



M.A. (ENGLISH) PART-I

COURSE-I

SEMESTER-I

**INTRODUCTION TO POETRY :
MEDIEVAL AND
RENAISSANCE**

UNIT NO. II

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Punjabi University, Patiala

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Lesson No. :

JOHN MILTON : PARADISE LOST BOOK-I

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Note:- The students can download syllabus from the website of department **www.pbidde.org**

1. JOHN MILTON AND HIS WRITINGS

Introduction

Three Periods

John Milton's life is generally divided into three well-defined periods : the early years from his birth in 1608 to his return from Italy in 1639; the middle years the so-called 'prose period of twenty years', from the gathering storm of the Civil War in 1640 to the Restoration in 1660 during which he wrote, 'with the left hand', hundreds of pages of polemic prose; and the final period, the last fourteen years, from 1660 to his death in 1674, during which his great poems *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes* were published.

Education of the Poet

John Milton was a gifted child. His father, who was a scrivener as well as an accomplished musician and a man of culture, provided him with an unhurried education. This education consisted of nearly seven years of private tutoring at home, five years (1620-25) at St. Paul's school, seven years (1625-32) at Christ's college at Cambridge, six years (1632-38) of further private study, and fifteen months of foreign travel, mostly in Italy. Rare intellectual gift nourished by such an expensive and unhurried education made Milton one of the most learned Englishmen of his time. Such was his appetite for knowledge throughout his life that, from the age of twelve when he entered St. Paul's school, he rarely left his studies before midnight. This strain on his eyesight was perhaps responsible for his blindness by 1652, when he was not yet 44.

Minor and Major Poems

Quite early in his life, perhaps when he was a Cambridge undergraduate, Milton like Wordsworth, felt himself to be called a dedicated spirit and a poet. In the 'Vacation Exercise', written in 1628 when Milton was nineteen, he expressed his desire to write in English, his mother tongue, an epic in the classical mode, 'something like Homer's *Odysey*'. After trying his hand at minor classics like *On the Morning of Christs's Nativity* (1629). *L'Allegro* and *L'II Penseroso* 1632, *Comus* (written 1635, published 1637) and *Lycidas* (1637), and passing through the disappointments of the Civil War and

personal misfortunes like blindness, Milton began the composition of *Paradise Lost* sometime around 1658, when he had fallen on evil days. It was published in 1667. *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes* were published together in 1671. A second edition of *Paradise Lost*, in twelve books instead of ten, was brought out in 1674, the year of his death.

2. the development of milton's plan for the epic

a 'little epic'

Though the composition of *Paradise Lost* might have been started when the poet was more than fifty. Its plan had been developing in his mind for nearly thirty years. There is plenty of evidence to show that youthful Milton aspired to write an epic. Indeed, during his second year at Cambridge when he was hardly seventeen, he tried his hand at 'little epic', a Latin poem 'In Quintum Novembris'. As the title ('The fifth of November') implies, the poem was written for 'Guy Fawkes Day' which was celebrated at Cambridge in those days with formal exercise in Latin. Milton's Latin exercise vaguely foreshadows *Paradise Lost*, in that its main character is Satan. The blessings he finds in England fill him with such envy that he rushes to Italy to urge the Pope to take action against English Heretics. At the end of the poem, God, looking down from Heaven, laughs on three occasions. God laughs in *Paradise Lost* foreknowing how frustrated these diabolic plans will be. The Satan of *Paradise Lost* in embryo, counts the number of his followers, sighs in envy, and is an artificer of fraud.

Some Graver Subject in English

Two years later, however, in the 'Vacation Exercise', Milton indicated that he intended to write his epic not in Latin but in his native language. The exercise not without significance, begins with an invocation ("Hail native language. Here I salute thee") to his mother tongue, to assist him in giving utterance to his 'naked thoughts' that rove about and loudly knock to have their passage out. The bent of these thoughts, the young poet, hesitatingly, indicates, is towards the loftiest theme :

Yet I had rather, if I were to choose,
Thy service in some grave subject use.
Such where the deep transported mind may soar
Above the wheeling poles, and a heaven's door
Look in, and see each blissful deity,

The exercise, it may be recalled, was written in 1628 when the poet was not even twenty, and the occasion was a mock oration at a party of a college festivity. Even then it reveals several important aspects of his poetic personality, 'first the poet's consciousness of the divine impulse stirring within him, for which poetry appeared the natural outlet;

secondly, 'some graver subject' which shall be the concern of that poetry : thirdly even though the young poet may aspire to compete with epic poets like Homer, his substance will be knowledge of the secret things such as even Virgil, his master modestly disclaimed. The poet mentions Apollo singing before 'the thunderous throne' as in *Paradise Lost* he would describe the angels singing hymns of praise before God : on the other side, there is 'Greeneyed Neptune' of Heaven and even a hint of the motive of rebellion. Such casual hints, even though they do not clearly indicate the specific theme of *Paradise Lost*, Lucifer's rebellion in Heaven and Man's disobedience and fall, surely give some idea of the direction in which the poet's mind was moving, and the atmosphere and broader scope of his intentions.

Nativity Ode

Next year, on December 15, 1629, when Milton had just come of age, and had been overflowing with poetic ambition, he attempted to sound the greatest mystery of Christianity in what has come to be called "Nativity Ode", a poem in some respects a prelude to *Paradise Lost*. Whatever his private, unrecorded hesitations, the apprentice emerges suddenly as an assured master. The writing of this Ode was an exciting experience for the young poet barely twenty one years old. His short account of it to his friend, Charles Diodati, towards the end of elegy, is full of excitement and of the consciousness of power. Perhaps the poet was not recalling what he had found in his vocation as a poet in English. The poet wanted to revive the very themes which were to be the inspiration of his later work. The magnificent fallen angels surrounded by the prestige of their names in the ancient world, and the Christ, the Platonic champion of truth was to be drawn large in *Paradise Regained*. In this poem there can be seen not only accomplished craftsmanship, but also a confident fusion of two interwoven value systems, the competing impulses of Renaissance and the Reformation, what have come to be called the order of Nature and the order of Grace.

Dedicated to God's Service

While the "Nativity Ode" had been an indirect self-consecration, "Sonnet 7", same kind of a stock-taking at the age of twenty-three, is a mature and conscious dedicating of oneself to God's service :

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,
Stolen on his wings my three and twentieth year !
My hasting days fly on with full career
By my late spring on bud or blossom shew'th
Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth.
That I to manhood am arrived so near;

And inward ripeness doth much less appear.
 That some mere timely happy spirits endu'th
 Yet be it less or more, or - soon or slow,
 It shall be still in strictest measure even
 To toat same lot, however mean or high.
 Towards which Time leads me and with the Will of
 Heaven ;
 All is, if I have grace to use it so,
 As ever in my great Task Master's eye.

Mark Pattison has justly called these lines 'an inseparable part of Milton's biography'. They bring out clearly the poet's solemn devotion to his self-selected task and his determination not to try the execution of that task until the time of complete 'inward ripeness'.

The Sonnet was written in 1631, and it was one of the last poems composed by Milton during his residence at Cambridge. This was a period of almost unbroken self-preparation for the 'inward ripeness' which, as he believed, was possible only as a result of chaste living and devout study. In the Sixth Elegy written in December 1629 when Milton was 21, it may be recalled he literally dedicated himself to elegiac poetry and prescribed for himself a way of life appropriate for such an ambition :

But the poet who sings of Heaven.....
 and of pious heroes and leaders half divine, sings now
 of the sacred conferences of high Gods, now of the abysmal
 realm where barks of savage dog, the poet should live sparingly
 as did the Samian teacher (Pythagoras) and should find in
 erbs his simple food.

