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## **‘FALL’ IN MILTON’S PARADISE LOST: READING OF ACTIONS MOTIVATING THE FINAL EVENT IN BOOK IX.**

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**Abstract:** Milton’s *Paradise Lost* focuses on the fall of man, especially in book IX. The action is dramatized with greater depth with Earth crying for its loss of innocence. The fall which occurs, the obvious blame is imposed upon either Satan or Eve. The paper makes an attempt to analyze some action which can be said as motivating factors for the fall. Milton takes the simple story of fall, with the blend of Christian belief imposing greater depth. Belief relies on a mind, which has reason as its motivating factor, greater in Adam than Eve. The exercise of free will is a diversion of God’s command to disobedience. However the actions and feelings of the characters might also indicate their fall even before the actual event has occurred. The paper tries to provide a conclusion for actions of varying degree that shape the final event.

**Keywords:** Fall, Christian Belief, Event, Free Will, Disobedience, Reason.

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*“So saying, her rash hand in evil hour  
Forth reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she ate:  
Earth felt the wound and nature from her seat  
Sighing through all her works gave signs of woe,  
That all was lost.” (MILTON)*

**Introduction:** The fall justifies the fall of man. John Milton’s epic poem *Paradise Lost*, focuses on the fall of mankind, particularly Book IX narrates the events and actions which leads to the fall of mankind. The fall mainly occurs when Eve was tempted by Satan to eat the forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge. The eating of the fruit is what the fall of mankind, the loss of innocence. The mention of fall indicates the direct or obvious blame on Satan, who tempts Eve to give into his temptation or Eve who succumbs to Satan’s temptation. However, it can be analyzed Milton devotes many instances which points what is call ‘motivating’ the fall. There are many actions which take the shape of the final event. Many reason can be analyzed that led Eve fall a victim to Satan and Adam fall a victim to Eve and even Satan fall a victim to earlier actions. The reasons which can be taken into context of arguing the fall that was likely to happen is aligned to man’s disobedience to god, the division of reason, the fall in the characters and so on.

**Disobedience or Free Will:** Milton in his *Paradise Lost* depicts Christian belief of faith and follow god’s will. The fall which is precisely the fall of man here refers to the first human transgression of divine command. It is Eve’s disobedience to God’s will that bring the downfall and ultimately Adam falling into it. The transgression includes both the narratives and its consequences. Milton’s *Paradise Lost* seeks to establish a balance between the interest of narrative and of doctrine, which had been historically present in Genesis 2 and 3 the fall narrative appears. God places Adam in the garden of Eden after creating him, however, commands him not to eat the fruit from the tree of knowledge or “for *in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*” Later the serpent spoke to her and claims to have eaten the fruit and denies the fact that they would die. Satan ascribes Gods jealous motive intends to keep them low and ignorant. The eating of the fruit will make them knowledgeable and position to God. The women eats the fruit and persuades her husband to eat it, there occurs the fall of mankind. Before this event occurs

there is a mention by Adam when Eve insists on to work alone, that God has given them the Paradise and not to lead any action to ruin it. In opposition to the ideas of disobedience, Milton encounters a difficulty to meld things between narrative and doctrine is the issue of foreknowledge and human free will. Milton himself stresses in *Aeropagitica* that freedom is an essential quality for any moral or rational creature. As earlier, Adam was told by Raphael about the free will, when Eve insists on to work alone, he also connects to the idea of free will which a creature possesses. Although Adam and Eve have their free will, this will lead to their downfall. If they need to obey God's will then there is no presence of their free will. Attempting to work on their free will, which supposedly do not have place since they have command over them, will lead them to the path of disobedience. The will works in a circular path, Eve has the will to work alone, which fails Adam's will and thereby both disobey God. If Adam and Eve are not sufficient as well as free, God will in effect have inclined the scale toward disobedience. Their responsibility for their conduct is what derives them from the capacity to obey. This can be said as the source of dignity and freedom from which they fell "till one greater man/restore us". (McColley).

