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ADAM AND EVE IN THE VR HOUSE OF MILTON'S PARADISE LOST

Summary

For a long time Milton's Paradise Lost, as the original Biblical story, has been a controversial testing ground for various theories regulating human sexuality. The paper explores Milton's rendering of Satan's and Adam and Eve's immersion in the virtual realities of inverted, false consciousness in the light of Augustine's doctrine, dystopian societies (ancient and modern), and political theory. Sexual enlightenments, whether in Paradise or contemporary quasi-paradisal forms of entertainment, coincide with the appearance of the solipsistic self and cybersexuality and they tend to have serious political implications. What appear to be personal liberating frenzies in public places actually turn out to be serious losses of political freedom.

Key words: Milton, virtual reality, privacy, sexuality, ideology, freedom.

Next they passed the Sacred Mountain and the highlands where the Mossynoeci live in the mossynes or wooden houses from which they take their name. These people have their own ideas of what is right and proper. What we as a rule do openly in town or market-place they do at home; and what we do in the privacy of our houses they do out of doors in the open street, and nobody thinks the worse of them. Even the sexual act puts no one to the blush in this community. On the contrary, like swine in the fields, they lie down on the ground in promiscuous intercourse and are not at all disconcerted by the presence of others. Then again, their king sits in the loftiest hut of all to dispense justice to his numerous subjects. But if the poor man happens to make a mistake in his findings, they lock him up and give him nothing to eat for the rest of the day. (Apollonius of Rhodes 101)

This is how Apollonius describes the Argonauts' brief encounter with a culture that is in conflict with their customs. The conflict between Greek and "barbaric" cultures arises primarily from the inversion of consciousness as to what constitutes private and public spheres of life and it becomes most evident in the area of sexual behavior and politics. While the people are totally given to the pursuit of sexual freedom in public places, they seem to have given up on their public political engagement and freedoms; consequently, justice is administered in a very obscure way in the privacy of the king's home. Apollonius' scanty account of this shift of politics into the sphere of private life seems to suggest the transference of power into the hands of a despotic monarch and the rich as a privileged group. The Mossynoecian sexual "enlightenment" in public places exposes the darkened state of their political consciousness which stalls their further cultural development. The reason this consciousness can be perceived as wrong ensues from the fact that it represents, as any ideology, losses as some kind of gain. As Jacob Burckhardt notes, "As soon as a people, at least of our race, emerges out of barbarism, they demand something more than state organization and public life; they desire the privacy of an undisturbed home and independence in the realm of thoughts and feelings" (1963, p. 80). This type of emergence toward democracy, which was the constitutional standard even in Hellenistic monarchies of Apollonius' time (Fraser, 1972, pp. 93-4), seems to be impossible in a community that shows no desire for

privacy in emotional and sexual relations and no desire for “privacy” of thoughts or independent thinking.

It should be noted that this culture exists somewhere beyond “the Sacred Mountain” or beyond the reach of “sacred” precepts of Greek culture that Apollonius wishes to uphold, and democracy and the respect for human privacy seem to top the list. Although Mossynoecian culture might be intriguing to the reader, it is not represented as a desirable utopian land but rather as a marginal dystopia of inverted (barbaric) consciousness whose influence neither extends to nor is expected on this side of the mountain. However, the vulnerability of these precepts became evident long before Apollonius’ time, not only in the dystopian environment of Plato’s *Republic* but also in various aspects of Greek life, as much as it becomes more and more prominent in Postmodernist politics, journalism and life in general (Ludwig, 2002, pp. 7, 259-318). The nightmares arising from attacks on privacy and democracy, no matter which quarter they come from, are not simply aesthetic or moral concerns about some kind of relapse into undecorous forms of barbarism. They are also deeply political concerns since the idea of privacy is intimately connected with various freedoms that a democratic society wishes to uphold in the sense that the loss of the former can lead to the loss of the latter.

Surprisingly or not, in the twentieth century, dystopia comes to the fore as a literary genre, and the reason for this has to be sought in the disintegration of numerous “sacred mountains” and the emergence of various scientific and political nightmares, accordingly represented in Huxley’s *Brave New World* and Orwell’s *1984*. In contrast to Apollonius’ *Voyage*, these works represent the nightmare of the inversion of consciousness in one’s own community. However, this nightmare, whether it arises within a bourgeois or communist society, is once again closely tied to human sexual behavior. Namely, in both cases sexual life is taken out into the street and emerges from the private into the public sphere of life in the sense that the political establishment entirely regulates and controls the sexual behavior of its citizens. While in Huxley’s *Brave New World* promiscuity is “funded” by the state and the plot ends in a Mo-

ssynocian orgy, in Orwell's work sexual urges are suppressed and Big Brother imposes, by means of total surveillance, political correctness of sexual behavior, correctness that excludes love and desire. Thus, sexuality is harnessed to political ends of total control and social stability; it is politically sublimated and citizens are expected to sacrifice their right of privacy in the realms of feelings, sexuality, and thought in the name of a greater good. At the same time this type of sublimated sexuality enables almost limitless cloning of insatiable consumers and politically correct party members.

