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“... he had been else a mere artificial Adam”¹: Reason and Freedom in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*

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Paradise Lost is a product of the post-humanist age of Enlightenment, in which the rational faculty of man had come to be considered as the measure of all things. As the son of an affluent scrivener belonging to the rising middle class and, more significantly, as the most vociferous political pamphleteer of his times, Milton’s literary imagination was shaped by the dominant revolutionary bourgeois spirit of his age. The first premise of the emerging world vision was the freedom of the rational individual (Milner 96). Hence, when Milton composes a heroic poem in a scientific age, he fashions an altogether new concept of heroism or pseudo-heroism. The encounter in which the hero is to exhibit his prowess is a battle of the mind; his aspirations are intellectual; his valour lies in asserting his rational freedom.

In *Defensio Secunda*, Milton urges his countrymen to be rational, because in order to be master of one’s own self, one must learn to obey right reason or reason rightly. Milton seems to be echoing Cicero who in *De re Publica* identifies the foundation of a free republic as ‘*Recta Ratio*’ or erect reason – the power which brings man closest to Godhead. The very first virtue of Adam that Milton emphasises in *Paradise Lost* is his unencumbered rationality. It is the “sanctity of reason” (VII, 508)² that transforms Adam into a living rational soul, as Raphael tells him while explaining the mystery of creation. As a corollary, man is presented as the only creature fit to govern himself in accordance with the power of reason implanted in him by God. Adam’s liberty consists not only in his right to enjoy God’s bounty in Eden, but he is also allowed to “possess it, and all things that therein live” (VIII, 340; PL 414). He is created sovereign, to whom all birds and beasts “pay . . . fealty/ With low subjection” (VIII, 344-345; PL 415). But Adam is *created* so by God, the ultimate exemplar of Right Reason – “the eternal Law of Right, whose service is perfect freedom” (252) as Basil Willey phrases it. Therefore, Adam’s spiritual freedom in its truest sense would consist in the voluntary submission of his rational being to the law of Reason.

It will not be out of place to clarify that Milton uses the term “reason” in two senses as Clarence C. Green points out – “Reason” as the law of Right or the will of God and “reason” as the intellectual faculty in man. This is no arbitrary distinction, since Milton also states in *De Doctrina Christiana* that God envisaged creaturely freedom from eternity and that the former follows from the hypothesis of divine will. Milton’s acquaintance with Ramist ideas which regarded the rational faculty of man as sacred and coming from God is further suggested through Raphael’s speeches in *Paradise Lost*.

In fact the concept of *actus voluntarius* or *actus humanus* freely participating in the Fall is the cornerstone of Milton’s rational justification of “the ways of God to men” (I, 26; PL 44). Unless Adam’s and Eve’s transgression is proved to be a rational and free decision instead of a temporary lapse of faith, they cannot be shown to have sinned; and human sin alone can justify the punishment of misery and death meted out to man by an apparently just and benevolent God.

What problematizes the question of human freedom in Fall is the perfect foreknowledge of God. But God’s omniscience does not necessitate events. Rather it is the nearly certain occurrence of events in the future that brings them into God’s view. The narrator of *Paradise Lost* clearly indicates the “event” as “perverse” (IX, 405; PL 461), and not the cause, i.e. God’s creation of Adam and Eve as he did. God’s explanation of the sin of disobedience offered to his Son may be regarded as containing the crux of Milton’s conception of *actus voluntarius*:

They trespass, authors to themselves in all
Both what they *judge* and what they *choose*; for so
I formed them free, and free they must remain,
Till they enthrall themselves (III, 122-125; PL 149; emphasis added)

Man is the maker of his own destiny – free from the coercive forces external to it such as fate and God himself. He *authors* his own fall and is *free* by virtue of the capacity to *judge* and *choose* – both essentially involving some kind of exercise of reason. Again, in the same speech, God declares: “Reason also is choice” (III, 108; PL 149). This idea also finds expression in *Areopagitica* where Milton unambiguously states that the freedom of rational choice is the basis of

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Adam's *humanus* – that he is not “a mere artificial Adam” (30). He seems to be suggesting that reason is synonymous with freedom to believe and act upon that belief, as he chooses.

A conversation between Adam and Eve in Book IX focuses more specifically on the connection between reason and freedom. Adam tells Eve:

what obeys

Reason, is free, and reason he made right. (IX, 351-352; PL 457)

Inner freedom is conditional upon the right action of the will, i.e. the act of obeying the dictates of reason. Milton's God even declares that “long obedience tried” may enable the human race to “open to themselves at length the way/ Up hither” (VII, 158-159; PL 366). The divine hierarchy is not rule and repression, as Raphael tells Adam. It is a dynamic process of ascent, confirming the human autonomy in the Great Chain of beings that Pico della Mirandola suggests in his *Oration on the Dignity of Man*. But this divinity is not to be won by a short-cut rebellious method of eating a forbidden fruit, but by continual obedience of the voice of reason “by *degrees* of merit raised” (VII, 157; PL 366; emphasis added).

This virtue of obedience, however is not the same as servitude, since servitude is “to serve the unwise, or him who hath rebelled/ Against his worthier” (VI, 178-180; PL 319) – to be a slave to the irrational forces that threaten to upset the liberal hierarchy of created beings.

Milton portrays a “celestial colloquy sublime” (VIII, 455; PL 420) illustrating how the obedience of Reason is perfect freedom. In this interaction between a newly-created Adam and God, Adam asks for a like and “equal” companion because – he argues – he lacks the “*rational* delight” (VIII, 400; PL 417; emphasis added) of conversation and togetherness. Adam is bold, but not presumptuous, since his arguments are the manifestation of an “inner sovereignty, a confidence in what he knows to be just and reasonable” (Reid 131). Adam displays not only freedom from constraint, but also a freedom of choice in conceiving of Eve and arguing for her. God's pleasure is expressed in the remark to Adam:

A nice and subtle happiness I see

Thou to thy self proposest, in the choice

Of thy associates, (VIII, 399-401; PL 417-418)

Adam's self-knowledge indeed delights God, who recognizes in Adam's rational firmness “the spirit within thee free,/ My image, not imparted to the brute” (VIII, 440-441; PL 419).

Now what exactly is the nature of this obedience? God's discussion with his Son, as he watches Satan flying in Book III, sheds light on this issue:

What praise could they receive?

What pleasure I from such obedience paid,

When will and reason (reason also is choice)

Useless and vain, of freedom both despoiled,

Made passive both, had served necessity,

Not me. (III, 106-111; PL 148-149)

God desires the service of free agents, not of automata bound involuntarily to the chain of necessity. Unless brought about by the exercise of *will and reason*, any act of obedience is meaningless. Passive obedience is just another name for servitude. William Myers argues – “For Milton, the *actus humanus* is voluntary, intentional and free – it is end directed; it is the outcome of an exercise of practical reasoning.” (68)

The essence of the obedience desired by Milton's God is perfectly encapsulated in the tug and pull of reasoning between Adam and Eve, as they decide to work separately in the Garden of Eden. The question of *obedience* is tempered by the gentle persuasiveness of Adam: “That I should mind thee oft, and mind thou me.” (IX, 357-358; PL 457) Just as God desires man's free obedience, similarly Adam wants the pleasure of Eve's freely willed companionship and her acceptance of his advice. “Go; for thy stay, not free, absents thee more” (IX, 372; PL 459) – Adam concludes reluctantly. He had expressed his desire to work together with his mate, but he does not force it on Eve against her will, recognising her rational freedom. Hence Adam implicitly gives Eve the permission to disobey his wishes if she chooses to do so. This is exactly the liberty that God himself allows to Adam and Eve with due respect to their rationality. Eve, on her part, “persisted, yet submits” (IX, 377; PL 459). This subtle balance of two reasoning minds and Adam's effort to

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convince Eve rationally reflects Milton's statement in *Art of Logic*. There Milton rejects divine testimony on the ground that, while it "makes me believe, it does not prove, it does not teach, it does not make me know or understand why it is so, unless it also adds reasons" (Milton, CPW 319)

When we view Adam and Eve through Satan's eyes for the first time at the beginning of Book IV, Adam's face reflects "absolute rule" (IV, 301; PL 213) and Eve's "subjection" (IV, 308; PL 214) which are clearly shadows of evil cast by the Satanic distorting lens on prelapsarian life. But even if Eve is placed under the rule of the "patriarch of mankind" (V, 506; PL 289), it is to be done with "gentle sway" (IV, 308; PL 214), i.e. the persuasiveness of true reason, which Adam employs in attempting to make his will prevail over Eve's. The *gentle sway* of reason is also reminiscent of the "yoke of Christ" which is "sweet and agreeable, not harsh, that they have found fathers, not tyrants, . . . that they are called to salvation, not dragged away into slavery" that Erasmus writes about (114).

Adam fails to persuade Eve, just as divine Reason fails to contain the first man and woman within their limits. Is it because Adam, being an image of absolutist God himself, fails to bring in the right amount of gentleness into his persuasive logic? According to Joan Bennett, Adam's failure as Eve's governor is manifested when he "lets" her go, because he actually retains his authority instead of allowing her truly free decision its claim. Nevertheless it illustrates and clarifies the liberty enjoyed by Eve as she rationalises her decision with the aid of "will and reason".

Though "orders and degrees/ Jar not with liberty" (V, 792-793; PL 306), as Satan himself acknowledges, the erring creatures seem to have forgotten this basic principle of creation. Immediately after Fall, Adam and Eve find themselves in the thrall of "high passions" (IX, 1123; PL 503), blaming each other for their misery. The narrator of *Paradise Lost* laments, accounting for the event by evoking a myth of dethronement:

For understanding ruled not, and the will
Heard not her lore, both in subjection now
To sensual appetite, who from beneath
Usurping over sovereign reason, claimed
Superior sway (IX, 1127-1131; PL 503)

A similar disruption in the psycho-physical hierarchy of the human body, where ideally reason should be in control of the passions and emotions, is diagnosed by Adam in Book V as the cause behind Eve's bad dream. Adam tries to convince Eve:

But know that in the soul
Are many lesser faculties that serve
Reason as chief; (V, 100-102; PL 261-262)

By ousting Reason from its rightful position, Fancy which forms "airy shapes" (V, 105; PL 262) can lead to false reasoning and jeopardise the proper order of things.

However, Milton's narrative of the Fall subverts any easy equation between reason and freedom apparently suggested by the remarks framing the pivotal events of the epic. Moreover human reason operates in multiple dimensions in *Paradise Lost* as indicated by the distinction between the modes of reasoning employed by Adam and that by Eve. In *Art of Logic*, Milton, following the tradition of the Neo-Platonists, distinguished between three categories of reason – intuitive reason of the angels and sometimes in humans, noetic or dianoetic reason working on the basis of axioms and discursive reasoning at the level of syllogistic logic.

Raphael's claim in Book V that the various types of reasoning differ "but in degree, of kind the same" (V, 490; PL 287) and that it is easy to pass from one level of reasoning to another, higher or lower to it (as happens in the case of Eve), further complicates the question. Adam follows the second method – by arranging axioms in their natural hierarchy – thus demonstrating closer link with the angels. Milton's Eve however applies the more earthy method of syllogism.

Hence when Eve falls by transgressing a limit, she fails to distinguish between good and evil by her power of syllogistic reasoning. Eve's reason is not derived directly from God, since she is created in the image of Adam, who reflects divine Reason. She falls prey to Satan's "persuasive words, impregn'd/ With reason, to her seeming, and with truth" (IX, 737-738; PL 482). She is deceived – "surprised" by a "fair appearing good" (IX, 354; PL 457) that Adam had warned against.

What baffles us most is the fact that Eve sins in listening to her voice of reason. She claims her rational

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autonomy when she declares herself capable of withstanding any danger on her own. Eve's open-minded reception of Satan's insidious arguments is not to be condemned, since God himself encouraged Adam to have a liberal outlook and to reason well with discrimination. Indeed, to believe in God's benevolence implicitly, without actually feeling it, is to give up freedom of will. Eve's rational desire for knowledge and even the yearning to ascend towards her creator – an aspiration encouraged by Raphael – is perverted by Satan's irrational promptings masquerading as true reason. Moreover, she is befooled by the rational evidence of the speaking serpent which apparently proves by its existence that the fruit may not mean death after all. Unlike the serpent's, Eve's deliberations are "straightforward and entirely free from diabolical sneering" (Reid 137). Eve's will indeed obeys her reason and "what obeys reason is free". But her reason is corrupted at its very root. Hence she cannot be free under the rule of depraved reason.