In a well-known passage in *Apology* (1612), Milton repeats the same belief when they say that he who could not be frustrated of his hope to write the laudable things "ought himself to be a true poet". During his studies and "meditations in retirement at Norton, the thought must have come again and again to him that whatever his plans, he had little to show by the way of achievement". In a letter written in 1637, he is found saying, "It is my way to suffer no impediment, no love for others, no avocation whatever, to chill the ardour, to break the continuity, or divert the completion of my literary pursuits. From this and not other reasons it often happens that I do not readily employ my pen in any poetic exercise." In the same month and to the same friend (Charles Diodati) he wrote again, "Do you ask what I am meditating ? By the help of heaven, an immortality fame. But what I am letting my

wings grow and preparing to fly : but my Pegasus has not yet feathers enough to soar aloft in the fields of air." These are the sentiments expressed privately to an intimate friend, and may be taken as trustworthy. From these it appears that Milton at this time was preoccupied with a desire for fame as a national poet like Homer and Virgil. He also seems to be preoccupied with the notion that such fame was possible only through intense study and a chaste life.

The Theme of Temptation

"Comus", a Mask, celebrates the ideal of chastity and handles the theme of temptation which is the chief concern of *Paradise Lost* also. So far fame is concerned, *Lycidas* (1638) has a well-known passage on it :

Alas ! What boots it with uncessant care
To tend the homely, sighted shepherd's trade,
And strictly meditate the Muse ?
Were it not better done as others use
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Neaera's hair !
Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
(That last infirmity of noble mind)
To scorn delights and live laborious days
But the fair guerdon when we hope to find
And think to burst out into sudden blaze
Comes the blind Fury with the abhorred shears,
And slits the thin - spun life.

It is indeed a characteristic passage ; it is a cry that seems to rise from some deep recess of the youthful poet's heart; he had such a life of self-denial that, at college he had come to be called 'the Lady of Christ', and he had spent so much time in deep meditation and intense study. Was it all in vain ? It will be seen that the little hint of self-doubt revealed in "Sonnet 7" had become by now a vehement questioning of his own destiny and of God's providence and justice. Though a detailed reply to the self-doubt was to be attempted by him in *Paradise Lost*; the reply that he proposes immediately after the rhetorical question in *Lycidas* is characteristic of the young poet :

But not the praise
Phoebus replied, and touche'd my trembling ears ;
Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the glistening foil,

Set off to the world, nor in broad rumour lies,
 But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes,
 And perfect witness of all judging Love ;
 As he pronounces lastly on each deed.
 Of so much fame in Heaven - expect the meed.

Patriotic Zeal

Lycidas, it may be recalled, closes with the line, 'Tomorrow to fresh wood', and 'pastures new'. A few months after its composition, Milton set out on a tour of Italy, where his project for some great poem must have been given further thought. His acquaintance with Manso, seemed to bring him closer to Tasso, the Italian poet of epic in vernacular, whose theory and practice had a great influence on Milton. In the Latin verses, addressed to Manso, Milton, after paying tribute to Italian literature, patriotically declares that the English too are votaries of Appollo, and suggests that he himself should apply his mind on English epic :

I will recall in song the things of my native land, and Arthur,
 who carried war even into fairy land, Or I shall tell of those
 great hearted champions bound in the society of the Round
 Table, and (O may be spirit be in me) I shall break the Saxon
 Phalawes With British War

That his thoughts should take this direction is not surprising. The example of Virgil, his favourite master, taught him to seek a national hero. Spenser and the Tudor revival of interest in British origin directed him to Arthur. Milton had apparently begun to think of an epic based on King Arthur and the Knights of Round Table.

The Example of Italian Poets For any one who would follow, step by step, the development of the ideas which finally resulted in the composition of *Paradise Lost*, the lines addressed to Manso have a twofold value, first the concluding verse shows that whatever the theme of the poem, whatever the style, the medium of expression would be English. Apart from the other advantages of the Italian tour, Milton now came to have a first hand acquaintance with the theories and practice of poetry in Italy. Dante had weighed the merits of the vernacular and Latin, and had chosen the former, even though the choice imposed on him the erection of an ideal, language transfigured Italian out of the baser elements of many competing dialects. Dante's example confirmed Milton's resolve, indicated in the Vacation Exercise to use English for his projected great poem. The resolve is again repeated in a passage of the *The Church Government* (1641). "I applied myself to that resolution which Aristotle followed to fix all the industry and art I could unite to the adorning of

my native tongue, not to make verbal curiosities the end (that were a toilsome vanity); but to be an interpreter and relater of the best and sagest thing among mine own citizens throughout this island in the mother dialect. That is what the greatest and choicest wits of Athens, Rome or modern Italy, and the Hebrews did for their country. I, in my proportion, with this over and above, of being a Christian might do for mine". Here, in these words, is a clear affirmation of Milton's patriotic zeal. He knew that the use of English would place him at a great disadvantage : English was less known than French or Italian and was perhaps less refined : Latin was the lingual franca of the 'laureate fraternity' of scholars and men of letters. Milton thought that by choosing to write in English, he would be limiting his audience to his own countrymen. Even then, he resolved to write in English because if he wrote in French or Latin he could, at the most, become a poet of second rank. Such a possibility had little attraction for him.

Secondly, the lines addressed to Manso give us ground to guess that the historic event would be celebrated in a narrative poem. This can be, at best a guess. In an oft-quoted passage in "The Reason of Church Government", he can be still found debating the choice between the epic and the dramatic mode. There is a consideration whether to attempt "that epic from whereof the two poems of Homer, and those of other two of Virgil and Tasso, are diffused, or the book of job, a brief model of whether those dramatic constructions wherein Sophocles and Euripides reign, shall be found more doctrinal and exemplary to a nation."

Two Fold Change

The adaptation between the epic and the dramatic form, it will be noticed, is somewhat new. By the time Milton returned from Italy he had been thinking of an epic in English on a national hero such as Arthur. During the next two years (1640-1642) however, Milton's plan underwent a two fold change by which the character of the poem was entirely altered. First, the subject for which he had shown such a decided preference, King Arthur, was gradually dropped. Secondly, he now seemed to prefer the dramatic form to the epic. This inclination towards the dramatic form is so obvious in the Trinity manuscript, which Milton set down for a major work. All the subjects in this manuscript, it will be noted, are for drama.

Milton seemed to be toying with the idea of Arthur until 1642. In the "Apology for Smectymuns" (1642), when Milton spoke of his early reading interests, after mentioning 'grave orators and historians', 'the smooth elegiac poets' and 'two famous renowners of Beatrice and Laura', he went on to mention 'those lofty fables and romances, which recount in solemn cantos the deeds of Knighthood founded by our victorious Kings. Similarly, in the reason of 'Church Government' (1641) he is found

considering' what king or knight before the conquest might be chosen in whom to lay the pattern of Christian hero.

Just when and why, Milton gave up the idea of an Arthuriad, it remained a matter of surmise. The political situation and Milton's republican sympathies probably made it difficult for him to celebrate the glories of King Arthur's reign. It would have gone against the interest of his political affiliation to employ his talents in creating a royal figure that would shed lustre on monarchy. Probably Milton came to discover the mythical character of the legend. Milton was too earnest a poet to build his great work on what he had found to be a mere fiction.

Epic or Drama ?

During this period (1640-42), not only the subject of the projected poem, but its design also underwent a change. Till now he had been inclined towards an epic, now in 1640 or 1641, he came to prefer the dramatic form (Shall he bring to England the dramatic art of the lofty grave tragedians 'like Sophocles Euripides?'). This change of interest from epic to dramatic form is clear in the Trinity manuscript, where all the subjects are noted down for dramatic treatment. Among the hundred subjects, sixty-two are derived from the Bible, out of which fifty-four come from the Old Testament, thirty-three subjects are from British history. Among the scriptural subjects the story of the Creation and Fall occupies the most important place. As many as four of the entries refer to the theme of *Paradise Lost* to be treated, of course, in the dramatic (not epic) form. From these successive outlines it appears that Milton had now come to have an unmistakable preference for the nephew, Philips who claimed to have seen the beginning of a drama on the Fall. "This subject was designed as a tragedy, and in the fortieth of the poem there are ten verses which several years before the poem was begun were shown to me, and some others, as designed for in the very beginning of the said tragedy. Had Milton continued this plan, he should have written a Greek tragedy with allegorical characters".

Experience in the Public Area

The Civil War broke out in England in 1642, and Milton, whose sense of civil responsibility was as highly developed as his sense of his own importance as poet, felt obliged to put aside poetic ambition and take part in the struggle for liberty. He saw England resuming her role as the standard bearer of religious and civil liberty, a nation of Platonic philosophers, kings and Puritan saints. Christ's kingdom appeared to be descending on to the earth and Milton, full of boundless optimism, threw himself heading into the great work. But as time went on, and Charles' execution in 1649 was followed by the Commonwealth and then by the Protectorate under Cromwell, the 'unrealistic' idealist came to learn more and more of human

inertia and depravity to see the grand reformation fading into petty realities of usual political life.

The Restoration (1660), though it destroyed all that Milton had hoped and striven for during twenty years, did not make him a sullen or cynical defeatist. His hostility to the new regime flamed out at times in his last prose works on his major poems, but a more important effect on his profound disillusionment was a purer and even stronger religious faith. This deep faith though it had emerged from the ashes of his high hopes, was wholly independent of popular movements and was founded only on God and the individual soul. If he had written the epic in the early 1640s, it would undoubtedly have embodied his triumphant confidence and immediate reformation. His political experience made him a sadder and much wiser man. When he actually came to publish his great work - *Paradise Lost* (1667), *Paradise Regained* (1671) and *Samson Agonistes* (1673), they contained a sadder and sterner reading of human experience. They were concerned with individual and inward temptation, defeats and victories.

3. sources

The central truths of *Paradise Lost* gradually emerged from Milton's life study and contemplation enlivened by his experience during the Civil War and the Commonwealth. The epic is neither a metaphysical enquiry into the origin and nature of evil, nor a document to be interpreted literally. It is a 'Myth' about the actual and perpetual war between good and evil in the world and in the soul of man. In its total scheme it includes all history from the beginning of the world to the end, when God will be all in all and is thus a divine comedy. Its tragic vision of human experience and history, it must be noted, ends with a measure of happiness and hope. *Paradise Lost* is followed by the recovery of a "Paradise with happier form". It depicts the result of disobedience of secular pride, its rebellion against the divine order.

The basic source of this story is, of course, the Bible (including the Apocryphus), which supplied in addition to the central theme, endless allusions and words and phrases that carry significant sentences. There was also the rich storehouse of Biblical and theological commentary, old as well as new. Milton himself, it may be recalled, in the 1646 had begun making collections for what came to be known as his theological handbook. The Christian Doctrine, a comprehensive critical summary of doctrines is based strictly on the Bible. A third body of material comprised imaginative treatments of the creation and the Fall written over many centuries. Among countless renderings of the story, mention may be made perhaps of Sylvester's rendering of Du Barta's epic of creation and the dramatic work, *Grotius, Adamus Exul* (1608) and Adrenini's *L' Adamo* (1618).

If the Bible supplied the main theme and story, the classic - Homer's *Illiad* and 'Odyssey' and Virgil's 'Aeneid' - were the models of structure and literary embellishments. Milton followed the ancient classics in standard conventions such as the invocation of Muse, the roll call of leaders, the reported narrative events, beginning the story "in the middle of things", prophetic unfolding of history and celestial agencies.

In addition to these two sources – the Bible and the Classics, Elizabethan dramatists and the poet Spenser were powerful influences on Milton. For example, Satan appears to be modelled on the heroic villains like Macbeth. And Spenser's heroic and figurative treatment of religious and moral ideas may have been an example for depiction of characters, Sin and Death.

These so called sources are mentioned to give an idea of the cultural heritage behind *Paradise Lost*. An epic poem is not merely a long narrative, it is by its very definition encyclopaedic, distilling the essence of all the religious, philosophical, political, even scientific learning available at the time of its composition. In a sense, the real source of *Paradise Lost*, because it is a story of all things in all places and all times, is the whole of Western civilization as it was known to a learned poet like Milton.

Suggested Questions

1. Analyse the development of Milton's plan for writing an Epic ?
2. Discuss Milton's achievements as a poet.

Suggested Readings

1. As the best commentary on the first two books of *Paradise Lost* is ultimately connected with the remaining ten books of the epic a serious student would like to have the full text. Among reasonable priced editions may be mentioned the one edited by Scott Ellege (Norton, 1975) which contains, in addition to annotated text, backgrounds, sources, and criticism. The texts edited by Edward Le Cornte (Amenior Classic). *Northrop Frye* (Rinehart), Merritt Hugs (Odyssey Press) are not expensive. Among editions which contain only Books I and II, those edited by P.T. Prince (Oxford 1961), (Longmans, 1938), Pedley (Chatto and Windus, 1959), Verity (Cambridge revised W2) and T. Crehan (1961) may be recommended.

2. A number of good short biographies of Milton contain useful materials for a better understanding of *Paradise Lost* in the context of the poet's life and times.

Mark Pattison's *Milton* (Macmillan), Douglas Bush's, *John Milton* (New York 1964), David Daiches, *Milton* (Hutchinson, 1957), Kenneth Muir's, *John Milton*, (Longmans, 1955), are among the best.

3. J.H. Hanford *A Milton : Hand Book* (fifth edition, 1970) will be found very helpful for gathering information on Milton's plan for an epic source of *Paradise Lost* etc.
4. www.paradiselost.org/novel/html
5. [www.online-literature.com/milton/paradiselost/-](http://www.online-literature.com/milton/paradiselost/)

The Opening of Paradise Lost

Scope and Purpose of the Fable

The opening paragraph of twenty-six lines proposes, in brief, the whole subject of *Paradise Lost* : Man's disobedience and the loss there upon of 'Paradise' till one greater Man restores us, and regain the blissful seat. Thus, the epic poet, following classical tradition, is announcing his theme and giving a summary of the fable (narrative). He is careful to indicate the scope and purpose of his poem. *Paradise Lost* intends to deal with the loss of Paradise, and then with its recovery and it also intends to show that the Fall of Man and his Recovery are only parts of larger design, the celestial cycle, including the revolt of the angels and the war in Heaven, creation of Man, his temptation and fall followed by his Redemption, the whole of human history to the flood, and from the flood to the birth of the Christ. Part of history is given in dramatic form and a part as vision and prophecy. The great Argument (Subject matter) is designed in such a way that the poet himself says :

I may assert eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men,

Thus the great moral as Addison said, "is the most universal and most useful that obedience to the will of God makes men happy and that disobedience makes them miserable." But this 'great moral' is only a part of Milton's great Argument. The opening lines indicate it :

Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste,
Brought death into the world and all our woe,
With loss of Eden.

These four opening lines are so emphatic that most readers are dazzled by them and overlook the implication of what is stated immediately after these lines :

till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat.

So the theme may be partly stated by summarising the first five lines :

Man's first disobedience brought all our woe, with loss of Eden, till one greater Man, Jesus, will restore us, and regain Paradise. But (it must be repeated and emphasized) it is only a partial statement of the theme. The real theme is the operation of Providence through the celestial cycle, from the revolt of the angels to the Last Judgement. The loss and recovery of Paradise is only an episode in this grand drama. By asserting eternal Providence, Milton intends to justify the ways of God and show that

Just are the ways of God
And justifiable to men

(Samson Agonistes, LL. 293-94)

If we accept that God's Providence is the real theme of *Paradise Lost* and that Man's disobedience is only a part of grand design, many of the puzzles of the poem, which have teased so many readers from Dryden's time to our own, disappear automatically.

Dryden, it may be recalled, thought that Milton would have a better plea for the title of heroic poem "if the giant had not foiled the knight and driven him out of his stronghold, to wander through the world with his lady errants' the theme would not have emerged." And towards the end of the last century, Raleigh, speaking for so many Satanists complained that in "the irritable and barren nature of his chosen theme, God appeared as a whimsical tyrant exacting an arbitrary obedience from his creatures, while allowing the gift of free will to ensure their latitude to disobey." Now, it will be seen that Dryden's mind had "fabled Knights in battles feigned" which Milton deliberately rejected (See *Paradise Lost* IX 14-16), choosing in their place, "the fortitude of patience and heroic martyrdom". Raleigh's complaint, on the other hand, was based on what appeared to him the hindrances in Milton's design : "the unsympathetic presentation of God, these seductive appeals of Satan, the nobility of Adam in his wrongful choice, and these are only parts of a plot. Raleigh made for the mistake of condemning the whole on the basis of his opinion of the part. There are two examples to show how even well qualified readers have misunderstood or overlooked Milton's plan or purpose and they have been misled into wrong conclusions."