Although Huxley's and Orwell's nightmares might not have fully or literally materialized in their own time, their unexpected transmutations keep emerging in our own time. The idea of Big Brother surveillance of private life as well as the urge for sex in public places are not nightmares anymore; for many people they have become, along with prison tourism and public confessions of the most intimate details of their lives, desirable forms of entertainment. While some people are still appalled by the emerging trend of sex on the beach and other public places, most fans of the Big Brother Show cannot wait for it to happen in their national house because it has already happened in other houses. If sex in the BB house was a sensation at first, it is not any more and in order to be so once again it must become more and more public and "unconventional."

The tolerance of sex in the BB house arises from its imposed perception of time and space which assume elements of virtual reality and fiction. The isolation of time and space creates the impression of utopia or artificial reality, a quasi-paradisaal environment where everything is in a state of "childhood innocence" and therefore permitted and possible. As Kevin Robins notes, "Artificial reality is designed and ordered in conformity with the dictates of pleasure and desire" (2000, p. 85) and those dictates attempt to eliminate the need for ethical codes. Furthermore, this type of reality becomes very ambivalent in the sense that it obfuscates the distinction between private and public spheres of life. While it creates the cozy atmosphere of privacy in one's home, it exposes this privacy to the public eye indirectly, by technological means. This fusion

of the private and the public place reflects the floating state of consciousness of its inhabitants as they simultaneously yearn for privacy and desire to be seen. It is hard to say how far those dictates will take. Whether sex will be tolerated in public places of quasi-paradisaal nature, such as beaches and BB houses, and then maybe even in market-places and streets, is essentially a political question, the resolution of which will greatly depend on the prevailing state of consciousness.

While the BB shows seem to be posing a cultural and political threat by accommodating the participants' consciousness to total surveillance, they also seem to be social testing grounds of "isolated" utopian/dystopian environments which foreshadow what the future has in store for us, positing the inevitable question of how far we want to go with this game. In many ways the melodramatic nominations and expulsions of this game mimic the archetypal theme of loss of the Garden of Eden. As a matter of fact, from the Middle Ages to the seventeenth century the Biblical story of the Garden of Eden was a controversial testing ground in a theological/doctrinal sense, and even John Milton could not avoid developing it as such in his *Paradise Lost*. Although Adam and Eve are its only inhabitants, the Miltonic Garden of Eden has its private and public spots, the spots where they have sex and those where they admit others. Furthermore, the confusion of these spheres of life comes as a result of their inversion of consciousness, or the Fall, and becomes most evident in their sexual behavior.

For the Church Fathers, some of Milton's contemporaries, and some twentieth-century critics sex before the Fall, and possibly sex at all, was, like life for Schopenhauer, something that should not have been. For his own part, C. S. Lewis doubts Milton's wisdom and accuses him of inconsistency of faith for treating the subject at all and for making the "unfallen" sex "voluptuous" (1942, pp. 69, 118-120). Interestingly, it is not Milton's description of Adam and Eve's "going to bed" (Fowler, 1998, IV 736-743) that drew Lewis' response. It is his description of their "foreplays" and the description of naked Eve in particular that aroused his sense of Milton's political incorrectness.

So spake our general mother, and with eyes
Of conjugal attraction unreproved,
And meek surrender, half embracing leaned
On our first father, half her *swelling* breast
Naked met his under the flowing gold
Of her loose tresses hid:... (Fowler, 1998, IV 492-97; italics mine)

Lewis found Milton's "un-mysterious pictures" of Eve so unbecoming even for an academic audience that he surgically removed the "swelling" from her breast in a very curious act of censorship. He cites Milton as writing, "half her breast Naked met his" (1942, p. 120). Although Milton shows apparent political correctness by "half-hiding" Eve's erotic parts, for Lewis it was far from being correct enough. That Lewis' omission is not accidental becomes evident in the fact that he does not even provide a reference for this particular citation. He attempts to "cover" the illicit part of the picture by "hiding" both the location and the full content of Milton's text, which reveals his stronger commitment to political correctness than to scholarly consistency. Lewis probably wished Milton had at least written this and similar passages in Latin. Namely, as late as the 1960s this form of political correctness was the norm in English translations of illicit passages of ancient texts.

One possible reason why Lewis found the "swelling" so offensive is the fact that Milton's Eve is not simply a well-endowed woman, Eve of *swollen* breasts, but a woman in the process of sexual arousal, which equals illicit sex representation. Furthermore, this arousal seems to be caused by playful "half movements" or "accidental" touching of bodies as well as by the flowing movement of Eve's "loose tresses." In other words, Eve's sexual arousal comes spontaneously through the senses and it is not "an act of will" controlled by the mind, as St. Augustine speculated: "the two sexes might have been united for impregnation and conception by an act of will, instead of by a lustful craving" (Augustine, 2003, XIV, 26). When Milton's Adam and Eve mean business, they do not mean business at all. In their case pleasure comes before business, and that is something neither the saint nor the literary critic could condone.

