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# **COURSE WORK**

**Theme : The ideas of humanism in  
“Paradise Lost”**

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## Introduction

As we know, be aware of many languages, it means that people will be capable to communicate with divergent nationalities. That's way learning any foreign language is really crucial . If you pay attention to history of all languages, it is known that history of language, its importance of course is related to literature. Well my theme is somehow familiar to you, because really you have background information about it. The reason most of you heard this as a folklore. It is not all, maybe you read in any religious books. But the author of this poem tried to make it more complicated and literary.

The author of the book is John Milton.

The first words of Paradise lost state that the poem's main theme will be "*Man's first Disobedience*". Milton narrates the story of Adam and Eva's disobedience, explain how and why it happens and places the story within the larger context of Satan's rebellion and Jesus' resurrection".

Milton's poetry and prose reflect deep personal convictions, a passion for freedom and self-determination, and the urgent issues and political turbulence of his day. Writing in English, Latin, Greek, and Italian, he achieved international renown within his lifetime. Samuel Johnson praised *Paradise Lost* as "a poem which...with respect to design may claim the first place, and with respect to performance, the second, among the productions of the human mind", though he described Milton's politics as those of an "acrimonious and surly republican".

The phases of Milton's life parallel the major historical and political divisions in Stuart Britain. Under the increasingly personal rule of Charles I and its breakdown in constitutional confusion and war, Milton studied, travelled, wrote poetry mostly for private circulation, and launched a career as pamphleteer and publicist. Under the Commonwealth of England, from being thought dangerously radical and even heretical, the shift in accepted attitudes in government placed him in public office, and he even acted as an official spokesman in certain of his publications.

## Chapter 1

### 1.2. The biography of John Milton

**John Milton** (9 December 1608 – 8 November 1674) was an English poet, polemicist, and man of letters, and a civil servant for the Commonwealth of England under Oliver Cromwell. He wrote at a time of religious flux and political upheaval, and is best known for his epic poem *Paradise Lost* (1667), written in blank verse.

The Restoration of 1660 deprived Milton, now completely blind, of his public platform, but this period saw him complete most of his major works of poetry. Milton's views developed from his very extensive reading, as well as travel and experience, from his student days of the 1620s to the English Civil War. By the time of his death in 1674, Milton was impoverished and on the margins of English intellectual life, yet famous throughout Europe and unrepentant for his political choices.

#### Early life

John Milton was born in Bread Street, London, on 9 December 1608, the son of the composer John Milton and his wife, Sarah Jeffrey. The senior John Milton (1562–1647) moved to London around 1583 after being disinherited by his devout Catholic father, Richard Milton, for embracing Protestantism. In London, the senior John Milton married Sarah Jeffrey (1572–1637) and found lasting financial success as scrivener. He lived in, and worked from, a house on Bread Street, where the Mermaid Tavern was located in Cheapside. The elder Milton was noted for his skill as a musical composer, and this talent left his son with a lifelong appreciation for music and friendships with musicians such as Henry Lawes. Milton's father's prosperity provided his eldest son with a private tutor, Thomas Young, a Scottish Presbyterian with an M.A. from the University of St. Andrews. Research suggests that Young's influence served as the poet's introduction to religious radicalism. After Young's tutorship Milton attended St Paul's School in London. There he began the study of Latin and Greek, and the

classical languages left an imprint on his poetry in English. At Cambridge, Milton was on good terms with Edward King, for whom he later wrote *Lycidas*. He also befriended Anglo-American dissident and theologian Roger Williams. Drafts of these poems are preserved in Milton's poetry notebook, known as the Trinity Manuscript because it is now kept at Trinity College, Cambridge. In May 1638, Milton embarked upon a tour of France and Italy that lasted up to July or August 1639. He left Florence in September to continue to Rome. With the connections from Florence, Milton was able to have easy access to Rome's intellectual society. His poetic abilities impressed those like Giovanni Salzilli, who praised Milton within an epigram. In late October, Milton, despite his dislike for the Society of Jesus, attended a dinner given by the English College, Rome, meeting English Catholics who were also guests, theologian Henry Holden and the poet Patrick Cary.

### **Family**

Milton and his first wife, Mary Powell (1625–1652) had four children. Mary Powell died on 5 May 1652 from complications following Deborah's birth. Milton's daughters survived to adulthood, but he had always a strained relationship with them. On 12 November 1656, Milton was married again, to Katherine Woodcock. She died on 3 February 1658, less than four months after giving birth to a daughter, Katherine, who also died. Milton married for a third time on 24 February 1662, to Elizabeth Mynshull (1638–1728), the niece of Thomas Mynshull, a wealthy apothecary and philanthropist in Manchester. Despite a 31-year age gap, the marriage seemed happy, according to John Aubrey, and was to last more than 12 years until Milton's death. (A plaque on the wall of Mynshull's House in Manchester describes Elizabeth as Milton's "3rd and Best wife".

### **1.3. The plot of Paradise Lost**

The story opens in hell, where Satan and his followers are recovering from defeat in a war they waged against God. They build a palace, called Pandemonium,

where they hold council to determine whether or not to return to battle. Instead they decide to explore a new world prophesied to be created, where a safer course of revenge can be planned. Satan undertakes the mission alone. At the gate of hell, he meets his offspring, Sin and Death, who unbar the gates for him.