Prime Cause of Man's Fall

After indicating the scope and purpose of the central episode in the opening paragraph, Milton proceeds to suggest the prime cause of man's fall in lines 27-74. The opening question in lines 27-33 again, is a well-established epic convention. Homer and Virgil both began by asking the Muse to tell which God had caused the events of the story. So Milton begins by asking rhetorically what cause moved our grandparents in that happy state to fall

off from their creator, and transgress His will ? Who seduced them ? The answer to his question is an occasion for relating past events :

The infernal Serpent : he it was, whose guile
 Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived
 The mother of mankind.

Man was not disobedient by nature or by free choice. It was the infernal Serpent who deceived Eve, the mother of mankind. But why did the guile of the Serpent (or of the devil in the Serpent), stirred up with envy and revenge, deceive the mother of mankind ? How could he do it ? The answer to such question has to wait till Book IX, when Eve, in an evil hour, her rash hand

Forth reaching to the Fruit, she plucked, she ate.
 Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat
 Sighing through all her works give signs of woe (IX, 81-84)
 That all was lost

That was the moment of disobedience, of touching and tasting the forbidden fruit. That was also the moment when all was lost. The opening lines of the poem refer to this moment : 'the fruit' of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste/Brought death into the world, and all our woes. This act of Disobedience in *Paradise Lost* has been brought about by Satan

What time his pride
 Had cast him out from Heaven, with all his host
 Of rebel angels, by whose aid aspiring
 To set himself in glory above his peers
 He trusted to have equalled the Most High,
 If he opposed ; and with ambitious aim
 Against the throne and monarchy of God.
 Raised impious war in Heaven and battle proud,
 With Vain attempt. (PL 1, 36)

Man's disobedience, thus, was a part of Satan's envy and revenge after his ambitious rebellion in Heaven, which turned out to be a vain attempt, resulting only in the expulsion of the rebelling angels and the creation of the world. This is an illustration of the operation of Providence. Similarly, when Satan succeeded in seducing Eve into tasting the forbidden fruit, the loss of Paradise led to the recovery of an inner Paradise 'far happier place' and far happier days.

Heavenly Love and Hellish Hate

This scheme of salvation is set in motion very early in the poem, though

Satan once again miscalculates :

If then his Providence
 Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
 Our labour must be to pervert that end,
 And out of good still to find means of evil;
 Which oft times may succeed, so as perhaps,
 Shall grieve him (PL, 1.161)

It is a clear indication of how Providence operates : Divine Providence rings forth good out of evil. Satan, God's adversary, on the other hand, embraces evil as contrary to his high will, and then resists the whole movement of Divine Providence by trying to bring forth evil out of good. Oft times, as he claims, he seems to succeed. But he is given full latitude by 'all ruling Heaven' to pursue his course (the poet comments) so that in seeking evil in others, he yet :

..... and enraged might see
 How all his malice served but to bring forth
 Infinite goodness, grace and mercy shewn
 On Man by him seduced, but on himself
 Treble confusion, wrath and vengeance poured (P.L. 1, 216-20)

The high permission of Heaven left the Archfiend at large to his dark 'designs', so that with reiterated crimes he might heap damnation on himself as he sought evil for others. These two statements, one by Satan and other by the poet, not only set forth the eternal contrast between Divine Providence and the Devil's dark designs but they also define the role of Satan in the poem : Satan himself is used as an instrument of Providence, even as he seeks to thwart its purpose : all the evil that he releases brings forth even greater good to mankind. In other words *Paradise Lost* is an imaginative rendering of the eternal contest between Heavenly love and Hellish hate, between good and evil. The Fall of Man and his recovery is one episode on this eternal war.

The Disposition of the Fable

Chronologically, the first encounter of the contending powers, God's eternal purpose and Satan's dark designs, was the war in Heaven. It is described by Raphael to Adam in Books V and VI and its issue 'the expulsion of the rebelling angels' and the creation of a new world and a new race of man - is described in Book VII and VIII. After this action, as Milton himself says in the Argument to Book I, the poem hastens into the middle of theme (another epic convention), presenting Satan with his angels now fallen into hell and described in Books I and II. Towards the end of Book

II, Satan is shown undertaking the journey to the newly created earth for seducing man. Expelled from Heaven, and imprisoned in Hell, the fallen angels decide to take revenge against God by manipulating the defection of the new world. After presenting Satan's plan of action in Books I and II, Milton displays in Book III God's counter stroke through which the Fall of Man, described in Books IX and X, will be made productive, once again, of greater good. This was the second encounter. The resulting God, as it emerges from the spectacle of the history of the world from the expulsion of Adam and Eve to the birth of the Redeemer, is shown in the last two books.

The poem, as the opening line says, is about disobedience. Eve disobeys God and Adam, by obeying the Serpent and her own appetite, Adam disobeys God and gives his own reason that overcome by female charm, he obeys Eve. It is, therefore, rhetorically most appropriate that the poem opens with Satan, the originator of all disobedience. The first rebel, Satan, is disobedience personified. He is the representative of one of the two opposing powers, and is given in Books I and II, a chance to set in motion his plan of action; God's counteraction is announced in Book III. After foretelling the success of Satan in perverting mankind, God does his own justice. Man has been created free and able enough to have withstood His Temper. "Sufficient to have stood though free to fall", God taking into account that the angels "by their own suggestion fell self-tempted, self-depraved. Man fell deceived". Thus Man shall find grace, the other none :

As my eternal purpose hath decreed :
 Man shall not quite be lost, but saved who will,
 Yet not of Will in him, but grace in me
 Freely vouchsafed : once more I will renew
 His lapsed powers, though forfeit and enthralled
 By sin to foul exorbitant desires :
 Upheld by me, yet once, more he shall stand
 On even ground against his mortal foe.
 By me upheld, that he may know how frail
 His fall'n condition is, and to me owe,
 All his deliv'rance and to none but me

(PL III. 172)

It will be noticed that God is forgiving man even before the transgression has taken place and is taking steps to provide for man's regeneration from his fallen state. This is the kind of Providence that Milton claims to assert (champion, defend) and thereby justify the ways of God to man.

This deference, to be logical, must demonstrate first, the guilt of Man.

Secondly, the evil of Satan, who seduced Man. Thirdly, God's justice and mercy. When an argument is to be advanced by narrative example, every character and every incident, must secure the reader's conviction by enlisting his sympathies and affections in support of the main theme. In *Paradise Lost*, the theme (disobedience and woe, till restoration) is illustrated by Adam's example; this illustration will convince the reader of the height of Milton's great argument, and the extent to which the details of narrative support the theme. In other words Milton has to show that man was justly punished for his offence which deserved punishment. However, the mitigating circumstances (that he was seduced) were taken into account in granting grace to man.

Milton, undertaking to justify God's ways to men, had to deal with the paradox of the existence of evil in a world governed by just and all powerful God. How did evil come to the Earth ? Milton undertakes to prove that Satan was responsible for the introduction of evil into the world and that he is hateful because he is evil incarnate.

for whence

But from the author of all ill could spring

So deep a malice, to confound the race

Of mankind and Earth with Hell

To mingle and involve all to spite

The Great Creator ? (PL. - LL. 78-80)

Satan's evil thoughts are presented in Book I, his evil plan is put forth at the end of the "great consult" in Book II, his evil thoughts and evil plans are excited in Books IV and IX. But how did evil enter into Heaven before it came to the Earth ? The answer to this question is given in Book VI, where Raphael, in order to educate Adam by an example of disobedience in Heaven, gives an account of the War in Heaven and of the Expulsion of the rebelling angels. Man's guilt demonstrated in Book IX. God's justice and mercy are announced in Book III. God's Providence is the main theme of Adam's education in Book V and VIII. What Raphael said, by way of warning before the Fall of Man, is supplemented by Michael by way of consolation after the Fall. The last two books are some kind of an illustrated lecture on the operation of God's Providence.