While being emphatic about the fact that St. Augustine did not believe that the “unfallen” sex ever took place, Lewis does not question the saint’s decision to describe it nevertheless:

When mankind was in such a state of ease and plenty, blest with such felicity, let us never imagine that it was impossible for the seed of children to be sown without the morbid condition of lust. Instead, the sexual organs would have been brought into activity by the same bidding of the will as controlled the other organs. Then, without feeling the allurements of passion goading him on, the husband would have relaxed on his wife’s bosom in tranquility of mind and with no impairment of his body’s integrity. (Augustine, 2003, XIV, 26)

Augustine attempts to accommodate prelapsarian sexuality to his doctrine of God’s creativity according to which everything comes into existence as an act of God’s will. He believes that that type of sexuality is beyond our understanding because it would have taken place before the Original Sin. Since he does not trust our inverted postlapsarian consciousness, he follows the general precepts of his doctrine. Because of his strong commitment to political correctness, and possibly for some personal reasons, Augustine “purges” prelapsarian sex not only of lust but also of any emotional involvement, love and joy. However, the irony is that this type of sexuality is not beyond our understanding but rather becomes a reality of dystopian and postmodernist consciousness.

The saint seems to be representing our first parents as spoiled celebrities: they must have been rich and had nothing to do. The ease and plenty seem to have been better than sex, so much so that sex could not have contributed any further to their ultimate felicity, and that was probably the reason why they never felt compelled to do it. Its sole purpose must have been reproduction and it was strictly controlled by the mind. Thus, sex would have been more of an intellectual effort, probably occasioned by God’s direct command or after long hours of study and meditation in the library, rather than a spontaneous act of morbid physical exertion in the bedroom.

Augustine’s idea of “clean” sex verges on grotesque when he engages in farming metaphors whereby the operation of reproductive organs is

equated with sowing by hand (Augustine, 2003, XIV, 23). His apparent concern for the “impairment” of reproductive organs leads toward disembodiment of sex with allusions to masturbation and lab conception. This type of mechanized sexuality is asocial because it does not enrich the love bond between people, and between people and their Creator, but becomes a political function in the service of a particular ideology. It is completely unclear why his Adam has to be in bed with Eve at all because as soon as he arrives there he relaxes on her bosom. Adam’s “relaxing” attitude is more suggestive of an almost immediate sleep than of something exciting going on between the sheets. Quite ironically, this tendency toward sleep in sex, or sex in sleep, suggests transference of the will for sex into the dream world of cybersex and it seems to reflect Adam’s—or Augustine’s own—Thanatos, rather than Eros, drive.

For Augustine, lust is a self-contradictory impulse which frequently arouses the mind but fails to arouse the body (Augustine, 2003, XI, 16); however, he could not have foreseen the time when science and technology would be able to eliminate such an impairment by placing the “fallen” sexuality under direct control of will. Namely, will and financial standing are more determining factors for Viagra sex than emotions, love, or even lust itself. As Augustine would put it, it is enough for the husband to relax, and the show can begin.

The importance of Augustine’s hypothesis, however, was not in how it regulated the “unfallen” sex but in how it attempted and succeeded, in conjunction with other authoritative texts on the subject, in regulating the prevailing concept of sexuality, as well as the concept of “clean” or politically correct sex, in the postlapsarian world of the Middle Ages and subsequent periods. The following ideas came to prevail: “fallen” sexuality is something dirty and shameful, a necessary evil whose primary purpose is procreation; one is not supposed to have fun in sex because if enjoyed too much, sex is morbid, sinful and dangerous and as such it has close ties with the devil; one should practice only safe, politically correct, sex as prescribed by the Church. And this prescription of “clean” and “safe” sex seemed to have followed the same “safe rule of thumb,” as the narrator of David Lodge’s *How Far Can You Go?* notes

in the 1950s, in “that anything you positively dislike doing was probably Good, and anything you liked doing enormously was probably Bad, or potentially bad—an ‘occasion of sin’” (1981, p. 7).

However, it is not only Eve who is enjoying the erotic foreplay too much; Adam is equally to blame: “he in delight / Both of her beauty and submissive charms / Smiled with superior love, as Jupiter / On Juno smiles” (Fowler, 1998, IV 497-500). There is no doubt that Adam is sexually aroused by Eve’s charms, but here Milton faced a far greater problem as of how to reveal and hide the “swelling” at the same time. Milton might have left it out in this case for very practical reasons: Adam’s hair was simply not long enough to do the job of natural censorship. And again, for practical reasons, he could not have hidden Adam’s swelling behind his lifted leg, the way Adam’s private parts are frequently “covered” in Renaissance paintings. On the other hand, for doctrinal reasons he could not have made Adam turn away. Any type of turning or intentional covering would have suggested some kind of inhibition, which the prelapsarian Adam did not possess. Milton’s solution was sublimation; he describes Adam above, and not below, the waist. It should be noted that Milton generally tends to sublimate Adam’s desires, fears and hopes, so it is not surprising that in this case he substitutes the “swelling” with a big intertextual smile of “superior love” on his face.

What seems to be tormenting Lewis here is not simply the fact that our first parents are represented as two “horny” people walking through Central Park but also that this scene might be erotically engaging to the audience, that it might give them a “swelling,” or simply that it might be enjoyed. Although Eve and Adam are exposed in their garden, there is a strong sense of audience in this scene, an audience, intentionally or unintentionally, involved in an act of voyeurism. While God and his angels respect Adam and Eve’s “privacy” and leave the garden, the narrator, the reader, and the devil are still there and watching. Of course, the narrator and the reader are intentionally left in a privileged position in order to observe both the couple and the devil.

