of Heav'ns

Hath he excluded my resort sometimes. (364-7)

In fact, Satan claims that he has served primarily as an agent of God (377) by illustrating, for example, the "high worth" of Uzzean Job, and by causing the fall of proud King Ahab. Though having lost his original brightness or favour from God, Satan, repeating the word "lost" four times (377-82), insists nevertheless on his ability to recognize and admire virtuousness in words and God-like deeds. In Paradise Lost, Satan, disguised as a "stripling Cherub," had in a similar way attempted to persuade Uriel of his wish to admire the new creation (3.654-80). In Paradise Regained, Satan concludes his speech by announcing his role as an agent of history who will, in opposition to providence, both counter and guide fate. Satan offers advice by presages, signs, answers, oracles, portents and dreams to help direct the future life of humankind whom he identifies as a "Copartner in these regions of the World" (387-96).

The Son, in turn, accuses Satan of deluding the devilish adorers with the ambiguous "double sense" of his oracular predictions by which he appropriates and takes possession of providential truths (453) and of history itself. Satan's followers as

a result succumb to idolatry (443-4). The Son, therefore, proposes to restore their liberty by destroying the false images and by challenging predictability and the closure of history. The processual and individual experience of time is a condition of free will. The oracular voice which directs and determines the future by codifying the past has to be silenced:

henceforth Oracles are ceast,
 And thou no more with Pomp and Sacrifice
 Shalt be Inquir'd at Delphos or elsewhere,
 At least in vain, for they shall find thee mute. (456-9)¹⁵

In place of the singular voice which had made a claim for the sole possession of truth and which attempted to control the course of history, the Son, as a "living Oracle," democratizes access to and interpretation of the historical process. In an act anticipating Pentecost, the Spirit of Truth and the "inward Oracle" make the truth available to all. The Spirit, initially invoked by the poet-narrator, also offers poetic truths, without which the Song of the speaker, would, like Satan's oracles, be rendered mute.

iii:

Resisting muteness: the poet-narrator's intervention

The narrator makes an unobtrusive comment at this point in the poem to describe the setting and introduce the next speaker. The narrative voice does draw attention to itself, however, not by standing outside of the narrative, but by becoming part of it. The speaker, like the Son himself, is ignorant of a number of the details of the recounted events:

Full forty days he pass'd, whether on hill
 Sometimes, anon in shady vale, each night
 Under the covert of some ancient Oak,

Or Cedar, to defend him from the dew,

Or harbor'd in one Cave, is not reveal'd. (1.303-7)

The narrator's subsequent description of the aged man similarly offers several different explanations for his presence in the wilderness (314-19). Rather than precipitating the narrative, the speaker actually suspends it. At the same time, however, his words complement and prolong the Son's own meditation, and thereby delay the entry of Satan who throughout the poem challenges the intervention of voice and suspension of time by attempting to bring the narrative of history to a conclusion.

Unlike the primary speaker of Paradise Lost, the poet-narrator of Paradise Regained remains unobtrusive throughout the poem. Yet he does so not so much by saying relatively little, but by offering more descriptive rather than judgmental commentaries. Moreover, the poet-narrator participates in the historical process more than he anticipates it. His partial knowledge and experience of the aged man complements the reader's and the Son's own. In this scene where he introduces the disguised Satan, the speaker--unlike the poet-narrator of Paradise Lost who signals the temptation and fall through a change in the language and tone of his voice in the poem to book 9--does not mention the upcoming temptation of the Son. Nevertheless, the sound patterns in his speech and the alliteration of "w's" in such words as "wild," "wither'd," "Winter," and "winds" (1.310-18) implicitly connect present and future time, and anticipate Satan's entrance. The antagonist himself will in part echo this sound pattern in the speech that follows (321-34).

Many critics have associated the poet-narrator's unobtrusiveness with the Son's own "meditative lesson in self-removal" (Cunningham 217).¹⁶ Fish and Mustazza both specifically connect silence with obedience and self-denial. However, the Son himself is anything but silent in his poem; moreover, his role consists in part of redeeming language (Mustazza 199). Why redeem language if it is then to be abandoned, Goldsmith asks justifiably (138 n3). I agree that silence is not conjunct with

obedience in the poem. Furthermore, it is Satan who is not only rendered mute at various times throughout the poem, but who continually attempts to end the dialogue himself. The poet-narrator, on the other hand, invokes the muse out of fear of muteness, since poetry is itself adverse to silence. By juxtaposition, the very inspiration invoked by the poet is also infused in the Son: "By proof the undoubted Son of God, inspire, / As thou art wont, my prompted Song else mute" (11-12).

Woodhouse claims Paradise Regained is a dialogue set in a framework of narrative (168). The inspired poetic voice--conspicuous by its relative absence as well as by its association with the voice of the Son--is given the power to "record" the historical narrative which is begun *in medias res*, and ended without drawing to a conclusion. The "framework," then, is constantly disrupted, and the debate between Satan and the Son that officially begins in the poem at the end of book 1 continues on beyond the poem's narrative boundaries as a dialogue between a monological and a self-denying voice, and between an infinitely cyclical and a processual perception of history.

iv:

Political domination and the power of speech

In examining Satan's apostrophe to the Sun in book 4 of Paradise Lost, I noted the allusion to Revelation 13:5 where John speaks of the authority granted to the beast who consequently tyrannized all races, peoples and nations. Milton contemporizes the reference in The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates in his condemnation of the magistrates who opposed the trial of Charles. Later in The First Defense, Milton remarks similarly on the authority given to Nebuchadnezzar, who is in turn compared to Charles:

But God, you say, gave over many realms in slavery to Nebuchadnezzar.
For a definite period, I confess, he did so (Jeremiah 27, 7), but I
challenge you to show that he gave over the English as slaves to Charles

Stuart even for half an hour; I would not deny that he permitted it, but I never heard that he gave them over. And on the other hand, if God enslaves a people whenever they have less power than a tyrant, why should he not also be said to liberate them when they have more power than a tyrant?
(4.387; also see 4.384)

In Paradise Regained that authority includes both political control and control of language and images through Satan's censoring voice. The poet-narrator, Satan and the Son all refer to the political power conferred on the devil. Offering to reveal to the Son the monarchies of the world that Michael had shown to Adam in Paradise Lost, Satan leads him up the mountain where he reproduces the scene. "Such power was giv'n him then," the poet-narrator remarks (3.251). In the subsequent book, Satan tries to tempt the Son with control of Rome: "to me the power / Is given, and by that right I give it thee" (103-4). After the Son's response, he reaffirms his authority and repeats his offer: "The Kingdoms of the world to thee I give; / For giv'n to me, I give to whom I please" (163-4). In answering Satan, the Son confirms the authority bestowed on Satan, but criticizes his abuse of it. He does so by focusing attention on the significance of the word "give," which Satan had been using indiscriminately:

The Kingdoms of the world to thee were giv'n,
Permitted rather, and by thee usurp't,
Other donation none thou canst produce:
If given, by whom but by the King of Kings,
God over all supreme? If giv'n to thee,
By thee how fairly is the Giver now
Repaid? (4.182-8)

Satan denies the origin of his power, and renders the action in the passive construction: "given to me." There is no room for indebtedness, reciprocity or dialogue. Yet Satan, in turn, demands gratitude and service from the Son when he presents the kingdoms: