

John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and its Basis in the Bible

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Abstract *Paradise Lost* is a religious epic poem. Milton is going to justify the ideas of God, the perspective of God, and whatever God wants, whatever God plans for human beings. All these are the ways of God. The first line is about Man's first disobedience. A human being is disobeying God. Milton was trying to look at the world the way it was constituted, with all its suffering, malevolence, and corruption, and to make a case for why it was still acceptable. He did the first what might be thought of as a psychoanalytic study of Evil. There is the concept of heaven and hell. The idea that God's highest angel, Lucifer, the bringer of light and the spirit of rationality, fomented a rebellion against God in heaven. In *Paradise Lost*, there is this idea that there is tension between the political and ideological. He considers the constructions of the rational mind and the transcendent mythology that guides human organization. If people do not believe in God, if people distrust God or they are neutral regarding God, Milton attempts to convert these people and tell them to come back and follow God and start believing in Him. Milton will justify his view, giving reasons why this must be so.

Keywords: first disobedience, Heaven and Hell, Lucifer, malevolence, rebellion, religious poem, Satan

Introduction

John Milton was a well-known English poet, the author of the monumental *Paradise Lost*, one of the great literary masterpieces of the 17th century, which influenced literature in his country, especially the romantic poets of the 18th century (Raupp, 2022; Wittreich, 1973).

Paradise Lost follows two different narratives: the biblical story of Adam and Eve as they fall from grace and are expelled from the Garden of Eden by God; and the story of Lucifer/Satan, with the other fallen angels, who must create their own home after being driven from heaven. The poem begins with a brief discussion of humankind and its disobedience toward God. "Of Mans First Disobedience, and the Fruit Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal taste Brought Death into the World" (Milton, 2001, p. 1). Milton was going to

tell us why there is evil in the world. Why did Man fall? Why was humanity expelled from Eden? Milton was writing the very first Christian epic poem.

Research question:

The central theme of the current research is *Paradise Lost* and its basis in the Bible. We develop a research question with the expectation that its answer may be generalized to other works with common themes: *How did Milton express biblical parallels in his poetry?*

Methods

Close reading is a research-based reading comprehension strategy. It is a deeper dive into the integration of knowledge and ideas. This kind of method is standards-based, which means the common core states standards which focus just on

lower-level thinking skills, so we are focusing on key ideas, details, the author's use of craft, and structure. Readers will analyze and then synthesize and connect the text to other things in their lives or other texts or just a bigger picture. This kind of method uses four-based language skills: reading, speaking, writing, and listening. The nature of close reading is one of the things that might be thought of as rereading, where you read a text and then read it again. to learn even more and deeper information about its meaning. "Comprehension may be poor with the first reading of the text, but with each additional rereading, the student is better able to comprehend, because the decoding barrier to comprehension is gradually overcome" (Samuels, 1979, p.405). Close reading is the process of discovering as much information as you can. "Essentially, close reading means reading to uncover layers of meaning that lead to deep comprehension" (Boyles, 2013, p.38).

Results

Paradise Lost—the name suggests that it's about loss, suffering, pain, and the things that we most fear in life. It is an attempt to come to some understanding of what those things are. Milton's immediate answer, being a good Christian, is simply biblical. Who got us into this situation? And he says straight away that it was the infernal serpent, Satan. The poem deals with the Christian view on the origin of Man and refers to Satan's temptation of Adam and Eve. *Paradise Lost* offers a new reading of the biblical Adam and Eve.

Milton combined classical pagan tradition with Christian text and material. Satan is going to be Milton's epic protagonist. Satan was and is probably the most important public figure in human history. Without Satan, it is impossible to imagine our lives. He is in the foundation of the building of Mankind. Satan is the one who goes on a journey.

There is a typical conversation in epic poetry which is a journey into the Underworld. Satan does the reverse. Satan journeys out of Hell, and his whole mission is to cause the fall of Man. This becomes the most compelling part of

Paradise Lost. Satan is trying to cause the fall of humanity.

For Edmonds "Underworld journey myth is primarily a convenient tool for expressing ideology, which is tied more to immediate context than to a larger literary gesture" (2004, p. 66-69). He argues, for example, that the Orphic Gold Tablets "use the traditional pattern of the journey to the underworld to express a protest against the mainstream of polis society" (Edmonds, 2004, p. 30); those who were buried with the tablets were somehow trying to distinguish themselves and may even have been marginalized members of society (Edmonds, 2004).

Fowler writes, "In the Underworld scenes of ancient Greek and Roman literature, scholars have identified many levels of connection in individual works between texts and their contexts." He notes, "These connections between texts were historically referred to as 'parallels,' 'allusions,' and, more recently, 'intertexts,' the latter term having been borrowed from semiotics and structuralism" (Fowler, 2000, p.115-117).

In the beginning, Lucifer was God's special angel, messenger, and obedient servant. He helped people, but in some cases, blocked or opposed human plans and desires. But this angel was not malevolent. However, as Lucifer becomes Satan, he looks like the angel of death and performer of a task that will be against human intention.

Peck writes, "The most widely accepted, and what was for a long time the orthodox theory, is that *Paradise Lost* is a theological and historical epic, dealing with human and super-human facts, its action beginning before the creation, and ending, with the disposition of things for eternity. Its central conceptions are the truths of Christianity, represented with the splendor of language, and in certain portions with a wealth of poetic ornament" (Peck, 1914, p. 256).

Milton declares that the reason tyrants exist and have power is that we are morally bankrupt. That is what Milton is showing here.

When Satan draws us in with his rhetoric, and we start to find Satan to be so charismatic, it is Milton reminding us that we are fallen, we are morally bankrupt.

In *Paradise Lost*, Milton puts the reader in the position of Adam and Eve. We fall as they do. Yet none of the editors, commentators, or scholars have attempted to bring together and systematize Milton's use of the Bible in his major poems. Milton is first seen in this study as a Christian poet, believing in the Biblical basis of his subject and communicating the conviction of Biblical authority, super historical reality, and Truth to his audience, an audience whose response to his Biblical references he could safely assume. The knowledge of the Bible enjoyed by everyone with any claim to literacy in the 17th century made it possible for Milton to achieve a great degree of the illusion of reality for his readers through his use of allusions to Biblical characters and historical events about which practically no one doubted.

Discussion

In conclusion, I would define *Paradise Lost* as an artificial epic poem and Biblical view of the universe, which also includes an excellent portrayal of a type of libertarianism.

It illustrates an ideal system of ethics that emphasizes the doctrine of free will. In addition, the book is written with the greatest stateliness and sublimity of style, the reflex of a mind of unsurpassable grandeur. The epic poem has, like Hamlet, such a breadth of the state or quality of being suggestive and elements that interest a wide variety of minds, which is evidence of its enduring greatness.

I want to sum up my reference with William Blake's quote: "The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels and God, and at liberty when of Devils and Hell is because he was a true poet and of the Devils' party without knowing it" (Ratcliff, 2016).

When Milton was writing *Paradise Lost*, he intended it to be about God, Christ, and redemption. But it became clear that he was

writing predominately about Satan. Could it be that Milton had some sympathy for Satan's plight? Perhaps he is more on Satan's side and maybe in a way a little Satanic. And in some way, Satan hijacks the poem from him.

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Author's Note



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