That the devil is not indifferent to Eve and Adam’s erotic foreplay becomes evident in his response to the scene: “aside the devil turned / For

envy, yet with jealous leer malign / Eyed them askance” (Fowler, 1998, IV 502-4). Satan’s turning away is not indicative of his modesty or respect for other people’s privacy but rather of apparent envy and jealousy of the original parents’ pleasure, as of anybody’s happiness in general terms. However, there is something grotesque rather than dignifying in his posture. The fact that he cannot resist looking back and eying “them askance” demonstrates that his lascivious interest is a stronger impulse of motivation than hate. Here Satan himself seems to be caught in an act of “inconsistency of faith” and he tries to hide it.

One cannot tell what is really going on physically on the dark side of Satan at this point, but one might be tempted to ask how long it has been for Satan because he does appear like a prisoner on a long-awaited parole. Nevertheless, the aura of secrecy has been very suggestive of different things. John Baptist Medina might have exaggerated in his representation of Satan for the first illustrated edition of *Paradise Lost* (1688) by representing him as an ithyphallic masturbator, but, as Turner notes, there is definitely something pornographic about this scene (1993, pp. 258-59). For his own part, Lewis envisions a more soft-core Satan who gradually degenerates into a dirty old man (1942, p. 97), and to Turner he is simply “a uniquely Miltonic creation, a fallen erotic angel” (1993, p. 262).

With Satan’s erotic engagement in this scene Milton broaches yet another great mystery, that of Satan’s sexuality. However, the mystery itself is not so much in whether Satan has a spontaneous or hand induced erection, if any at all, but rather in what type of sexuality his is. It is important to note that Satan’s general state is an antithesis of Adam and Eve’s and that is what causes his tormenting pain.

Sight hateful, sight tormenting! Thus these two
Imparadised in one another’s arms
The happier Eden, shall enjoy their fill
Of bliss on bliss, while I to hell am thrust,
Where neither joy nor love but fierce desire,
Among our other torments not the least,
Still unfulfilled with pain of longing pines; (Fowler, 1998, IV 505-11)

Satan's sexuality seems to be as antithetical as his physical location and state of mind, and this antithesis occasions the comparison of "unfallen" and "fallen" sexualities sooner than one would expect, before Adam and Eve's fall. Although Milton suggests the contrary nature of these two sexualities by sublimating Adam's "swelling" into a big smile of "superior love" and by relegating Satan's into "leer malign," he makes Satan elaborate the differences in the nature and effects of "unfallen" and "fallen" sexualities from the point of view of inverted or "fallen" consciousness.

In contrast to St. Augustine, Milton's Satan "admits" that Eve and Adam's erotic foreplay contributes greatly to their happiness in Paradise with a clear potential for growth for even greater pleasures. It does not mean that our general parents are simply in for a night of great sex of multiple orgasms. Their ecstatic "bliss on bliss" indicates that their pleasure of sex tops a whole pile of pleasures by adding a new paradisaic dimension to their relationship with each other and with their Creator. Being "imparadised" in "one another's arms" they transcend Paradise as a physical place and reach "The happier Eden" or paradise internalized. The secret of their elevation into this paradisaic bliss lies in the fact that the primary form and the end of their "unfallen" sexuality are "joy and love," and those are identical with the form and the end of marriage, as Milton describes them in *De Doctrina Christiana*: "the mutual goodwill, love, help, and solace of husband and wife..." (qtd. in Fowler, 1998, p. 265, n750-65). Satan realizes that Adam and Eve's sexual urges have already been sublimated to mutual love and their love for their Creator and that as such they cannot be harnessed to his own political ends. Like Platonic Socrates in book 5 of the *Republic*, he seems to believe that long lasting love leads to the creation of privacy of the family home. While for Socrates family is "a selfish bastion of private good holding out against the common weal" (Ludwig, 2002, p. 37, n23), for Satan Eve and Adam's marriage and their love ties to the Holy family are the bastion which excludes him as an unwanted intruder. And Satan's findings become crucial for his takeover agenda; if he is to become the ruler of the new world, he has

to eradicate privacy in Paradise and dissociate Adam and Eve's sexual urges from love. To do so, he will only have to make them emulate his own family life and sexual practices.

While Adam and Eve are doubly imparadised in joy and love, Satan is doubly disparadised in his "fierce desire." He is thrust in hell, but the torments of physical hell are not any stronger than the pain of hell internalized. His "fierce desire" burns within like the unquenchable fire of hell without, and Satan cannot control either of them. His strong sexual urge is triggered accidentally and unexpectedly and it perpetuates itself into its own punishment of pain on pain. Devoid of joy and love, his "fierce desire" cannot be fulfilling and the pain cannot be stopped. Thus, Satan's strong sexual urge is something he simultaneously cannot resist and something he shuns; he seems to resemble the Socratic miserable tyrant, as described in books 8 and 9 of the *Republic*, who is helpless against his own urges and desires. On the other hand, in its whimsical and self-contradictory nature his sexual urge seems to be a dramatic elaboration of St. Augustine's definition of lust.