He journeys across chaos till he sees the new universe floating near the larger globe which is heaven. God sees Satan flying towards this world and foretells the fall of man. His Son, who sits at his right hand, offers to sacrifice himself for man's salvation. Meanwhile, Satan enters the new universe. He flies to the sun, where he tricks an angel, Uriel, into showing him the way to man's home. Satan gains entrance into the Garden of Eden, where he finds Adam and Eve and becomes jealous of them. He overhears them speak of God's commandment that they should not eat the forbidden fruit. Uriel warns Gabriel and his angels, who are guarding the gate of Paradise, of Satan's presence. Satan is apprehended by them and banished from Eden. God sends Raphael to warn Adam and Eve about Satan. Raphael recounts to them how jealousy against the Son of God led a once favored angel to wage war against God in heaven, and how the Son, Messiah, cast him and his followers into hell. He relates how the world was created so mankind could one day replace the fallen angels in heaven. Satan returns to earth, and enters a serpent. Finding Eve alone he induces her to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree. Adam, resigned to join in her fate, eats also. Their innocence is lost and they become aware of their nakedness. In shame and despair, they become hostile to each other. The Son of God descends to earth to judge the sinners, mercifully delaying their sentence of death. Sin and Death, sensing Satan's success, build a highway to earth, their new home. Upon his return to hell, instead of a celebration of victory, Satan and his crew are turned into serpents as punishment. Adam reconciles with Eve. God sends Michael to expel the pair from Paradise, but first to reveal to Adam future events resulting from his sin. Adam is saddened by these visions, but ultimately revived by revelations of the future coming of the Savior of

mankind. In sadness, mitigated with hope, Adam and Eve are sent away from the Garden of Paradise.

The first words of *Paradise Lost* state that the poem's main theme will be "Man's first Disobedience." Milton narrates the story of Adam and Eve's disobedience, explains how and why it happens, and places the story within the larger context of Satan's rebellion and Jesus' resurrection. Raphael tells Adam about Satan's disobedience in an effort to give him a firm grasp of the threat that Satan and humankind's disobedience poses. In essence, *Paradise Lost* presents two moral paths that one can take after disobedience: the downward spiral of increasing sin and degradation, represented by Satan, and the road to redemption, represented by Adam and Eve. While Adam and Eve are the first humans to disobey God, Satan is the first of all God's creation to disobey. His decision to rebel comes only from himself—he was not persuaded or provoked by others. Also, his decision to continue to disobey God after his fall into Hell ensures that God will not forgive him. Adam and Eve, on the other hand, decide to repent for their sins and seek forgiveness. Unlike Satan, Adam and Eve understand that their disobedience to God will be corrected through generations of toil on Earth. This path is obviously the correct one to take: the visions in Books XI and XII demonstrate that obedience to God, even after repeated falls, can lead to humankind's salvation.

Opposites abound in *Paradise Lost*, including Heaven and Hell, God and Satan, and good and evil. Milton's uses imagery of light and darkness to express all of these opposites. Angels are physically described in terms of light, whereas devils are generally described by their shadowy darkness. Milton also uses light to symbolize God and God's grace. In his invocation in Book III, Milton asks that he be filled with this light so he can tell his divine story accurately and persuasively. While the absence of light in Hell and in Satan himself represents the absence of God and his grace.

### **Conversation and Contemplation**

One common objection raised by readers of *Paradise Lost* is that the poem contains relatively little action. Milton sought to divert the reader's attention from heroic battles and place it on the conversations and contemplations of his characters. Conversations comprise almost five complete books of *Paradise Lost*, close to half of the text. Milton's narrative emphasis on conversation conveys the importance he attached to conversation and contemplation, two pursuits that he believed were of fundamental importance for a moral person. As with Adam and Raphael, and again with Adam and Michael, the sharing of ideas allows two people to share and spread God's message. Likewise, pondering God and his grace allows a person to become closer to God and more obedient. Adam constantly contemplates God before the fall, whereas Satan contemplates only himself. After the fall, Adam and Eve must learn to maintain their conversation and contemplation if they hope to make their own happiness outside of Paradise.

The wreath that Adam makes as he and Eve work separately in Book IX is symbolic in several ways. First, it represents his love for her and his attraction to her. But as he is about to give the wreath to her, his shock in noticing that she has eaten from the Tree of Knowledge makes him drop it to the ground. His dropping of the wreath symbolizes that his love and attraction to Eve is falling away. His image of her as a spiritual companion has been shattered completely, as he realizes her fallen state. The fallen wreath represents the loss of pure love.

With these lines, Milton begins *Paradise Lost* and lays the groundwork for his project, presenting his purpose, subject, aspirations, and need for heavenly guidance. He states that his subject will be the disobedience of Adam and Eve, whose sin allows death and pain into the world. He invokes his muse, whom he identifies as the Holy Spirit. He asserts his hopes that his epic poem will surpass the other great epic poems written before, as he claims that his story is the most original and the most virtuous. He also asks his muse to fill his mind with divine knowledge so that he can share this knowledge with his readers. Finally, he hopes this knowledge and guidance from his muse will allow him to claim authority

without committing any heresies, as he attempts to explain God's reasoning and his overall plan for humankind.

These passages from Book III make up part of Milton's second and longest invocation, which is also his most autobiographical and symbolic. Milton refers to light simultaneously as divine wisdom and literal light. When he speaks about his blindness he refers to both his inward blindness, or lack of divine wisdom, and his literal blindness, or loss of eyesight.

He begins by praising holy light as the essence of God. The idea that God is light was common before and during Milton's time, and is a popular interpretation of certain biblical passages in Genesis. He then invokes his heavenly muse, the Holy Spirit, by reusing similar images and ideas from his first invocation; remember that Milton has asked for this heaven muse to illuminate "what in me is dark" . Symbolically, Milton asks for his muse to enter his body and fill him with divine knowledge.