Though there are cautious references in Eve's speeches to her awareness of the divine law, they disappear as she grows more and more enthralled by Satan's reasons. Ultimately she reasons herself to sin, by conveniently putting the blame on her ignorance:

What fear I then, rather what know to fear
Under this ignorance of good and evil,
Of God, or death, of law or penalty? (IX, 773-775; PL 483)

She is partially correct, since God had further complicated the situation and made her more susceptible to the sin of transgression by naming an arbitrary prohibition on the first humans which is – as Milton explains in *De Doctrina Christiana* – "an act of its own nature indifferent" (qtd. in Willey 250). Since God did not attach any moral bar to the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, it did not appear as confirmed evil to Eve. This makes it easier for Satan to present it as the key to infinite knowledge and hence irresistible to a rational individual. One can even say that God thus kept the possibility of a violation of his injunction open, and on purpose.

The situation of Adam further problematizes the plain equation between reason and freedom. On learning about Eve's fall from her, Adam laments that she should be lost – "defaced, deflowered, and now to death devote" (IX, 901; PL 490). Next, he argues with himself that since the forbidden fruit had been "profan'd" (IX, 930; PL 492) by the serpent, it might not bring death after all. It might indeed lead to a "higher degree of life" (IX, 934; PL 493). But if the fruit has thus lost its magical power of bringing evil – as Adam argues – how can it retain its potential to give infinite knowledge? Eventually Adam dismisses all these justifications as false and yet chooses to sin against his better Reason. Language of uncorrupted intellect rings out in Adam's voice as he decides to die with Eve, knowing fully the consequences of eating the forbidden fruit. His action, therefore, is based upon perfect freedom of indifference.

In Eve reason is "obscured" and in Adam it is "not obeyed" (XII, 86; PL 614) – a distinction made by Michael in the final book of *Paradise Lost*. Eve's failure is intellectual, as she reasons badly, though freely. In Adam's case, reason and freedom stand in contradiction. He chooses to sin by sheer willpower, asserting his voluntaristic freedom to fall. The narrator of *Paradise Lost* clearly states that Adam fell:

Against his better knowledge, not deceived,
But fondly overcome with female charm. (IX, 998-999; PL 495)

In disobeying Right Reason, Adam cannot be free in the God-ordained moral scheme of the epic. But this very act of disobedience of the undeceived rational faculty is an assertion of free will acting contrary to Reason. The narrator of *Paradise Lost* as well as the Son of God squarely condemns Adam for allowing passions to overcome him, since sensuality has no place in paradisaic innocence as expressly stated by the narrator. But it must be noted that Adam's Reason is not unseated. Moreover his free choice is motivated not so much by base passion as by love. Adam's *fondness* for Eve is not mere carnal love, but the oneness of two creatures who reflect each other and who have been created as "one flesh, one heart, one soul" (VIII, 499; PL 422). Love is posited as the greatest positive virtue in the poem, and virtue itself is equated with reason by Michael (XII, 98; PL 614).

Traditional moral interpretation of Adam's fall as voiced by St. Thomas Aquinas in *Summa Theologica* argues that to act reasonably is to act well and to sin is to knowingly act against reason. In choosing personal will over Reason, Adam sins. But can an act of love – the very essence of Christhood and man's redemption – be regarded as sinful? Therefore it can be said that Adam's fall, more than Eve's, unsettles the stable hierarchy of God's creational prescriptions, asserting an unprecedented value of human liberty.

Evil is a conjectural force or a possibility in paradise and becomes an actually tested reality by the Fall. Stanley

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Fish considers reason to be the culprit responsible for man's loss of paradisaal freedom. But in his prose writings, Milton unambiguously posits the adulthood of choice as the true index of human freedom, as opposed to faith or unquestioning belief preserving the freedom of innocence. Thus, the freely willed fall of Adam illustrates Milton's argument that "God uses not to captivate under a perpetual childhood of prescription but trusts him with the gift of reason to be his own chooser" (Milton, *Areopagitica* 22).

Eve is "much deceived" (IX, 404; PL 461) by Satan, i.e. passively affected by external forces represented by the devil. Milton's presentation of the influence of Satan over Eve is comparable to that of "Ate" or the irrational in the classical epic tradition. It is a disruptive energy beyond man's conscious control in the ancient Homeric sense.³ For detailed discussion see

ER. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), pp. 36-39.

It is essentially an extraneous force that manifests itself in the form of inner rebellious impulses, sometimes even acting as a source of deception, as it does in the case of Eve.

Satan represents the greatest ambivalence of reason in *Paradise Lost*. He is the very incarnation of the irrational in Miltonic imagination, as his reason works directly against Reason or God's will. He is also the most perfect rhetorician in *Paradise Lost*, proficient in twisting truth and making it serve his own purpose. His rational power is so strong as to develop an alternative ethical centre, though the motion of his will is one of negation.