John Milton's Prayers for Inspiration

A poet who undertakes to portray the birth of evil in Heaven and its entry into Earth, who proposes to tell the story of all things from the beauty of Heaven to the darkness visible to Hell, who freely ranges over the whole universe as he pursues "things attempted yet in prose - or thyme", must according to the epic convention, seek the aid of the muse. Milton's prayer

takes the form of requesting her to 'sing' (through him) though of course it is really the poet himself who is about to perform. In the old poetry which Milton loved, the Greek or Roman poet was accustomed to think of his poem as something 'inspired' or 'breathed into' by his goodness and deliberately he describes it as a song. It is an 'adventurous song' and he involves the aid of the Heavenly Muse for the simple reason that by himself, he cannot accomplish the stupendous task. Later, in Book VII, Milton identifies Heavenly Muse as 'Urania' but he takes care to warn that it is "The meaning, not the name I call" and what he invokes is heavenly wisdom. He invokes the Divine Muse as the inspirer of history, the inspirer of prophecy, and the Creator. Milton was relating as a historian, at length, the story of Creation as is given in Genesis - a history like Milton's which was recorded by Moses under the inspiration of the divine spirit. By implication Milton claims that the source of his vision is the same Divine Spirit which inspired Moses to sing of the Creation in which flowed Siloa's Book, whose water purged the vision of the blind man. It is noteworthy that Milton does not mention Moses by name but just refers to "that shepherd" to Horeb (Ored) where the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out to the midst of abush. Mount Sinai, near Horeb, was the wilderness where Moses passed forty days and forty nights and received the Ten Commandments. Milton mentions first Mount Horeb, and then Mount Sinai because Moses was a shepherd only when he went to Horeb and a leader of men and prophet when he went up to Mount Sinai. Thus, Heavenly Muse is supposed to have inspired the shepherd prophet on Mount Horeb and on Mount Sinai, as Moses was asked to tell the children of Israel, so Milton too would become the inspired spokesman of God before the people of England.

Before their settlement in Israel, God spoke to the chosen Jews through Moses in Horeb and Sinai in Arabia. After their settlement in the promised land, God had his permanent sanctuary on the Temple Mount (Zion or Sion) in Jerusalem. God's oracles were now sent through priests. Milton would be a prophet or priest whichever role the Heavenly Muse prefers.

Milton here invites a comparison with Greek Muses who also were supposed to haunt favoured mountains and their nearby fountains or springs. He mentions Mount Parnassus, sacred to the Muses and Apollo, the God of light, music, poetry and prophecy. In Greece, the Muses were also thought to live near the 'Spring Hippocrene' on Mount Helicon. Milton offers 'devout prayer' to the eternal spirit who can enrich him with all utterance and knowledge and sends the spirit which in Genesis "moved upon the face of waters at Creation". Milton recognized it as "that impulse or voice of God by which the prophets were inspired." Here Milton also implies that the Bible is richer in source of true inspiration than the classics. He would go

to the richest sources because he intends to soar above Mount Helicon, 'with no middle fight' to pursue things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme. Having moved from Mount Horeb and Sinai in Arabia to Mount Zion in Jerusalem, from prophetic to priestly inspiration, Milton takes care to add that true inspiration does not depend upon any place. The spirit prefers before all temples, the pure and upright heart of man. This is the spirit, it may be recalled, which sat dovelike breeding on the vast abyss and made it pregnant at the time of creation. Thus, Milton, as prophet, priest, poet is invoking the aid of that divine breath of influence by which everything is created and nourished. This Holy Spirit, as Milton explains in the Christian doctrine is that impulse or voice of God by which the prophets were inspired. It also means that light of truth, whether ordinary or extraordinary is the one with which God enlightens and leads His people.

Milton is seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit when he appeals, "What in me is dark, illumine", 'what is low raise and support'. Thus, in a carefully composed invocation, Milton is using the metaphor of the bird and the blind bard, for the narrative is going to celebrate in song, the 'darkness invisible' of Hell and the 'Illuminable Ocean' of chaos and the beauty of Heaven and the bliss of Paradise. This invocation sets the tone of the narrator in the poem. He is not John Milton, a blind poet and a citizen of London fallen on evil days and evil tongues. He is the poet-prophet in his singing robes, inspired by the Holy spirit to sing the things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.

Things Unattempted Yet

When Milton invokes the aid of Divine Spirit, while it pursues things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme, he is not merely echoing Aniosto (What never yet was said in prose or rhyme), he is suggesting both the elevation of his subject and his determination to surpass his classical models. It is not so much a boastful claim as an awareness that the Heavenly Muse is using him for (through) a unique subject, Man's First Disobedience. The singularity of this subject does not consist simply in rejecting the conventional epic theme (Wars, hitherto the only Alignment Heroid deemed) and choosing a Biblical epic theme story. It lies rather in the startling contrast which Milton's true and false heroes present to those of the classical epics.

Paradise Lost does not propose the victory of its hero : it shows his defeat, his action, in place of some glorious deeds lies in crime. Its hero, in place of paragon of heroic virtue, is the archetypal sinner. The results of this conflict are not glory but shame, servitude and death : instead of celebrating his merit, the poem exhibits his voice.

Milton had a divided loyalty to two traditions : he was following the classical

epic writers in form and style; but from the ethical point of view, he was imitating Christian norms. Milton reconstructed the heroic poem in terms of the contrast between human depravity and divine mercy. "Supernal Grace contending with sinfulness of man". For the praise of men he substituted the glory of God. Instead of celebrating heroic exploits, he stressed their imperfections. In Milton's hands, the Heroic poem became a divine poem.

Short-Answer Questions

Q. What is the moral of Milton's *Paradise Lost* ?

Ans. The moral of *Paradise Lost* is that man should obey God. The obedience to God makes men happy and the disobedience makes them miserable. Adam and Eve remain happy as long as they continue to obey God. God had forbidden them to taste the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge and they obeyed God. However, as they violated the command of God and tasted the forbidden fruit they were punished and banished from Heaven. Similarly, as Satan disobeyed God and rebelled against his authority he was thrown into Hell. Thus disobedience to the Will of God brings misery on mankind. In *Paradise Lost* Milton sings of Man's first disobedience. He asserts that mortal taste of the forbidden fruit brought death and suffering into the world.

Q. Why does *Paradise Lost* open with Satan as the main character ?

Ans. It is appropriate that *Paradise Lost* should open with Satan who is the originator of all disobedience. The theme of *Paradise Lost* is that the disobedience to the Will of God causes misery and suffering in the world. It is Satan who first of all disobeys God and rebels against his authority. God had created the Son in his own image and had told Satan and all other angels living in Heaven that obedience to the Son means obedience to God. But Satan does not accept the authority of the Son and disobeys him. He even raises a revolt against God. Satan is disobedience personified. In Book I and II, Satan sets in motion his plan of action against God. The introduction and the role of Satan contribute to the development of the plot and the theme in *Paradise Lost*.

Q. Why does Milton invoke the Muse in the Beginning of *Paradise Lost* ?

Ans. Milton seems to be influenced by the Greek and Roman poets who also invoke the Muse, the goddess of poetry in their epics. He invokes the Muse because he thinks he cannot accomplish this great task - the task of describing the beauty of Heaven and the darkness of Hell. He thinks that the Muse can give him the inspiration and enlightenment required for writing an epic. Milton basically believes in divine inspiration and hence his invocation to the Muse.

Q. How does the war begin in Heaven ?

Ans. Satan shows his dark designs against the eternal purpose of God.

God has created the Son of God in his own image. He has ordained that obedience to the Son means obedience of God. But Satan does not accept the authority of the Son. He feels aggrieved that God has given his powers to the Son while Satan has been ignored. So Satan rebels against God. God sees the revolt of Satan and the rebelling angels. He expels them from Heaven and throws them into Hell. Satan then begins his journey with a view to seduce Eve and Adam.