Milton discusses his physical, outward blindness when he compares himself to other famous blind "Prophets old" , such as Homer (Maeonides) and Tiresias, and asks that he be filled with even more wisdom than them. He does not seek pity for his blindness, explaining that he is still active and undeterred from his poetic purpose. He believes that his outward blindness is insignificant, and that he hopes he is not inwardly blind. He hopes to sing beautifully like the darkling bird, which sings at night, unable to see who or what she is singing to. He ends his invocation by asking for his inward blindness to be corrected so that he can properly tell the story of Adam and Eve.

One reason that Satan is easy to sympathize with is that he is much more like us than God or the Son are. As the embodiment of human errors, he is much easier for us to imagine and empathize with than an omniscient deity. Satan's character and psychology are all very human, and his envy, pride, and despair are

understandable given his situation. But Satan's speeches, while undeniably moving, subtly display their own inconsistency and error.

When Satan first sees Earth and Paradise in Book III, he is overcome with grief. His description of his situation is eloquent; his expression of pain is moving. Perhaps we pity Satan as he struggles to find his new identity while reflecting on his recent mistakes. Likewise, his feeling of despair resonates with feelings that all human beings undergo at some point. However, Satan's despair becomes fuel for his ever-increasing evil, rather than the foundation for repentance. His anger and irrationality overcomes him, and he resolves to make evil his virtue. In many ways Satan becomes more understandable in this speech for his pitiable human qualities, and he becomes more interesting as well due to the unpredictability of his character. But overall, his ever-increasing stubbornness and devilish pride makes him less forgivable.

Trace the appearance of autobiographical details in *Paradise Lost*. How are these details important to the story? What is the identity and role of the narrator?

Traditionally, critics make a distinction between the author and the speaker of a poem, or between the author and the narrator. *Paradise Lost*, however, identifies the narrator with Milton in several of the invocations that open individual books. Milton inserts autobiographical references to make the reader know that it is he—not an imaginary, unnamed character—who is narrating.

The autobiographical details in Milton's three invocations allow Milton to simultaneously express his purpose and his Christian humility. Milton explains to his audience that his purpose is just and his humility is real. First, in his invocation in Book I, he hopes his darkness (or blindness) will be illuminated so he can learn the facts of his story he will tell. In his second invocation, in Book III, he praises Holy Light and again hopes that his blindness will be corrected, at least metaphorically. He also expresses his fear that he may have waited too long to begin writing his epic poem; he fears his age may cloud his reason, or that he has passed his creative and stylistic peaks. In the final invocation, in Book VII, Milton

asks for help in making the narrative transition from Heaven to Earth. In a display of humility, he asks for help in finishing his story. This invocation presents Milton as a devoted follower and writer with fallible qualities. His pleas to his heavenly muse parallel Adam and Eve's repentance and request for guidance. Milton's interjections diminish the possibility that the story will become simply a vehicle of his ego and opinions. These autobiographical details endow his narration with a sense of authority.

Traditional Christian belief holds that the Son and the Father are two parts of the same God, but Milton presents the Son as a fundamentally separate entity from God the Father. How does this distinction affect the plot of *Paradise Lost*?

Milton deviates from traditional Christian theology concerning the Holy Trinity. He explains in *Paradise Lost* his belief that God the Father existed with the Holy Spirit, another part of the Trinity, who wandered about the "vast abyss". But, Milton explains, God the Son had not yet been created. God the Father creates him afterward, and appoints him as his second-in-command. Indeed, this depiction of the Son's origin conflicts with the Bible. But in both the Bible and in Milton's story, the appointment of the Son as second-in-command leads to Satan's envy and rebellion. In this way, Milton's separation of the Father and the Son allows for Satan's outrage to be more understandable, and at least more believable. While Milton did not completely believe in every aspect of the Holy Trinity as it was believed by others in his time, he does believe that God the Father and God the Son have equal powers but with different roles.

The Father and the Son are essentially one entity, but the construction of *Paradise Lost* as a story with characters who must interact with each other allows Milton to explore their separate roles and their unfathomable relationship. In many scenes, God the Father sends God the Son to perform certain tasks, like the creation of the universe, of Earth, and Adam. The Bible explains that God himself, not Jesus the Son, performed these tasks, and Milton agrees. In these scenes, the Father merely works through his Son. Since Milton believes that God the Father is unknowable and unimaginable, God the Son becomes his knowable

and imaginable representation. In other words, the Son (Jesus) becomes the mobile version of God and the mediator between humankind and God the Father.

The reception of *Paradise Lost* is a long story in itself. In many ways the work was a challenge. The choice of a biblical theme was criticized by Dryden, for example. Yet the greatness of the work was quickly recognized. The first edition, for which Milton received ten pounds, sold well over one thousand copies. The second edition, the final text, continued to be published after Milton's death.

In the coming Age of Reason, Milton's poem might appeal because of its reasonableness. Milton was not much interested in the laws of universal mechanics that were the dominant interest of the scientific age, he never chose between the old earth-centred system and the new sun-centred one, but he did consider that Christian belief, based on the Bible, was in accordance with the demands of reason. Milton wanted to know and express in words the truth, as much as any other seventeenth or eighteenth century philosopher.

Milton was writing in an age that had largely lost the ability to take seriously the old myths of Greece and Rome, or even to use them in metaphorical ways. He benefits from this, since his subject matter is still universally recognized as true and treated with the deepest respect, even though many of the details of the Bible, the Old Testament in particular, were already beginning to be found unacceptable to a modern enlightened sensibility.