**Division of Reason:** Milton in his book goes beyond what is revealed. The fall may be the result of division of reason between the sexes. Milton in his creation of the characters is somewhat biased. Adam is given the reason and Eve is not, but provided with immense beauty. Book IX reflects Adam's gift of reason in his creation, since he is directly the creation of God, whereas Eve was created out of Adam's rib. This biased-ness may have in time given rise to the fall of mankind. It is reason that the temptation disturbs through the feeling of insecurity, which arouses in them the need for true knowledge. Reason is the commanding force of the will of man, which may be confused and as a result dictate false and lead the will astray. The fall occurs for reason stronger in the person of Adam, relinquishes its sovereignty over decision, to passion, which is stronger in the person of Eve. In the hierarchy of being he is placed in charge to protect and guide her, both physically and intellectually. The absence of Eve's reason can be seen as indicated through the saying which Milton projected through Adam. Eve was constantly made aware of the danger that lingers around, and was projected as a child who was in constant need of support and guidance. Adam constantly rejects the idea of Eve's division of labor, because he was aware of the danger for he has been directly warned. Eve's lack of reason may also be due to the fact that she had not been given the proper knowledge about the danger. The power of reason places Adam above Eve, but his rejection of her idea is ornamentalized as his love and responsibility towards her. (Tarr)

Satan expressing his relief in finding Eve, which he did not expect to because he too expresses that if he was to find Adam alone instead of Eve, it would have been a difficult task for him to persuade Adam to fall into his temptation. Eve's weaker reason made her fall victim to a more powerful passion under which influence she takes the decision and ultimately decides the fate of both. Before the actual fall takes place, there is a trail or temptation. For example Eve when she sees her own image in the lake, she is almost infatuated like Narcissus but she hears and responds to the voice that leads her to Adam, and she moves from being two dimensional image from loving a real person whose image she shares. Milton is providing Eve's potential for falling, the fallibility, not the fallenness. Milton in the characterization of Eve presents her as an idol of beauty and as a fragile beauty that constantly needs supports. This was one of the weaknesses on which Satan worked to bring about her fall. The end creation of image is Eve a person of feeling and Adam a person of reason. When Eve insists on working alone, Adam tries to persuade her through reason but not through patriarchy. He is certain that the enemy would not tempt in any obvious way. Though Adam was given the reason he has to give into the notion of free will and the wisdom and beauty of Eve. Adam was given the reason but it is beauty that wins over it. In short, Eve as was "just and right" had accepted Adam's wisdom as fairer than her beauty. If Adam undervalues his wisdom and exalts her beauty above it, guided by him she will do the same; but the fault will be his, not hers. She will not respect his values if he himself does not respect them. If he will not lead, she cannot follow. The feminine power has a dual nature. So as such she is the perfect existent next to men, who observes her to be able to see his own rue nature reflected in her. This self reflection is only possible, because woman contains something that is not herself- a part of Adam. Fish understands that Adam's and Eve's disobedience is not failure of reason but failure of faith. (Walker) (Tarr)

**Fall of Characters:** Milton in Book IX provides some points through which it can be argued that there are instances which hint the presence of fall in the character. The 'fall' of the characters is evident in

their characters through the actions before fall. In Book IX of *Paradise Lost*, it can be seen that the glorious image of Satan which was earlier present in the other book is diminished. He is reduced to the image of a fallen. Milton does so by glorifying the image of Adam thus creating a position from which Satan is fallen. Although Satan has his fall occurred earlier in the book. Yet he gets too low to fulfill his revenge. Satan stooping low to get his revenge fulfilled shows another fall of Satan. This might be due to one reason, the first is that, for Satan he has already fallen from a state of height of the Gods, and the second might be that, as he has already fallen, the fall instigates him to get determined to fulfill his revenge. Satan who had once the image of glory now is reduced to a mere earthy beast. He had to get low in order to fulfill his revenge. He had to reduce or get into a serpent in get his revenge reach its goal. Although the task is hateful for him yet he would take into the task. Milton again states his fall, as he asserts some human qualities to Satan in Book IX. This addition of human qualities again gives him a position for his fall. The reflection of human qualities makes him realized what he has lost and this constantly ignite the feeling of revenge and strive for it. Satan is himself is aware of the fact that he is already fallen and that state cannot be revived. (Urban) (Tarr)

The sense of having lost paradise creates a sense of repentance in him which cannot be revived. His human realization gives a step closer to fall. When Satan encounters the beauty of Eve he is struck and his mind blank for some time. Again there is a connection to beauty with fall, which can be argued as Satan when comes in contact with anything beautiful is more determined of his deeds. The flow of human quality seeing Even again gives him the determination to his fall. This can also be analyzed as, the actions which seems to be a fall for the readers, might be a state of glory for Satan. For Adam, Eve and Satan, their positions would be balanced. Milton has also given absolute power and reason to Satan. Satan's thoughts are increasingly contradictory and confusing which becomes hard for the reader to amylase and also for himself, to follow. Satan comes to believe his own faulty logic and his own lies. In Books I and II, his ability to reason is strong, but now in Book IX he can hardly form a coherent argument. Ironically, Satan has proved the truth of his own earlier statement that the mind can make a heaven of hell or a hell of heaven. Satan intended to make a heaven out of Hell, where he would be an evil version of God. Instead, he has brought his torture with him, and made a hell out of the earth that, but for him, would be heavenly.

