

Romantic Backgrounds: The Pattern of Judeo-Christian History (courtesy of R.F.W. Kroll)

1. (Old Testament): Creation (The Word/Logos)--The Fall--Adam and Eve quarrel--Cain kills Abel--Men build the tower of Babel--God confuses the languages of men (thus a linguistic Fall)

2. Human history: state of alienation--

God *vs.* Man

Man *vs.* Man

Man *vs.* Nature

These three kinds of alienation are mitigated by moments of Prophecy, by which God's purposes are communicated to Israel.

3. (New Testament): The WORD/Logos/Christ--human redemption on individual level--Spirit comes to the Church--Pentecost: language re-unified in a prophetic moment--Apostolic prophecy (e.g. St. John in Revelation).

4. Human history: state of alienation, mitigated by the possibilities of individual salvation.

5. Millennium: the end of human history. Alienation overcome

The Problem of the Prophet/Poet:

Milton: How is a Christian poet to communicate prophetic truth when the medium of his persuasion is human, and thus fallen, language? How can he overcome, or at least temporarily surmount, the hurdle?

Romantic Poet: How can the ordinary man, even through the enlightened poet, convey something of the Transcendental Vision in the medium of the alienated world; namely language?

Romantic Devices:

--blank verse

--loose forms

--fairy tales, romance, ballads

--sudden unexpected events

--a moment of recognition (Wordsworth: "spot of time"; Joyce:

"epiphany")

--symbol; radical metaphor

--simple diction: "the ordinary language of men"

--strange syntax designed to shock the reader out of ordinary

rational apprehension of reality

--use of contradictory arguments to perplex common empirical or logical relations

"Poetry," like prophecy, imbues ordinary language with some mystical, unseen force, which finds expression in any number of linguistic symptoms.

Rom's and Judeo-Xian./Kroll2

[following this handout is an attachment consisting of Genesis 1-4, 11 and John 1-2. The captions are as follows:

Genesis

1-4. The myth of primal union; God creating through speech; images of water, light; the pattern of journey.

11. The original unity of language is broken up by God.

John

1-2. The coming of the -----, ----- . Linguistic chaos reversed; s universal language [or almost a universal language, with potential of being realized at the end of time]