Later in the century, Dr. Johnson published a well-known essay on Milton's works in 1779 in which he spends a long time on the excellence of *Paradise Lost*:

*Here is a full display of the united force of study and genius; of a great accumulation of materials, with judgement to digest and fancy to combine them: Milton was able to select from nature or from story, from ancient fable or from modern science, whatever could illustrate or adorn his thoughts. An accumulation of knowledge impregnated his mind, fermented by study and exalted by imagination.*

His main complaint is that the poem has "neither human actions nor human manners" since all happens in Heaven, in Hell, or in Paradise where Adam and Eve "are in a state which no other man or woman can ever know".

Dr. Johnson was blunt enough to add a celebrated comment with which many have had to agree:

But original deficiency cannot be supplied. The want of human interest is always felt. *Paradise Lost* is one of the books which the reader admires and lays down, and forgets to take up again. None ever wished it longer than it is. Its perusal is a duty rather than a pleasure. We read Milton for instruction, retire harassed and overburdened, and look elsewhere for recreation; we desert our master, and seek for companions.

For three centuries "Paradise Lost" has held its place as the greatest poem in the English language. It has been the touchstone of literary appreciation, the test by which the reader's taste and understanding have been judged. It came into the world unheralded and unsung, but within a few years it cut out, as Dryden remarked, all its contemporaries and the ancients too.

*Paradise Lost* was looked upon as a book of sermons, and its text was God. Therefore, say the critics, as the theological framework, so essential to the poem, becomes out of date, as thoughtful men cease to believe in angels or devils, the poem will lose its validity, its appeal to the modern man, and become one of those monuments of art whose interest is purely antiquarian. Its essential weakness, they would assert, is that *Paradise Lost* is built on a fable which the modern mind rejects and which is, in the words of Satan, "worth your laughter".

But it seems to me, to argue thus is to miss the whole point of the poem. The theme of *paradise Lost* is not God, but Man. I wonder if my listeners have noticed, what I have always felt, that there is an essential unity in Milton's work, that from the first poem he ever wrote to the last, every one of his writings—Prose or Poetry has but one theme, viz. Milton himself. Is there any other instance in the whole

realm of English literature of such unashamed egotism? Yes, egotism if you like, but as Coleridge said, the egotism of such a man is a revelation of spirit. Milton himself is the theme of his works, but Milton as representative man, Milton as embodying the eternal conflicts which flesh is heir to, Milton as forming the crowded arena where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat. It runs like a golden thread—this concentration on himself—and illumines his writings like a candle in a dark world.

The poem is separated into twelve "books" or sections, the lengths of which vary greatly (the longest is Book IX, with 1,189 lines, and the shortest Book VII, with 640). The poem follows the epic tradition of starting *in medias res*, the background story being recounted later.

Milton's story has two narrative arcs, one about Satan and the other following Adam and Eve. It begins after Satan and the other rebel angels have been defeated and banished to Hell. At the end of the debate, Satan volunteers to poison the newly created Earth and God's new and most favoured creation, Mankind.

At several points in the poem, an Angelic War over Heaven is recounted from different perspectives. Satan's rebellion follows the epic convention of large-scale warfare. The battles between the faithful angels and Satan's forces take place over three days. At the final battle, the Son of God single-handedly defeats the entire legion of angelic rebels and banishes them from Heaven. Following this purge, God creates the World, culminating in his creation of Adam and Eve. While God gave Adam and Eve total freedom and power to rule over all creation, he gave them one explicit command: not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil on penalty of death.

The story of Adam and Eve's temptation and fall is a fundamentally different, new kind of epic: a domestic one. They have passions and distinct personalities. Satan, disguised in the form of a serpent, successfully tempts Eve to eat from the Tree by preying on her vanity and tricking her with rhetoric. Adam,

learning that Eve has sinned, knowingly commits the same sin. He declares to Eve that since she was made from his flesh, they are bound to one another if she dies, he must also die. In this manner, Milton portrays Adam as a heroic figure, but also as a greater sinner than Eve, as he is aware that what he is doing is wrong. After eating the fruit, Adam and Eve have lustful sex. At first, Adam is convinced that Eve was right in thinking that eating the fruit would be beneficial. However, they soon fall asleep and have terrible nightmares, and after they awake, they experience guilt and shame for the first time. Realizing that they have committed a terrible act against God, they engage in mutual recrimination.

Meanwhile, Satan returns triumphantly to Hell, amidst the praise of his fellow fallen angels. He tells them about how their scheme worked and human kind has fallen, giving them complete dominion over Paradise. As he finishes his speech, however, the fallen angels around him become hideous snakes, and soon enough, Satan himself turned into a snake, deprived of limbs and unable to talk. Thus, they share the same punishment, as they shared the same guilt.

Eve appeals to Adam for reconciliation of their actions. Her encouragement enables them to approach God, and sue for grace, bowing on suppliant knee, to receive forgiveness. In a vision shown to him by the angel Michael, Adam witnesses everything that will happen to mankind until the Great Flood. Adam is very upset by this vision of the future, so Michael also tells him about humankind's potential redemption from original sin through Jesus Christ.