In fact Satan's fall is the most real fall in *Paradise Lost*, because he is banished irrevocably from heaven. Only self-generating actions can be regarded as free and voluntary. William Myers argues that free will can coexist and be a part of a causal chain, only in the case of an equally destructive causal "backsliding" of "pure irrationality" (Myers 77-78) which operates in terms of negation. In a soliloquy at the beginning of Book IV, Satan attempts to find the cause of his rebellion by a process of strenuous self-interrogation. Satan recognizes that he was firstly jealous of the Son of God, because God had not endowed His power on him, the greatest of the angels. Satan asks himself – Why did he aspire to be greater than God? He finds the answer – it was because God created him so high. Satan catches himself in his own false reasoning, as he realises that his "bright eminence" (IV, 44; PL 193) cannot be a cause for rebellion, since angels like him withstood the temptation of power and even lower angels fell. He can find no reason for why God made him great and nothing to accuse except "Heaven's free love dealt equally to all" (IV, 68; PL 194). The *causa sui* that Satan reaches is no cause at all for his hatred. Satan becomes what he is by the power of pure negation or contradiction, expressed by him as follows:

Be then his love accursed, since, love or hate
To me alike, it deals eternal woe. (IV, 69-70; PL 194)

Any rational choice is explainable in language (Myers 76-77). Satan, in failing to justify his rebellion in terms of reasonable language, asserts the force of the irrational whose source is none other than his own perverted self. In this sense his fall is free, because he chooses to be God's sworn enemy, the active agent of evil in the epic. But, as pointed out by David Reid, "to choose evil is not merely to fall into an anti-world, it is also to will oneself out of creation into the abyss of the self" (118). Having dissociated himself from the law of Reason, Satan revolves in an eternal cycle of negation, self-enclosed in his personal hell. Abdiel's remark on the paradox of Satanic freedom is worth noting: "Thy self not free, but to thy self enthralled." (VI, 181; PL 319)

In his opening speech before the legion of fallen angels, Satan—posing as the ambitious leader and politician—claims freedom of choice:

Here we may reign secure, and in my choice
To reign is worth ambition though in hell; (I, 261-262; PL 59)

But in a private moment Satan reveals his heart wracked by suffering. The mask of freedom that he had donned before his followers – claiming himself as one "whom reason hath equalled" (I, 248; PL 59) – falls off. Satan would like to repent, but he cannot. He is trapped in the false image of freedom that he has created for himself, knowing fully his inability to liberate himself from the yoke of inauthentic existence that he is forced to live under.

Unlike Adam, Satan experiences no freedom of indifference, because he cannot choose good, even if he so desires. Satan's so-called freedom is a mere delusion, since freedom lies not in obstinate perusal of the undesirable. Locked in "adamantine chains and penal fire" (I, 48; PL 45), Satan is also chained to an evil that is the product of his own negative will. His selfhood is indeed constituted by what Myers calls "the intransitiveness of action" (51).

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The narrative of *Paradise Lost* also reflects this sense of false freedom experienced by Satan when the narrator repeatedly subverts Satan's linguistic freedom as he argues and poses. For example, Satan's "choice" to reign in hell is by "the will/ And high permission of all-ruling heaven" (I, 211-212; PL 57). Again when he enters Eden in order to tempt God's favourite creatures, stairs are lowered down to let him enter, about which Satan remains ignorant. These textual details strewn across the narrative have been seized upon by the supporters of predestination. But this cannot be Milton's only or final conclusion as indicated by the enigmatic ambivalence of the Miltonic narrative.

Just as Belial's words uttered at the Council are "cloth'd in reason's garb" (II, 226; PL 100), so is Satan's. Under the subjection of false reason, Satan's rhetoric displays a serpentine movement of self-contradiction. Satan's arguments sublimate the "wandering mazes" (II, 561; PL 116) of the mind into which the Devils sitting in Pandemonium lose themselves, in their failure to decipher the truth behind providential schemes. An analysis of Satan's rationale of action will suffice to demonstrate this. In order to win the conviction of the fallen angels in Book I, Satan declares:

If then his providence,
Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
Our labour must be to pervert that end,
And out of good still to find means of evil; (I, 162-165; PL 54)

The strategy of converting good to evil, as revealed by Satan's argument, is to go on *ad infinitum*. If God's creation is a process with an open ending, then Satan's scheme is one of constant regression into labyrinthine mazes of self-reflexiveness. This is perhaps the greatest parody of free rationality possible.