Q. How did evil come to the world ?

Ans. Milton tries to prove in *Paradise Lost* that Satan is evil incarnate. Satan is responsible for bringing evil into the world. Satan introduced the evil in order to malign God. The fact that Satan rebels against the authority of God and tempts Eve to taste the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge shows that Satan is a personification of evil. Satan believes that it is better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven. Satan's evil thoughts are portrayed in Book I of *Paradise Lost* and his plan gets prominence in Books IV and IX.

Q. Discuss one or two epic traits in *Paradise Lost*.

Ans. Milton follows the classical writers like Homer and Virgil in form and style. He also follows the Christian norms in portraying the theme. Instead of showing the grandeur of heroic exploits or adventures, he shows the imperfections in the hero's design. He shows the Supremacy of God. In this way, the heroic poem becomes a Divine poem. The invocation of the Muse and introduction of gods are the primary traits of the epic poem in *Paradise Lost*.

Suggested Readings

1. For brief discussion of the scope and purpose of *Paradise Lost*. See, G.A. Wikes, *The Thesis of Paradise Lost* (Melbourne University Press, 1961).
2. The first paragraph of the opening 26 lines is discussed in David Daiches, "The Opening of *Paradise Lost*" in *The Living Milton*, Frank Kermode (London, 1960); Joseph H. Summers, *The Muse's Method* (London 1961), pp. 11-31 : Gilbert Murray, *The Classic Traditionals in Poetry* (Harvard, 1927), pp. 7-22.
3. The uniqueness of *Paradise Lost* as heroic poem is discussed in John M. Steadman's : *Milton and the Renaissance*, Oxford, 1967.

A Critical Commentary on 'Paradise Lost' Book I

In the first twenty - six lines, Milton states his theme (1-5, Disobedience Loss, Restoration), invokes the aid of the Heavenly Muse (6-23) and indicates his plan and purpose (24-26 : "That to the height of this great argument/I may assert Eternal Providence and justify the ways of God to man).

The Primary Cause of Man's Fall (27-44)

The logic of the argument requires him, first to state the prime cause of man's disobedience and fall. He implores his Muse to recall, "What cause moved our grandparents, Adam and Eve, in that happy state in Eden; to fall off from the Creator, and transgress His will. Who seduced them to that foul revolt ?" Except for one restraint they were lords of the world. Even then, why did they disobey the command not to touch or taste the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge ? Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat : but of the Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat to it : for the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die. (Genesis 1 : 4).

By way of a reply to this question, Milton draws attention to the "infernal serpent whose guile, stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived the mother of mankind. In his first glimpse of Satan (33-34), Milton directs attention to his sinful nature. Helen Gardner, (*Reading Paradise Lost*, p.50) points to the infernal serpent as the old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan." (Rev. xii 9). His nature is guileful and dangerous to man and also because Satan, the hell hound entered the body of a serpent to tempt Eve the mother of mankind. He acted by guile the coward's way and he was stirred up by envy (jealousy), the basest and the most despicable, the meanest and the most ignorable of the seven deadly sins. In less than a dozen words "whose guile stirred up with envy and revenge, he deceived the mother of mankind", Milton recalls the motivation of Satan's rebellion in Heaven and his malice against man on Earth, and directs attention to evil, fraud and force. The account of Satan's rebellion in Heaven which is chronologically the beginning of *Paradise Lost* may be found in the middle of Book V. On a day in Heaven's Great Year, as Raphael relates to Adam, God the Father, in the presence of assembled

angels, made the announcement that :

This day I have begot whom I declare
 My only son, and on this holy hill
 Him have anointed, whom ye now behold
 At my right hand, your head I him appoint ;
 And myself have sworn to him shall bow.
 All knee in Heaven, and shall confess him Lord :
 Under his great Vice-gerent Reign abide
 United as one individual soul
 For ever happy : Him who disobeys
 Me disobeys, breaks union, and that day
 Cast out from God and blessed vision, falls
 Into utter darkness, deep engulfed, his place
 Ordained without redemption, without end. (PL. V 603-15)

This announcement, as Raphael relates to Adam, set off rebellion in Heaven. Lucifer (an archangel, later known as Satan, the enemy) constructed the new honour conferred on the Son as derogatory to his own glory, and plotted a sort of counter-revolution. Milton carefully pinpoints Satan's motivation :

..... yet fraught
 With envy against the Son of God that day
 Honoured by his great Father, and proclaimed
 Messiah, King anointed, could not bear
 Through pride that sight (V. 661-5)

Thus, it will be seen, that the envy, the elevation of the Son was at the root of Satan's rebellion. Pride, it will be recalled, is the deadliest of the seven deadly sins, even though it may appear nearly a virtue to the fallen man. But after all what was the aim of the revolt ? To set himself in glory above his peers ? So ambition also combined with pride and envy impels Satan to raise an 'impious war in Heaven'. But this war would be a vain attempt. This is not the picture of a leader fighting for liberty and just rights, it is the picture of an adventurer thirsting for personal domination and glory. And the very desire to have equalled God or the war in Heaven against Heaven's matchless King, is a vain attempt. The Devil, who underlook such an utterly hopeless task was an ass : Coleridge (*In Miscellaneous Criticism* ed. Raysor, p. 163) has given a penetrating analysis of Satan's character :

The character of Satan is pride and sensual indulgence, finding in itself

the sole motive of action. It is the character so often seen on the political stage. It exhibits all the restlessness, and cunning which have marked the mighty hunters of mankind from Nimrod to Napoleon. The common fascination of men is, that these Great men as they are called, must act from some great motive. Milton has carefully marked in his Satan the intense selfishness, the alcoholic egotism, which would rather reign in hell than serve in heaven. To place this lust of self in opposition to denial of self or duty, and to show what exertions it would make and what pains endure to accomplish its end, is Milton's particular objective in the character of Satan. But around this character he has thrown singularity of daring a grandeur of suffering, and a ruined splendour, which constitute the very height of the poet's sublimity.

It seems necessary to quote at some length a critic like Coleridge because any readers, seduced, like Eve, by the ruined splendour of Satan, starts a reading of the poem with the mistaken notion that Satan is the hero of the poem. The so-called heroic virtues (singularly of daring, a grandeur of sufferance, the alcohol of egotism that give vertitude in adversity and a courage never to submit or yield) have marked the mighty men from Nirmod to Hitler. Milton was not of the Devil's party knowingly or unknowingly. He has presented Satan grandly and allowed us the chance to mark his diabolic virtues for a while, because the poet was confident of our recognition throughout that Satan is our 'Grand Foe'. The poet has given ruined splendour and tragic beauty to Satan like heroic villain such as Macbeth. He has put into his mouth the most seductive and impassioned arguments, and at the very beginning of the epic, allowed him full scope to display designs, because as a Christian he very well knew or expected his audience to know, that Satan was both a fool; (he absurdly thought that he could stand against the Almighty) and a villain hero (he brought sin and death into the world and all our woe). The sorrows of the world are the trophies of the triumph of the archfiend.

The Fall of Satan (44-56)

As the prime cause of man's disobedience and fall was Satan, the epic fittingly opens with a brief reference to his rebellion in Heaven and consequent fall. The angel Raphael, who was sent by God to forewarn Adam of the possible consequences of disobedience by holding up, as a mirror, the terrible example of the fallen angels, gives a detailed account of the War in Heaven and dismissal of the rebelling angels. The detailed account is a part of Adam's education. The brief reference at the beginning of the epic is a part of the education of the reader who may be surprised by the sin of Satan.

Him the Almighty Power

Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky
With hideous ruin and combustion down
To bottomless predition, there to dwell
In adamantine chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms (1, 44, 49)

The comic posture of Satan, hurled headlong, should give us an idea of his folly. In defying the Omnipotent by raising arms against Him, his posture in hell, in adamantine chains and penal fire, as he lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf, confounded, though immortal is very likely to excite our sympathy. The horrible tragedy of ruined archangel must excite and is meant to excite both pity and terror.