Adam and Eve are cast out of Eden, and Michael says that Adam may find "a paradise within thee, happier far". Adam and Eve also now have a more distant relationship with God, who is omnipresent but invisible

## Chapter 2

### 2.1. The main characters of poem

#### Satan

Satan is the first major character introduced in the poem. Formerly called Lucifer, he was the most beautiful of all angels in Heaven, and is a tragic figure who describes himself with the now-famous quote "Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven." He is introduced to Hell after he leads a failed rebellion to wrest control of Heaven from God. Satan's desire to rebel against his creator stems from his unwillingness to be subjugated by God and his Son, claiming that angels are self-begot, self-raised," and thereby denying God's authority over them as their creator. Satan is deeply arrogant albeit powerful and charismatic. Satan's persuasive powers are evident throughout the book; not only is he cunning and deceptive, but he is also able to rally the fallen angels to continue in the rebellion after their agonizing defeat in the Angelic War. He argues that God rules as a tyrant and that all the angels ought to rule as gods. Though commonly understood to be the antagonizing force in *Paradise Lost*, Satan may be best defined as a tragic or Hellenic hero.

Satan's status as a protagonist in the epic poem is debatable; Milton arguably characterizes him as such, but Satan lacks several key traits that would otherwise make him the definitive protagonist in the work. One deciding factor that insinuates his role as the protagonist in the story is that most often a protagonist is heavily characterized and far better described than the other characters, and the way the character is written is meant to make him seem more interesting or special to the reader. For that matter, Satan is both well described and is depicted as being quite versatile in that he is shown as having the capacity to do evil whilst retaining his characteristic sympathetic qualities and thus it is this complex and relatable nature makes him a likely candidate for the story's overarching protagonist. Because Satan does not exist solely for himself, as without God he would not have a role to play in the story, he may not be viewed as protagonist

because of the continual shifts in perspective and relative importance of characters in each book of the work. Satan's existence in the story involves his rebellion against God and his determination to corrupt the beings he creates in order to create evil so that there can be a discernable balance and justice for both himself and his fallen angels. Therefore, it is more probable that he exists in order to combat God, making his status as the definitive protagonist of the work relative to each book. Satan's status as a traditional hero in the work is similarly up to debate as the term "hero" evokes different meanings depending on the time and the person giving the definition and is thus a matter of contention within the text. According to Aristotle, a hero is someone who is "superhuman, godlike, and divine" but is also human. A hero would have to either be a human with God-like powers or the offspring of God. While Milton gives reason to believe that Satan is superhuman, as he was originally an angel, he is anything but human. Therefore, according to Aristotle's definition of a hero alone, Satan is not a hero. Satan goes against God's law and therefore becomes corrupt and lacking of virtue and, as Piccolomini warned, "vice may be mistaken for heroic virtue".

Satan is very devoted to his cause, although that cause is evil but he strives to spin his sinister aspirations to appear as good ones. Satan achieves this end multiple times throughout the text as he riles up his band of fallen angels during his speech by deliberately telling them to do evil to explain God's hypocrisy and again during his entreaty to Eve. He makes his intentions seem pure and positive even when they are rooted in evil and according to Steadman, this is the chief reason that readers often mistake Satan as a hero. Although Satan's army inevitably loses the war against God, Satan achieves a position of power and begins his reign in Hell with his band of loyal followers, composed of fallen angels, which is described to be a "third of heaven". Satan's characterization as the leader of a failing cause folds into this as well and is best exemplified through his own quote, "to be weak is to be miserable; Doing or Suffering", as through shared solidarity espoused by empowering rhetoric, Satan riles up his comrades in arms and keeps them focused towards their shared goal. "Satan insists that he and his fellow.

revolutionaries held their places by right and even leading him to claim that they were self-created and self-sustained”

### **Adam**

Adam is the first human created by God. Though initially alone, Adam demands a mate from God. Considered God's prized creation, Adam, along with his wife, rules over all the creatures of the world and resides in the Garden of Eden. He is more gregarious than Eve, and yearns for her company. His complete infatuation with Eve, while pure in and of itself, eventually contributes to his joining her in disobedience to God. Unlike the Biblical Adam, before he leaves Paradise this version of Adam is given a glimpse of the future of mankind

### **Eve**

Eve is the second human created by God, taken from one of Adam's ribs and shaped into a female form of Adam. Far from the traditional model of a good wife, she is often unwilling to be submissive towards Adam. She is more intelligent and curious about external ideas than her husband. Though happy, she longs for knowledge and, more specifically, self-knowledge. Her first act in existence is to turn away from Adam and look at and ponder her own reflection. Eve is extremely beautiful and thoroughly in love with Adam, though may feel suffocated by his constant presence. One day, she convinces Adam that it would be good for them to split up and work different parts of the Garden. In her solitude, she is tempted by Satan to sin against God. Adam shortly follows along with her.

### **The Son of God**

The Son of God is the spirit who will become incarnate as , though he is never named explicitly, since he has not yet entered human form. Milton's God refers to the Son as "My word, my wisdom, and effectual might" but Milton believed in a subordinationist doctrine of Christology that regarded the Son as secondary to the Father, His "great Vice-gerent". The poem is not explicitly anti-trinitarian, but is consistent with Milton's convictions. The Son is the ultimate hero of the epic and is infinitely powerful, single-handedly defeating Satan and his followers and

driving them into Hell. The Son of God tells Adam and Eve about God's judgment after their sin. He sacrificially volunteers to journey to the World, become a man himself, and redeem the Fall of Man through his own death and resurrection. In the final scene, a vision of Salvation through the Son of God is revealed to Adam by Michael. Still, the name, Jesus of Nazareth, and the details of Jesus' story are not depicted in the poem.

### **God the Father**

God the Father is the creator of Heaven, Hell, the world, and of everyone and everything there is, through the agency of His Son. He desires glory and praise from all his creations. He is an all-powerful, all-knowing, infinitely good being who cannot be overthrown by even the great army of angels Satan incites against him. The stated purpose of the poem is to justify the ways of God to men, so God often converses with the Son of God concerning his plans and reveals his motives regarding his actions. The poem portrays God's process of creation in the way that Milton believed it was done, with God creating Heaven, Earth, Hell, and all the creatures that inhabit these separate planes from part of Himself, not out of nothing. Thus, according to Milton, the ultimate authority of God derives from his being the "author" of creation. Satan tries to justify his rebellion by denying this aspect of God and claiming self-creation, but he admits to himself this is not the case, and that God "deserved no such return from me whom He created what I was."

### **Raphael**

Raphael is an archangel whom God sends to warn Adam about Satan's infiltration of Eden and to warn him that Satan is going to try to curse Adam and Eve. He also has a lengthy discussion with the curious Adam regarding creation and events which transpired in Heaven.

### **Michael**

Michael is a mighty archangel who fought for God in the Angelic War. In the first battle, he wounds Satan terribly with a powerful sword that God designed to even

cut through the substance of angels. After Adam and Eve disobey God by eating from the Tree of Knowledge, God sends the angel Michael to visit Adam and Eve. His duty is to escort Adam and Eve out of Paradise.

### **Marriage**

Milton first presents Adam and Eve in Book IV with impartiality. The relationship between Adam and Eve is one of "mutual dependence, not a relation of domination or hierarchy." While the author does place Adam above Eve in regard to his intellectual knowledge, and in turn his relation to God, he also grants Eve the benefit of knowledge through experience. Hermine Van Nuis clarifies that although there is a sense of stringency associated with the specified roles of the male and the female, each unreservedly accepts the designated role because it is viewed as an asset. Instead of believing that these roles are forced upon them, each uses the obligatory requirement as a strength in their relationship with each other. These minor discrepancies could be interpreted as an indication of the author's view on the importance of mutuality between a husband and a wife.

When examining the relationship between Adam and Eve, critics tend to accept an either Adam- or Eve-centered view in terms of hierarchy and importance to God. David Mikics argues, by contrast, these positions "overstate the independence of the characters' stances, and therefore miss the way in which Adam and Eve are entwined with each other". Milton's true vision reflects one where the husband and wife (in this instance, Adam and Eve) depend on each other and only through each other's differences are able to thrive.

Although Milton does not directly mention divorce, critics posit theories on Milton's view of divorce based on inferences found within the poem, and, of course, the tracts on divorce Milton wrote earlier in his life. Other works by Milton suggest he viewed marriage as an entity separate from the church. Discussing *Paradise Lost*, Biberman entertains the idea that "marriage is a contract made by both the man and the woman". Based on this inference, Milton would believe that both man and woman would have equal access to divorce, as

they do to marriage. Feminist critics of *Paradise Lost* suggest that Eve is forbidden the knowledge of her own identity. Moments after her creation, before Eve is led to Adam, she becomes enraptured by an image reflected in the water (her own, unbeknownst to Eve). God urges Eve to look away from her own image, her beauty, which is also the object of Adam's desire. Adam delights in both her beauty and submissive charms, yet Eve may never be permitted to gaze upon her individual form. Critic Julia M. Walker argue that because Eve "neither recognizes nor names herself ... she can know herself only in relation to Adam.

"Eve's sense of self becomes important in its absence ... [she] is never allowed to know what she is supposed to see." Eve therefore knows not what she is, only what she is not: male. Starting in Book IV, Eve learns that Adam, the male form, is superior and "How beauty is excelled by manly grace And wisdom which alone is truly fair." Led by his gentle hand, she yields, a woman without individual purpose, destined to fall by "free will."

### **Idolatry**

Milton's 17th-century contemporaries by and large criticized Milton's ideas and considered him as a radical, mostly because of his well-known Protestant views on politics and religion. One of Milton's greatest and most controversial arguments centres on his concept of what is idolatrous; this topic is deeply embed in *Paradise Lost*. Milton's first criticism of idolatry focuses on the practice of constructing temples and other buildings to serve as places of worship. In Book XI of *Paradise Lost*, Adam tries to atone for his sins by offering to build altars to worship God. In response, the angel Michael explains that Adam does not need to build physical objects to experience the presence of God. Joseph Lyle points to this example, explaining "When Milton objects to architecture, it is not a quality inherent in buildings themselves he finds offensive, but rather their tendency to act as convenient loci to which idolatry, over time, will inevitably adhere.

" Even if the idea is pure in nature, Milton still believes that it will unavoidably lead to idolatry simply because of the nature of humans. Instead of directing their

thoughts towards God, as they should, humans tend to turn to erected objects and falsely invest their faith. While Adam attempts to build an altar to God, critics note Eve is similarly guilty of idolatry, but in a different manner. Harding believes Eve's narcissism and obsession with herself constitutes idolatry. Specifically, Harding claims that " under the serpent's influence, Eve's idolatry and self-deification foreshadow the errors into which her 'Sons' will stray.

" Much like Adam, Eve falsely places her faith into herself, the Tree of Knowledge, and to some extent, the Serpent, all of which do not compare to the ideal nature of God. Furthermore, Milton makes his views on idolatry more explicit with the creation of Pandemonium and the exemplary allusion to Solomon's temple. In the beginning of *Paradise Lost*, as well as throughout the poem, there are several references to the rise and eventual fall of Solomon's temple. Critics elucidate that "Solomon's temple provides an explicit demonstration of how an artefact moves from its genesis in devotional practice to an idolatrous end." He saw the practice as idolatrous. Barbara Lewalski concludes that the theme of idolatry in *Paradise Lost* "is an exaggerated version of the idolatry Milton had long associated with the Stuart ideology of divine kingship". In the opinion of Milton, any object, human or non-human, that receives special attention befitting of God, is considered idolatrous.