Sometimes the impulse is an unwanted intruder, sometimes it abandons the eager lover, and desire cools off in the body while it is at boiling heat in the mind. Thus strangely does lust refuse to be a servant not only to the will to beget but even to the lust for lascivious indulgence; and although on the whole it is totally opposed to the mind's control, it is quite often divided against itself. It arouses the mind, but does not follow its own lead by arousing the body. (Augustine, 2003, XIV, 16)

When Satan sees Eve's swelling breast he does not fall in any type of love, romantic or thwarted, as Turner suggests (1993, 261-2); rather, he falls in lust and reveals in words and deeds its effects. For Augustine, lust becomes the cause of shame in "fallen" sexuality because it takes away the mind's control over sexual organs, and he cannot imagine "even shameless men" displaying the consequences of their lust in public—and Milton's Satan definitely qualifies as one of them at this point. Therefore, for its consummation lust needs "darkness and secrecy" (Augustine, 1950, XIV, 18) or "privacy" (Augustine, 2003, XIV, 18). And for the same

reason Milton probably made his Satan turn away in a reflexive response to his “fierce desire.”

Interestingly, Adam and Eve also seem to need some kind of “darkness and secrecy” for the consummation of their connubial pleasures. However, in their case this need is not caused by shame or any type of inhibition, whether Freudian or Augustinian, as Lewis would make us believe (1942, p. 120); rather, the need for privacy seems to be, what Erwin Straus describes in “Shame as a Historiological Phenomenon” as, the “veiling” precondition that makes love and sex possible for any person with a sense of dignity (Ludwig, 2002, pp. 309-312); in privacy or, what Straus calls, “the sphere of becoming,” as opposed to the public sphere, our unrealized dreams and hopes are engendered and protected from unwanted intruders.

[I]mmediate becoming, whether erotic, religious or spiritual—generally seeks protections against the profane and safeguards against the presence of the nonparticipating stranger. The stranger is of necessity an observer. He is, thus, at odds with the shared unity of the group, and his mere presence tends to introduce some objectification into every immediate relationship. (qtd. in Ludwig, 2002, p. 311)

Furthermore, Eve and Adam’s love making crowns with dignity all their daily activities. As they are finishing with their evening worship they notice that it is getting dark and it is time for bed. Accordingly they withdraw into the privacy of their home.

This said unanimous, and other rites
 Observing none, but adoration pure
 Which God likes best, into their inmost bower
 Handed they went; and eased the putting off
 These troublesome disguises which we wear,
 Strait side by side were laid, nor turned I ween
 Adam from his fair spouse, nor Eve the rites
 Mysterious of connubial love refused: (Fowler, 1998, IV 736-43)

It should be noted that Milton emphasizes the privacy of Adam and Eve’s sex life. They do not simply enter the house and “show the door”

to all unwanted observers, as Augustine would put it, but they walk into “their inmost bower”; all doors are closed and there are no peep holes left. There is a strong sense of ritual “veiling” in this scene. Adam and Eve’s home has the connotations of a temple, and they, like high priests, are the only ones allowed to enter its inmost chamber. No one else is permitted into this sacred place of ultimate privacy. Milton’s speculation about what went on inside after that is an outsider’s speculation. Since they are joined by their Creator, it is logical to him that they should experience all connubial pleasures and he provides a doctrinal support for his view.

Whatever Hypocrites austerely talk
Of purity and place and innocence,
Defaming as impure what God declares
Pure, and commands to some, leaves free to all.
(Fowler, 1998, IV 744-7)

It appears that Milton was far wiser than Augustine when it comes to the treatment of hard-core sex in literary texts. While Augustine describes the very mechanics of the “unfallen” sexual act, Milton locks it in the privacy of their home. In Milton’s account, Adam and Eve’s sex is bonded with love and whatever they did, or how they did it, is nobody’s business. Sexuality has been “regulated” as such by God, and there is no need for any further regulation. The political implications are more than evident. Augustine tends to regulate politically correct sex and sexuality, while Milton leaves it in the private sphere, unregulated. It should be noted that Milton’s Adam and Eve “go to church” before and not after sex. They have nothing to confess and they are not asked to do so. Their sexuality is regulated neither by “the church” nor by “the state” and, therefore, it cannot be harnessed to the political causes of such institutions.

By tallying Milton’s rendering of prelapsarian sex against Augustine’s doctrine Lewis failed to notice any significant differences in Milton’s treatment of postlapsarian sex. One of those differences occurs at the point on which Augustine and Milton seemingly agree, and that is pro-

creation. While for the former procreation seems to be the sole end of sex, for Milton it is one of its significant ends. However, for Milton abstinence from sex is the work of the devil: “Our maker bids increase, who bids abstain / But our destroyer, foe to God and man?” (Fowler, 1998, IV 744-9) Interestingly enough, the obstruction of procreation becomes a significant feature of Adam and Eve’s postlapsarian sexuality, the feature that reflects their self-destructive drive, an impulse originally evident in Satan’s own character and sexuality. In their postlapsarian sexuality Eve and Adam come closer and closer to what seems to be Satan’s dysfunctional family life and cybersexuality.