The Fallen Angels in Hell (50-83)

However, one may regret the wicked folly of defying omnipotent creator one is driven to sympathy by the misery of prisoner of war in a concentration camp. Hell is of course, worse than the worst concentration camp. In that bottomless perdition there are not only adamantine chains and penal fire, but from these flames no light, rather darkness visible served to discover sights of woe also. In that dungeon horrible where peace and rest can never dwell, hope never comes. What comes is only torture without end. The rebellious prisoners thought of lost happiness and lasting pain. Such place of utter darkness was prepared for these rebellious and fallen angels. Eternal justice had prepared eternal misery to the rebellious angels because they persisted in eternal war against that justice. The fallen angels, one must keep in mind, became vulnerable to pain, both physical and mental, when their natures were impaired by sin. In that fiery gulf, as Satan lay vanquished, confounded though immortal, the thought of lost happiness and lasting pain was a greater torture than even the Penal fire of hell. The fallen angels are in the hell, as Satan himself confesses elsewhere. As Satan throws his baleful eyes around him he sees huge affliction and dismay mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast hate. Just as Heaven was region of light and love : hell is found to be a place of darkness and hate.

The Philosophy of Evil (84-191)

After referring to the overthrow of Satan in Heaven and drawing attention to his miserable condition in Hell, Milton gives the Devil a chance to expound his philosophy of evil and dark designs against God and man. In Satan's first speech, he recalls his own version of the glorious enterprise, the war in Heaven. This speech is a remarkable exposure of the psychology of defeat. Those who are formerly joined by mutual league, united thoughts and councils, equal hope and hazard in the glorious enterprise, are now joined by misery and equal ruin. Like Churchill's well known 'blood and

tears' speech, Satan's first utterance is thrilling. After taking into account the lost happiness and lasting pain and whatever the potent victor in his rage can else inflict. Satan refuses to repent or change; according to him only the weak repent or change. Satan claims to have the courage never to submit or yield ; and the love of liberty makes him declare:

Here at least

We shall be free

To reign is worth ambition though in Hell :

Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.

This high sounding eloquence, in its dramatic context, was meant to overwhelm the fallen angels, and before we allow ourselves to be similarly overwhelmed by it, we must recall that the infernal serpent, grand enemy of God and man, is saying all this. If we study this speech carefully, we will discover that his speech is contrived in such terms that even without a direct confession of evil, it is opposed to our accepted ideas and values. Milton has already prepared us for the desired response by showing that the ruined archangel is torn by wholly evil passions, such as obdurate pride and steadfast hate. But even if there were no such preparations, the speech itself, from the beginning to the end, in every line should arouse horror and revulsion. It is an exposure of nothing but egotistic pride and unmitigated malice of complete spiritual blindness. God, far from being victor in this range, was as Satan himself confesses in his soliloquy in Book IV, the fountain head of Heaven's free love.

..... nor was his service hard.

What could be less than to afford him praise,

The easiest recompense, and pay him thanks,

Forgetful what from him still received,

And understood not that a grateful mind

By owning owes not, but still plays, at once

Indebted and discharged : what burden then ?

Hadst thou the same free will and power to stand ?

Thou hadst : whom hast thou then or what to accuse.

But Heaven's free love dealt equally to all ?

Be then, his love accused, since love or hate,

To me alike, it deals eternal woe. (VI, 15-72)

The refusal to repent or change, it will be recalled, is a repudiation of Christian teaching. The unconquerable will is not the ethical and religious will, it is the evil desire for power 'Study of revenge' and 'immortal hate'. "What though the field be lost ? All is not lost" is the idiom of defeated

leaders like Hitler. 'Why from the terror of this arm so late doubted, his empire' is a plain lie. In foresight much advanced is simply not true. Phrases like 'grand foe' and 'tyranny of heaven' are little more than uncalled for abuse.

While the evil of Satan is somewhat hidden to the rhetoric of his first speech it comes out in its naked form as he is provoked by the idle query of his 'bold companion'.

Fall'en Cherub, to be weak is miserable,
 Doing or suffering : but of this be sure,
 To do aught good never will be our task,
 But ever to do ill our sole delight
 As being contrary to his high will
 Whom we resist, if then his providence
 Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
 Our labour must be to pervert that end (1.157-165)

This, in brief, is the programme and platform of Satan and his followers. This statement not only foreshadows the plan to be put to the full assembly of the fallen angels but it is also the first indication of how eternal Providence operates. Providence brings forth good even out of evil. Satan's way of striking back at God, of waging by force or guile the eternal war against the 'grand foe', is first to embrace evil, as contrary to his high will and beyond this, to resist the whole movement of divine Providence. This, in brief, is the cosmic theme of the eternal contest between good and evil. As the terms of the conflict are presented here, so is its outcome predicted by the poet himself a little later. Satan is given full latitude by 'All-ruling Heaven' to pursue his course so that in seeking evil to others, he yet :

..... enraged might see
 How all his malice served but to bring forth
 Infinite goodness, grace and mercy shewn
 On Man by him seduced, but on himself
 Treble confusion, wrath and vengeance poured. (1, 212-220).

Satan's Call to Awake and Arise (192-330)

While Satan and his bold compeer Beelzebub were considering what reinforcement they could gain from or what resolution from despair, how they could overcome their dire calamity, Satan lay floating like a huge sea - monster called 'Leviathan'. The point of the detailed simile is that the Devil is deceitful like the illusory island, and it illustrates the delusiveness of Satan and the danger of trusting his false appearance. The function of

Homeric similes like this in the poem will be considered later.

While describing how the archfiend was permitted by all ruling Heaven to rise from the burning lake and to leave his head to look around, Milton takes care to point out that the permissive will of God left him at large to his dark designs, so that, with reiterated crimes Satan may damn himself. However, it was not God's purpose that Satan should be tempted to ruin himself but that grace should be shown to man in spite of all Satan's malice.

The rising of Satan from the burning lake and his alighting on dry land is accompanied by the imagery of earthquake and volcanic eruption. Like a volcano, Satan is convulsing with the imprisoned wind of evil passions. As he leads from liquid to solid fire, he is accompanied by Beelzebub, both glorying in the mistaken belief that they had escaped from the dark pop of fire by their own recovered strength, and not by "the sufferance of supernal power". Even in that utter degradation, it will be seen, Satan is trying to catch at any straw that may support the illusion that he has the power to do anything, even the power to leap is now valuable to him.

The speech that follows (242-270) is a remarkable study in the psychology of defeat. The lost archangel cries in agony, as the reality of the changed situation thrusts itself upon him : Is this the region, this the soil, the clime, this the seat that we must change for heaven ? The contrast between 'this mournful gloom' and 'that celestial light is interesting'. His own helplessness in accepting whatever he allows is crushing. He derives some satisfaction from the notion that furtherest from him is best whom reason hath equalled, force hath made supreme above his equals. This is yet another expression of Satan's envy. He is still unable to accept that God has created him and the other angels. This sense of 'injured pride', this notion that God was superior only in force, is still clinging to Satan. He cannot abandon this fond belief even though he can bid farewell to heaven's happy fields where joy for ever dwells, and can welcome the infernal world. It will be noticed that he hails the horror around him as their 'new possessor', his attachment to power and possession is still his greatest passion. Surrounded by total misery, he seeks consolation in the possibility that the mind is its own place, and in itself 'can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven'. When he has really lost heaven, the unreal notion of the heaven of his own mind is a comic absurdity. This powerful epigram, it will be noticed, is a parody of the philosophy of resignation to undeserved hardship. The notion that the mind can transcend circumstances, however wretched, and that it is, therefore, in the power of every individual to be happy if he can mentally rise above his circumstances, was the basis of stoic philosophy. Milton regarded all

philosophies, which excited fallacious hopes or armed the obdurate bases with stubborn patience, vain. In *Paradise Regained*, Christ dismisses such philosophies as 'vain boast' :

Much of the soul they talk, but all away,
And in themselves seek virtue, and to themselves
All glory arrogate, to God give none.
Rather accuse him under names,
Fortune and Fate, as one regardless quite
Of mortal things (PR, IV, 313-318)

Satan, in the speech under consideration, is falsely boasting that his mind can make a heaven of hell. This is little more than the public boast of a defeated leader. His inner torments are partly revealed in the soliloquy in Book IV :

Me miserable ! which way shall I fly
Infinite wrath, and infinite despair ?
Which way I flay is hell : myself am hell :
And in the lowest deep a lower deep
Still threatening to devour me opens wide.