The writer and critic Samuel Johnson wrote that *Paradise Lost* shows off

Milton's peculiar power to astonish and that "Milton seems to have been well acquainted with his own genius, and to know what it was that Nature had bestowed upon him more bountifully than upon others: the power of displaying the vast, illuminating the splendid, enforcing the awful, darkening the gloomy, and aggravating the dreadful. " Milton scholar John Leonard interpreted the "impious war" between Heaven and Hell as civil war.

*Paradise Lost* is, among other things, a poem about civil war. Satan raises 'impious war in Heav'n' by leading a third of the angels in revolt against God. The term 'impious war' implies that civil war is impious. But Milton applauded the

English people for having the courage to depose and execute King Charles I. In his poem, however, he takes the side of Heaven's awful Monarch'. Critics have long wrestled with the question of why an antimonarchist and defender of regicide should have chosen a subject that obliged him to defend monarchical authority.

The editors at the Poetry Foundation argue that Milton's criticism of the English monarchy was being directed specifically at the Stuart monarchy and not at the monarchy system in general. In a similar vein, critic and writer C.S. Lewis argued that there was no contradiction in Milton's position in the poem since "Milton believed that God was his 'natural superior' and that Charles Stuart was not." Other critics, like William Empson, view it as a more ambiguous work, with Milton's complex characterization of Satan playing a large part in that perceived ambiguity. Empson argued that "Milton deserves credit for making God wicked, since the God of Christianity is 'a wicked God.'" Leonard places Empson's interpretation "in the Romantic interpretive tradition of William Blake and Percy Bysshe Shelley." As Blake famously wrote, "The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels & God, and at liberty when of Devils & Hell, is because he was a true Poet and of the Devil's party without knowing it." This quotation succinctly represents the way in which the 18th- and 19th-century English Romantic poets viewed Milton.

Empson's view is more complex. Leonard points out that "Empson never denies that Satan's plan is wicked. What he does deny is that God is innocent of its wickedness: 'Milton steadily drives home that the inmost counsel of God was the Fortunate Fall of man; however wicked Satan's plan may be, it is God's plan too since God in *Paradise Lost* is depicted as being both omniscient and omnipotent. Leonard calls Empson's view "a powerful argument", he notes that this interpretation was challenged by Dennis Danielson in his book *Milton's Good God* (1982).

## 2.2. Humanism in this epic poem

John Milton , an English writer whose works were greatly influenced by the tumultuous political climate of seventeenth century England. Milton's *paradise Lost* published in 1667, demonstrates the culmination of the effect humanism has had on his society. From the *Vacation Exercise at cambridge* to *Samson Agonistes*, Milton's poetry deals with the human problem, as fought out in the throbbing brain and pulsating spirit of one man, and it is as a humanist, as a champion of Man, as the knight in shilling armour fighting our battle and reaching the end of the day, without fear and without reproach, that Milton must ultimately be judged. But what, it may be asked, is this human problem? If I can put it in one sentence, I would say it is the story of Man's struggle with himself. Man is placed in a world of beauty and exhorted to enjoy himself. All things subserve his purpose and seem to be made for him. And as he sets out to be happy in this garden of bliss, he discovers that there is a snag about it somewhere: the moral law obtrudes itself and the question of right and wrong arises. Across his path he finds a banner with a strange device: "Thou shalt not", and, as he looks up, a forbidden fruit dangles before his eyes. And deep within him he finds something responding to this moral challenge, something which tells him that while he would like to sport with Amaryllis in the shade and with the tangles of Neaera's hair, there is something else which raises the clear spirit, to scorn delights and live laborious days. Then the conflict begins:

The genius and the mortal instruments  
Are there in council; and the state of man,  
Like to a little kingdom, suffers then  
The nature of an insurrection.

It was this inner struggle that Milton endured, the hell through which he passed, and the price he paid for his poetry. For no great work of art can be born until its creator has been crushed and ground in this wine-press of conflict and his life blood has watered the earth. On the one hand Milton was an artist. From his youth upwards he had been peculiarly sensitive to the appeal of beauty whether it came

in the form of some rustic Horton girl or the more seductive dark-eyed maidens of Italy or the more mature charms of a Delilah. This world of beauty—primeval, amoral, aesthetic—waved its snow-white arms and sang its siren songs to him. It tells him in *Lycidas* not to waste his youth. It promises in *Comus* that

Not that Nepenthes which the wife of Thone

In Egypt gave to Jove-Dorn Helena

is of such power to stir up joy as this. It offers, him the apple—and the apple in the fair hand of Eve—in *Paradise Lost* and the luscious banquet in *Paradise Regained*. In *Samson Agonistes* it takes the form of Delilah and produces the caustic comment of the Chorus: yet beauty, though injurious, hath strange power. But Milton was more than artist. He was a Puritan who desired to live as ever in his great Task-Master's eye. He had to serve the nation and fight for her cause. He was the chosen instrument of God to effect His purpose for his beloved England. He could not afford to linger in the lap of dalliance when duty called him. And this became the greatest problem of his existence: to reconcile the demands of his aesthetic nature with those of his moral life and to win for himself that calm of mind, all passion spent, which was his ideal.