Satan’s sexuality has close ties to his family life, and if there ever was one, Satan’s is a dysfunctional family. Of course, Satan is not married. His is the story of a “single parent” who has an incestuous relationship with his daughter and makes her pregnant. They are separated during the war and he ends up in prison; she, on the other hand, gives birth to their son. The son rapes his own mother, and she gives birth to a whole group of delinquents. Later on she and her son get jobs as guards at prison. The father forgets his daughter/sexual partner and is unaware of his offspring. When he meets his misshapen daughter/sexual partner and their son on his way out of prison, the father abhors and does not recognize either of them. Unaware of their relationship, he and his son have a very conflicting relationship; driven probably by a strong Oedipal complex, the son is on the verge of fighting and killing his father. The father almost makes the fatal mistake of fighting his own son, but the mother saves the day by enlightening them both about their respective identities and their common political goal. The father’s name is Satan; his daughter is Sin, and their son is called Death; the delinquents remain unnamed minors (Fowler, 1998, II 629-767).

This familiar postmodernist “news report” about abominable double incest actually materializes the Socratic agenda as of how to destroy, by means of incest, the privacy of family home so that its members may be tied to a higher political goal (Ludwig, 2002, 306-9). At the same time it is Milton’s allegorical representation of sin and death’s genealogy, a story in which the life of infernal family is a travesty of the Holy Trinity. As

Robert B. White Jr. has convincingly demonstrated, Milton's dramatic representation of the infernal family is actually a contrastive transmutation of the Trinitarian doctrine expounded in St. Augustine's *City of God* and *On the Trinity*, a doctrine that was restated by St. Aquinas and uncontestedly accepted by the Protestants of Milton's time and subsequent periods (1973, pp. 337-41). While the Holy Trinity is united "through the bond of peace," love, and self-knowledge, their infernal counterpart is divided against itself in lust, rape, violence and self-ignorance. Yet, what appears to be a pretty straight forward religious allegorical drama with sin and death personified actually turns out to be a postmodernist narrative of Satan's unstable and problematical identity and an equally problematical cybersexuality. It seems to be an ontogenetic allegory in which various driving forces are in the process of shaping the "floating identity" of Satan's deceptively omnipotent, solipsistic self.

Satan's postlapsarian identity, ideologically speaking, is false because it is the product of an inverted, false consciousness developed in the artificial reality of his mind, the consciousness that, as a rule, attempts to present losses as gains. In his discussion of the relationship between cyberspace and self-identity in the contemporary world, Kevin Robins notes that "To interact with" artificial reality "entails suspension of the real physical self..." (2000, p. 85). In Satan's case the creation of an artificial reality and suspension of the real self begins with the claims of self-creation and self-sufficiency:

That we were formed then sayst thou? And the work
Of secondary hands, by task transferred
From Father to his Son? Strange point and new!
Doctrine which we would know whence learened: who saw
When this creation was? Remembrest thou
Thy making, while the maker gave thee being?
We know no time when we were not as now;
Know none before us, self-begot, self-raised
By our own quickening power, when fatal course
Had circled his full orb, the birth mature
Of this our native heaven, ethereal sons. (Fowler, 1998, V 856-63)

Satan's experience of omnipotence and self-sufficiency are the products of his virtual empowerment which, as Robins explains, "is a solipsistic affair, encouraging a sense of self-containment and self-sufficiency, and involving denial of the need for external objects." Furthermore, "Such empowerment entails a refusal to recognize the substantive and independent reality of others" (2000, p. 85). In this sense, Satan's virtual empowerment entails the creation of an "instant universe" of wishes and desires, a universe that excludes God and the substantive reality that would restrain him in any way. In his denial of the substantive reality outside of the virtual reality of his own mind Satan actually dissociates himself from an identity grounded in a "durable public world" which precedes and potentially outlasts his life. Satan's rejections of Abdiel's "new doctrine" as false consciousness resembles the Modernist/Postmodernist self-crisis in the sense that it is not simply a psychological/personal but also an ideological crisis. As Christopher Lash notes, this type of crisis ensues from "the waning of the old sense of a life as a life-history or narrative—a way of understanding identity that depended on the belief in a durable public world, reassuring in its solidity, which outlasts an individual life and passes some sort of judgment on it" (qtd. in Robins, 2000, p. 83). By brushing aside God's doctrine as ideology, or false consciousness, Satan becomes the victim of his own inverted consciousness which is self-contradictory in the sense that it is challenged as false from within Satan's mind and by its own products, Sin and Death (Fowler, 1998, II 688-703).

With his immersion in the virtual reality of his own instant universe Satan sets out on the path of floating identities and disembodiment. As Gérard Raulet notes in a more contemporary context, "Floating identities are in the realm of schizophrenia and neo-narcissism" (qtd. in Robins, 2000, p. 85) and as such they seem to be engendering disembodied cybersexualities. And Satan's engendering of Sin and their subsequent incestuous relationship reflect such an identity and sexuality.