The character of Adam and Even had fallen after consuming the forbidden fruit, as Adam laments...

*“Both good and evil, good lost, and evil got,  
Bad fruit of knowledge, if this be to know,  
Which leaves us naked thus, of honor void,  
Of innocence, of faith and purity,”* (MILTON)

After consuming the forbidden fruit, what they strived to gain is knowledge but what they actually knew was about lust, their nakedness. It is often Eve who is blamed for the fall which occurs. This can be due to first, the disobedience to God's command and second as not aligning to the decision of her husband. Is it clearly the temptation or the revenge which leads to fall? This cannot be clearly argued as there are many other reasons which reflect on to this. It is not necessary the temptation which had led to the fall, but Eve's possession of human frailty of ambition. Milton provides circumstances which surround Eve's temptation, such as her being alone, and Satan's arguments, to explain her fall Because Milton presents Motivation for Eve's fall, and her part of the fall is believable. Milton provides instances before the actual fall that indicates a slight of fall in the character. Eve's infatuation for her own image in the pool, like narcissus, shows her vulnerability where she might give into temptation. Eve is not clearly responsible for her vulnerable position, but rather leaves her a lonely victim for Satan's plan. Only Milton gives Eve an active part in arranging her separation from Adam. Her will to work alone first sets the ground for their fall. What strikes the character of Eve is that she bases her argument for working alone upon the rightness of meeting temptation rather than avoiding it, the displeasure of having to restrict their activity if they avoid temptation and the honor to be gained in withstanding temptation and proving their virtue by test. Eve's fall depends almost exclusively with each author on her ambition and sensual desire. But the critics argue that this sin is common to all humanity, not merely a feminine

characteristic. Milton presents an Eve whose disobedience has been hinted by the development of her character. Milton's Eve is undoubtedly prone to ambition and susceptible to beauty. What is interesting to note is that Milton adds a realistic motive for Eve's attraction to it by setting her temptation at noon, the hour when she would be hungry. To justify Eve's fall traditionally this is caused by her ambition. This creates the problem of dramatizing why the world's first and perfect female chose her own advancement over obedience to God. Milton accomplished this by humanizing Eve, and making her actions physically and psychologically believable. Milton has used Eve's own weakness rightly against her. Physically she was attracted to the fruit because she was hungry at noon time and psychologically because of her desire for knowledge and the fruit's beauty. (Tarr) (Elliott)

Adam's fall in "Paradise Lost" is only made possible by the fact that Eve succumbs to temptation. Without her transgression, it is unlikely that Adam would have even wanted to taste the fruit from the tree of knowledge in "Paradise lost". His constant fluttering of infatuation for Eve presents a potential for falling, the fallibility, not their fallenness Adam fall can be argued as his act of idiocy. Even after being provided the power of reason, Adam acts out of his love for Eve. The fall in his character is seen his weakness in align to Eve. If they were in the state of unfallen, Adam mention of future children is questionable. Unlike Eve, Adam was not deceived as to the nature of the act, and since he was not deceived when he took and ate the fruit his preceding words justifying the deed had not themselves obscured his reason as Eve's had obscured hers. He could not truly believe them, and so did not act upon them but only on his love for Eve which he irrationally placed above the love of God. The permission episode appears to be identical in its meaning to the dramatization of Adam's own fall. To see that if Adam was not deceived when he ate the fruit, he was then also not deceived when he gave Eve permission to leave him to encounter Satan. If we cannot believe that the reasons he gave why he should eat were the ones that moved him to the act, then we cannot believe that he was actually convinced of the truth of the reasons he gave when he allowed Eve to depart. Milton's final comment on the Fall is that Adam was "fondly overcome with Female charm." (Elliott) (Tarr) (Urban)

**Conclusion:** To conclude, it can be said that the fall is the reaction as a result of many dispositions of previous and surrounding actions. The fall cannot be talked of as one, when there are two falls that occur. There are certain motivations which operated in each of the falls. Again the temptation worked only because they worked separately. Would this have worked if they were together? Although there is presence of disobedience, but is there a presence of obedience? The fall never occurred due to certain one reason or due to the tempter or the tempest, but the degree of the varying actions.

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