This, then, is the answer to those who ask why Milton, the humanist, chose the theme of the Fall of Man for his greatest work. For Milton was indeed a humanist. He was brought up in the tradition of Plato; the speculations of the Greek philosophers were his rod and staff, the dramas of the great tragedians his daily bread. He was a Renaissance scholar who had discovered afresh the vitality of the Greek outlook. The stories of Greece were parables that spoke that his inmost being. Like Orpheus he had found a lyre whose music could wring feeling from wood and stone; like Actaeon he had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness; like Proserpin he had gathered flowers in the fair field of Enna. He had the Greek thirst for knowledge, the Greek love of beauty, the Greek devotion to liberty, the Greek insistence on the primacy of man. He was of the breed which strove with gods outside the walls of Troy and on the high seas. And when he decided to put himself wholly into one mighty utterance which the world would not willingly let die, he

chose a theme which would have delighted his Greek predecessors. It had just that slightly ironic flavour which they appreciated, that emphasis on a human problem, that wide sweep which covered the three worlds that are found in the writings of the Greek masters. But Milton had something which the Greeks did not have—the assurance that the problem was not insoluble and—if only the Greeks would understand—it was a solution which continued to uphold the dignity of man, for one greater Man—yes, a Man, could restore us and regain the blissful seat.

Thus in *Paradise Lost* we see the fruition of the humanist outlook. The story revolves around that weak, helpless creature called Man. But, in spite of his frailty, he is the centre of the universe. For him a whole cosmogony has been devised, for him worlds have been created, and his welfare concerns regions beyond ours. For his salvation councils are held in Heaven and for his destruction pandemonium prevails in Hell. This gives Man a dignity and a status which is entirely different from the position afforded to him in Greek epic or drama. For in *Paradise Lost* Man is not the victim of some inexorable, inexplicable fate against which he is pitted in unequal struggle, nor can it be said of men that

Like flies to wanton boys are we to the gods,  
They kill us for their sport.

The moment the artist accepts such philosophies, however great his artistic power might be, the result of his work is helpless pessimism as in the Greek Tragedies or the novels of Thomas Hardy.

Adam's position in *Paradise Lost* has been much misunderstood, though Eve's role has been better appreciated. But Adam represents the real human element. He is, as his name implies, truly a man. In his long conversations with the angels—much derided by short-sighted critics—are the questions which have always troubled man: Who am I, whence have I come, and what is my destiny? With the creation of the new and strangely fascinating creature Eve, a whole realm of problem and perplexity bursts upon Adam; love, without which man cannot exist which does not enter alone; for in his train are tears and doubts and immemorial pain; and companionship, failure and forgiveness. With the bitter experience of

Eden comes the hard lesson that humanity refuses to learn but must learn, if it should survive in God's universe—that obedience to the moral law is the guarantee of peace and security and that the price of disobedience is the loss of Paradise, the Paradise of an innocent and undefiled mind.

Most readers of *Paradise Lost* have been perplexed by one difficulty, that Milton seems to be on the side of Satan; in the titanic struggle between good and evil he seems to admire the infernal enemy rather than the All-wise and All-good. While it is true that much of Milton's colossal energy has gone into the creation of Satan, it is not correct to say that he is on Satan's side. He is interested in Satan more perhaps than in God, because in Satan he finds the same conflict as in Man, the same dualism, the same upsurging of the good, the same repression of it and conscious choice of evil that have disfigured humanity. Indeed it is an intensely human Satan that Milton has created, a being who can feel the pangs of envy when he sees Adam and Eve imparadised in one another's arms and realises that he can never know that bliss. So, in this sense, Milton is Satan, Milton is Adam, as Milton was later to be the suffering Samson, now eyeless in Gaza at the mill with slaves, and now the triumphant instrument of God's punishment.

So to all lovers of humanity, to all believers in the dignity of the human race, to all champions of human rights and liberties, Milton has left his legacy—the soul-stirring, challenging, elevating message of *Paradise Lost*. That such a challenge is needed more than ever today we need not doubt. Nor do we need to question Milton's answer to our perplexity, that human problems cannot be solved merely on the human plane. In the acceptance of this truth lies our only hope, and the fulfillment of Milton's vision of a new Heaven and Earth wherein the just shall dwell

- Milton combines Christian humanism with the Greek epic
- Milton stresses Man's free will and God's mercy
- Paradise lost replace the values of the Greek and Roman epic with Christian value

- Milton emphasizes Adam and Eva's responsibility for the of man and their free will in acting against God's wishes "God to men". He combines his inspiration with vast sacred and secular learning.

## **Conclusion**

I learnt this poem deeply. This poem was written by author during Renaissance period. At that time mostly writers wrote about humanism. What is humanism by the way? The doctrine that people's duty is to promote human welfare. The doctrine emphasizing a person's capacity for self-realization through reason. We know from history before Renaissance people's status were as animals'. They had no rights, if they had, they also were for the rich. The importance of this time humanity became one of the important thing and, all things were done for people.

Paradise lost reconciles the justice of God's providential design with human freedom and responsibility , defending it with respect to the existence of evil, a form of literature known as theodic.

Man was made in the image of God ,with a spark of divine reason and divine will. Milton sets up Absolute Reason , the ultimate source and guarantee of life , order, justice , all the values comprehended by the spark of supreme love and right reason. He is also the Redeemer and the only Mediator through whom man becomes regenerate . he believes in human reason , thinks that man is and should be free. Even in exalting human reason and freedom , Milton stresses human weakness and the dangers of pride, which ruin Satan.

Humanism had a profound impact on European society during the Renaissance. This movement transformed the thinking process of many Europeans, altering the ways these people viewed themselves, their lives, and their place in the world. Literature written around time of the Renaissance displays humanisms influence on the European social order. Paradise lost was a work of lofty thinking and uncompromising art which would always find "fit audience thoughts few" and which "after time would not willingly let die".

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