To whom thus the portress of hell gate replied;
Hast thou forgot me then, and do I seem
Now in thine eye so foul, once deemed so fair
In heaven, when at the assembly, and in sight
Of all the seraphim with thee combined
In bold conspiracy against heaven's king,
All on a sudden miserable pain
Surprised thee, dim thine eyes, and dizzy swum
In darkness, while thy head flames thick and fast
Threw forth, till on the left side opening wide,
Likest to thee in shape and countenance bright
Then shining heavenly fair, a goddess armed
Out of thy head I sprung: amazement seized
All the host of heaven; back they recoiled afraid
At first, and called me Sin, and for a sign
Portentous held me; but familiar grown,
I pleased, and with attractive graces won
The most averse, thee chiefly, who full oft
Thyself in me thy perfect image viewing
Becam'st enamoured, and such joy thou tookst
With me in secret, that my womb conceived
A growing burden. (Fowler, 1998, II 746-67)

It is quite ironic that Satan's daughter, his creation, remembers and reminds him of her conception and birth whereas he, the progenitor or creator, is completely ignorant of it. This perverted concept of creation is an ironic materialization of Satan's inversion of consciousness as presented in his doctrine of self-creation and self-sufficiency (Fowler, 1998, V 856-63). It should be noted that Sin's conception and birth occur at a heavenly assembly. Yet, while Satan seems to be remembering the outer framing reality of this distinctly public event, he is completely unaware of the sudden fit of abstract lust in the virtual reality of his mind because that reality has been deliberately dissociated from external sources of reference. In other words, Satan's mind becomes a very "private place" of internalized darkness in which his desires and hopes are in the state of becoming. Dissociated from external reality, privacy in this instance becomes merely a state of mind in which inverted consciousness creates an illusionary protective shield from public intrusion. It is not that this

shield does not exist, but it shields in the wrong direction. At this point everybody sees Satan “naked” in the disfigured expression of his face but Satan himself.

Although Satan’s lust is linked to his political ambition, his seizure gives it strong sexual connotations. As Augustine notes, “This lust assumes power not only over the whole body, and not only from the outside, but also internally...” (Augustine, 2003, XIV, 16). The ambivalence of lust in Satan’s case is suggestive of its sublimation from sexual urges to political ambition. Satan’s desire is not physically projected toward another person but is rather internally directed toward his own image. In this respect his seizure represents an immersion in the virtual world of disembodied sexuality, a sterile sexuality that approaches the realm of schizophrenia and narcissism. At the same time it represents a split within Satan’s mind and his narcissistic tendencies. Sin emerges as a phantasmal hallucination out of his own mind and he falls in love with her because she is a replica of his own attractive image. By falling in love with Sin Satan falls in love with his own self. This is not an example of simple love idolatry but of self-incest. Sin is Satan’s disembodied phantasm or the mirror image of his own self that awakens his sexual urges and it is not at all surprising that his cybersexuality results in the birth of yet another phantasm, Death. Ultimately, Satan’s dalliance with disembodied phantasmal images does not result in any substantive procreation but it gradually develops into a strong self-destructive death drive.

In her assessment of contemporary cybersexuality, Juniper Wiley notes that “Cybersexuality is mindful. It is inter-active. It is a communicated reality that (re)moves the physical world of things to somewhere other...” (1995, p. 157). Nevertheless, as Satan’s case demonstrates, cybersexuality is an inter-action between disembodied fantasies. Thus, the point with cybersexuality is not in how it works for two people but in how it operates within the mind of a single person. The paradox of inter-active cybersex is that it does not tie persons together but rather locks them in their self-centeredness and it obstructs any substantive bonding. And this is one of the reasons why experiences of such an “involvement” easily fade away and ultimately lead to distancing from others.

In his representation of Satan's dysfunctional family and sexuality Milton foreshadows Adam and Eve's postlapsarian marriage and sexuality. The immediate consequence of their disobedience to God is a sudden and unexpected burst of lust. "Carnal desire inflaming, he on Eve / Began to cast lascivious eyes, she him / As wantonly repaid; in lust they burn" (Fowler, 1998, IX 1013-15). Since it is all blamed on the tree it is surprising that "knowledge" itself should have such aphrodisiac powers.

For never did thy beauty since the day
 I saw thee first and wedded thee, adorned
 With all perfections, so inflame my sense
 With ardour to enjoy thee, fairer now
 Than ever, bounty of this virtuous tree. (Fowler, 1998, IX 1029-33)

It seems that Adam and Eve's flaming sexual arousal comes as a result of their inversion of consciousness or immersion in the artificial reality of a self-created instant universe dominated by the senses in which they begin to perceive each other in a new way. For the first time Adam does not notice Eve but he is enflamed by her new image of depersonalized beauty, an abstract entity of its own. This disembodiment of desire eventually leads toward what appears to be their first sex in a public place.