The prelapsarian freedom of Adam and Eve is reflected in the "wanton" and "wild" (V, 294, 295; PL 275) luxuriousness of their garden. Like the "virgin fancies" of nature that "played at will" (V, 295-296; PL 275) in the Garden of Eden, do the fancies of the human nature "rove unchecked" (VIII, 188; PL 407) when given free play by human will. The task of the first gardeners to control the "wanton" growth of nature by the exercise of discipline— to "prune, or prop, or bind" (IX, 210; PL 450) the overgrown branches – operates as a metaphor for their duty of judicious control of freedom by their reasoning faculty.

In fact the theme of balance and temperance runs right through *Paradise Lost*, voiced by different characters at various points of the narrative. Drawing an analogy between appetite for knowledge and for food, Raphael warns Adam:

But knowledge is as food and needs no less
Her temperance over appetite, to know
In measure what the mind may well contain,
Oppresses else with surfeit, and soon turns
Wisdom to folly, as nourishment to the wind. (VII, 126-128; PL 364)

The freedom of the rational man should be tempered by an awareness of his limited concerns as Raphael advises: "Think only what concerns thee and thy being" (VIII, 174; PL 406). Eve fails to control her overreaching desire and thus falls a victim to the deception of the irrational disguised as reason.

However, as Adam claims, the paradise was "secure from outside force; within himself/ The danger lies" (IX, 348-349; PL 457). He further clarifies to Eve that the danger "yet lies within his power:/ Against his will he can receive no harm." (IX, 349-350; PL 457) Satan would not have succeeded unless Eve was weak. Her "wanton ringlets" (IV, 306; PL 214) are in some sense emblematic and proleptic of the error of wild abundance she falls into. One of the bleakest episodes in *Paradise Lost* is perhaps the moment when Eve, after being intoxicated by the taste of the forbidden fruit, debates whether or not to share her knowledge with Adam – often regarded by critics as betraying Milton's blatantly misogynistic ideology. She thinks that the forbidden knowledge has compensated for her feminine weakness and made her "more equal" (IX, 823; PL 486) to Adam. Satan seems to have succeeded in injecting the seed of mistrust and jealousy in her mind. Eve indulges in her blackest, almost devilish reasoning as she speculates about the effect of the fruit on her:

And render me more equal, and perhaps,
A thing not undesirable, sometime
Superior; for inferior who is free? (IX, 823-825; PL 486)

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Eve mistakes authority for freedom. Similarly, the false sense of freedom that Satan the tyrant “sultan” (as the narrator describes him in Book I, 348) enjoys subsists entirely on this feeling of authority. Eve’s reason, being thus infected, turns her against Adam for a moment and makes her participate in the Satanic rhetoric of negation. However, it is the “much deceived, much failing” (IX, 404; PL 461) mother of mankind who is the first to reason herself back to the truth of mutual love and trust when the first parents fall apart in a bitter exchange of accusations in Book X.

The question of human freedom had haunted the humanist Milton as it troubles us in our post-Nietzschean world plagued by existential crisis. What Milton asserts in *Paradise Lost* is the potential of fallen humanity to retrieve what is lost. Reason is not lost altogether as Michael consoles Adam, but can be regained by an insistent struggle against the irrational. The fall is after all a fortunate event (*felix culpa*), since it is a fall into the human condition – an outcome not undesirable of God. The Fall opens the gateway to a greater and far happier (XII, 465, 587; PL 631, 638) paradise than the Garden of Eden, as Michael suggests. Milton may have failed to “justify” God’s treatment of erring man, since the question of human guilt remains doubtful. But Milton certainly succeeds in asserting the moral significance of God’s paradoxical punishment-cum-reward to Adam. The hero of Milton’s neo-epic, Everyman in this fallen world, may be defined by his freedom of choice to discover a “paradise within” (XII, 587; PL 638).

¹ Excerpt from John Milton, *Areopagitica* (Rockville, Maryland: Arc Noble, 2008), p. 30.

² John Milton, *Paradise Lost* ed. Alastair Fowler (London & New York: Longman, 1987), p. 388. Citations to *Paradise Lost* are from this edition, henceforth parenthetically indicated using abbreviation PL)

³ For detailed discussion see E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), pp. 36-39.

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