So said he, and forbore not glance or toy
 Of amorous intent, well understood
 Of Eve, whose eye darted contagious fire.
 Her hand he seized, and to a shady bank,
 Thick overhead with verdant roof embowered
 He led her nothing loath; flowers were the couch,
 Pansies, and violets, and asphodel,
 And hyacinth, earth's freshest softest lap.
 There they their fill of love and love's disport
 Took largely, of their mutual guilt the seal,
 The solace of their sin, till dewy sleep
 Oppressed them, wearied with their amorous play.
 (Fowler, 1998, IX 1034-45)

Adam and Eve's first "fallen" sexual experience occurs in the Garden of Eden but it is different from their "unfallen" practices in more than

one way. It does not take place after an evening worship but rather after an “excessive lunch” during which their senses overshadow their reason. The impulse is so strong and unexpected that they cannot wait until they get home, so they do it right there and then, by the road on “a shady bank” and in broad daylight. The “verdant roof” seems to be there to protect them from the heat rather than from the “public eye.” Physical darkness and strict privacy are not the prerequisites of their sexual act any more and this suggests that their sexual urges are not tied to love, which attempts to “veil” and protect, but to lust, or what Ludwig calls “aggressive eros,” which attempts to expose and dishonor (2002, p. 312). One of the greatest paradoxes of their first “exciting” sex in Paradise is that although it is entirely centered on the senses and the body, the most exciting part of this act occurs in the theater of their minds. Once again the mind becomes a very “private place” of internalized darkness. And in this darkness Adam is not in bed with Eve but rather with her phantasmal image created by his inverted consciousness. Their emergence from this seizure of lust in false reality is very anticlimactic. Stripped of their omnipotence they are two completely disempowered individuals. Of course, they become fully aware of their inversions only when they wake up with a hangover of guilt and shame and realize that the opening of their eyes has caused the darkness of their minds (Fowler, 1998, IX 1053-8).

The similarity between Satan’s and postlapsarian sexuality becomes even more evident in its end or consequences. After their experience of what appears to be a fit of exciting sex, both Adam and Eve have to deal with an altered state of mind: “Their inward state of mind, calm region once / And full of peace, now tossed and turbulent” (Fowler, 1998, IX 1125-6). Consequently, this turbulence turns into marriage problems (Fowler, 1998, IX 1162-86). And as “they in mutual accusation spent / The fruitless hours, but neither self-condemning” they seem to be turning into a dysfunctional family. Nevertheless, the ends of Satanic and human “fallen” sexualities seem to merge completely in the developing self-destructive impulse. In Adam’s case it turns into an obvious death wish: “Why comes not death / Said he, with one thrice acceptable stroke

/ To end me?" (Fowler, 1998, X 854-6). Although Adam would not admit it in his own case, Eve's death wish is directly related to their sexuality. In order to prevent the misery of future generations she first proposes abstinence or marriage without sex: "Childless thou art, childless remain: / So death shall be deceived his glut..." (Fowler, 1998, X 989-90). This thwarting of procreation ultimately leads toward suicidal impulses. Eve first questions Adam's ability to abstain: "if thou judge it hard and difficult, / Conversing, looking, loving, to abstain / From love's due rites..." (Fowler, 1998, X 992-4). Then she suggests suicide: "From what we fear for both, let us make short, / Let us seek death..." (Fowler, 1998, X 1000-1001). However, Adam replies, "the lady doth protest too much, methinks." Her self-destructive urge actually reflects her own inability to control her sexual urges.

Eve, thy contempt of life and pleasure seems
To argue in thee something more sublime
And excellent than what thy mind contemns;
But self-destruction therefore sought, refutes
That excellence though in thee, and implies,
Not any contempt, but anguish and regret
For loss of life and pleasure overloved. (Fowler, 1998, X 1013-19)

Eve's "vehement despair" is deceptively subliminal: it seems to be serving a higher cause by means of which future generations would be saved. However, Eve seems to be more concerned about the loss of her pleasures than about the wellbeing of future generations. Just as she cannot live without "exciting" sex she cannot live without Paradise itself: "Oh unexpected stroke, worse than of death! / Must I thus leave thee Paradise?" (Fowler, 1998, XI 268-9) It reflects her growing centering in self-love and narcissism, the tendency she overcomes immediately after her creation (Fowler, 1998, IV 460-80) but becomes fully susceptible to after the Fall.

Although Adam recognizes in Eve's attitude exposure to Satan's ideology in which hedonistic sexuality leads to self-destruction, his idea of sublimated sexuality seems to be the product of this very same ideology.

Adam is as unwilling as his wife to leave Paradise, but he offers doctrinal reasons for this: he wants to stay there in order to continue worshiping God and procreating according to His promise (Fowler, 1998, XI 317-33). However, the fact that Adam's proposed form of worship resembles Cain's (Fowler, 1998, XI 326-7) and is rejected by God as false testifies to the fact that Adam's sublimation of his sexual urges is equally insincere and in the service of a false "political goal." After all, by engendering Cain Adam engenders the first instance of death.

Adam and Eve's sexual "enlightenment" in the public place is a significant flip toward total inversion of their consciousness. That this consciousness is false becomes once again evident in the fact that what they at first believe to be their liberating personal gains later on turn to be great personal and political losses. Their loss of Paradise can be seen as the loss of the private sphere of life, the loss that leads to the transference of political power on earth into the hands of a despotic monarch. The worst nightmare about this loss of freedom, as well as numerous other losses, is that they are not inflicted through an external act of aggression but that they are invited, as in our own time, from within as desirable forms of "entertainment."

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