To which the hell I suffer seems a heaven (P.R. iv 3-78)

After expounding a false philosophy of happiness in unhappiness, Satan proceeds to propound a Satanic philosophy of freedom. Satan, it will be recalled, launched his rebellion in Heaven in the name of equality and liberty. As he saw it, Heaven was a totalitarian state, where even a younger son could be appointed vicegerent over his superiors; an action which was a clear encroachment on the rightful position of the angels. In this speech he is again harping on his old notion of individual freedom and equality with God. As he talks of still being the same (216), he implies that except that God has thunder at his disposal, they are both equal. In his view, God was superior to all in force only "so much the stronger proved, He with his thunders." Satan is so much obsessed by his love of freedom that in a climatic burst of absurdity, he declares, "Here at least we shall be free." This place of utter desolation, he is quite sure, is such that God would not envy it. Here at least, he and his followers might 'reign secure'. From such a trance it is as short a step to leap into the absurdity of a slogan like "Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven", it is indeed, a monstrous leap into mental unreality.

With Satan's notions of liberty and equality are mixed up his notions of

fraternity. He now (261-270) turns to, his faithful friends, the associates and co-partners of the loss. He calls them to share their part in that 'unhappy Mansion' or once more with rallied arms, to try what may be yet 'Regained in Heaven' or what more lost in Hell? Beelzebub, like a faithful echo of his master's voice, joins him with the supporting flattery that, once they hear the voice of their leader, they will resume new courage and revive. Why even after such a dismal defeat, Satan should appear their liveliest pledge of hope in fears and danger's surest signal, difficult to understand. Brain-washing, it seems, was known among angels also. It is amusing to note that the leader, who had raised the battle cry of equality and liberty in Heaven, seems to command the unquestioning loyalty of his followers. The fallen angels, it will be seen are abject and lost / under amazement of their hideous change. Satan on the other hand, has a massive stature, with his shield hanging on his shoulders like the moon studied by Galileo, the Italian astronomer, through his glass, and his spear so big that the tallest pine, chosen for a flag ship, would be but a little stick by its side. The fallen angels are compared by the poet to dead autumn leaves in Italian woodlands and to the thick sedge of the Red Sea, where Pharaoh and his hosts were overwhelmed by the waves, as they pursued Israelites. Such similes are meant to give some idea of the doom of the rebelling angels.

Satan's address to his followers cleverly exploits mass psychology. To call them Princes, Potentates/Warriors, the Flowers of Heaven in that concentration camp is obviously a cruel irony. This is followed by Provocative sarcasm and bullying. Is this your idea of a rest after? Or, are you practising a new posture for prayer? Are you going to lie here till the conqueror becomes fully informed of the advantage he has just gained, and sends out his troops to finish off the rout? Awake, arise or be forever fallen?

The Fallen Angels Move (331-375)

Satan's call to his defeated followers stirred them like sleeping men caught on duty by some one 'whom they dread'. They sprang upon their wings even before they were fully awake. They were not unaware of their evil plight or fierce pains, yet they all, innumerable in that pool of fire obeyed their General's voice. This is the obedience to which the abandonment of Heavenly obedience has reduced them. Their uprising is described in similes which emphasise the stunning might of Satan's call and the poisonous nature of the hovering multitude. Milton here recalls Moses waving his rod and calling up the cloud of locusts, black as night, which brought ten virulent plagues. He also recalls the barbarian, hordes, Goths, Huns, and Vandals who descended from the 'frozen North' to deluge the Roman civilization. In addition to recalling

plagues caused by insects and devastation caused by dark pagan barbarians, Milton also recalls the former grandeur of the fallen angels. They were, in essence and origin of 'Princely Dignities and Powers' that once sat on thrones in Heaven. Their rebellious reasoning transformed their heavenly virtues to black hoardes of locusts and barbarians. The result of repudiating angelic obedience was insect like blind obedience to the uplifted spear of their great Satan.

After their rebellion in heaven, the names of the followers of Satan were drawn from the Books of Life. In Hell they had not acquired the names by which they came to be known and worshipped as various idols in the heathen world. Through God's high and mysterious sufferance, Christians like Milton thought that they were left free to corrupt a large part of mankind by falsities and lies. The devils came to wander over the earth for the trial of men, many of whom were made to forsake God, their Creator, and to transform His invisible glory often to the image of a brute, and to adore devils for deities.

Milton is indulging in Christian propaganda by identifying the devil with heathen gods. In its early centuries Christianity had to make its way against the religions of Greece and Rome and the rest of the Mediterranean world. Later it had to convert the Germanic people from their native Heathenism. Just as the Jews regarded the pagan religion of their neighbours as false, evil, and detestable; Christians regarded the religions of non-Christians little less than the work of Satan and his followers.

The Muster-roll of Rebel Chiefs (376-521)

Milton's muster-roll of the chief among the rebel angels is similar to Homer's catalogue of the Greek ships in the *Iliad*. Virgil in *Aeneid* also gives a similar list of chief warriors. For special mention Milton chooses twelve of Satan followers, Moloch, Chemos, Baalim and Ashtaroth, Thammuz, Dragon, Qsiris, Isis, Orus, Belial, Titan, Saturn, Jupiter. This is a travesty of Christ's twelve disciples, just as the infernal trinity (Satan, Sin, Death) is a travesty of the heavenly Trinity (God, Son, Holy Spirit). In this roll-call, Milton is seeking an opportunity to give a record of the false worship of abominations which as the Christians believed, had plagued mankind for long. Milton believed that England too, like Israel of old was a country of chosen people, who were in danger of lapsing into "the paganian of sensual idolatory."

Moloch the first devil mentioned is frequently mentioned in the Bible. In Leviticus, the Israelites are twice asked not to sacrifice their children to him, and it is said that the sacrifice rites involved burning the victims. Solomon, misled by his heathen wives, built shrines for Chemos and for Moloch. As described in *Kings xxiii*, the good king Josia destroyed his shrine in order to remove the cruel practice of sacrificing children.

After Moloch is mentioned Chemos, the obscene dread of Moab's sons, who was widely worshipped under that name or his other name, Peor, His lustful orgies extended even to the Hill of Scandal, Mount of Olives in the valley of Hinnom, where Solomon was persuaded by his wives to set up shrines to Astrate, Chemos and Moloch. Thus, on that hill of corruption were placed, side by side Chemos and Moloch, who were filled with lust and hatred.

With these, Milton lists Baalim and Ashtaroth, plural collective names for the various manifestations of Baal and Astarte, male and female Sun-god and moon-goddess of the Phoenicians. Then come 'bestial gods', such as Astrate moon-goddess with horns. The reference to uxorious Solomon is meant to link him with Adam, who, also like him, was beguiled and led by fraud when he was fondly overcome by female charm. Thammuz is of course Greek Adonais, slain by a boar in Lebanon, from whose wound as the legend goes, blood flows annually to redden the river that flows from his burial place. As the Syrian damsels mourned his death in annual festival, so, as Ezekiel saw in his vision of abomination the daughters of Zion themselves lamented him at the gate of the Lord's house. Then there was Dagon, national god of the Philistines, and, after him Rimmon, Syrian god of Damascus.

Then followed the nature gods of the Egyptians, animals or half animals in form, a reminder of the golden calf worshipped by the rebellious Israelites in the wilderness when their faith in the leadership of Moses and their true God was shaken by crushing misery. Last of all, there was Belial, representative of lust of sensuality. Just as King Moloch, ferocious and cruel general of war, led the chief rebels, Belial, an image of effeminacy and lechery, closed the ranks. The reference to wantonness in courts and places and streets is relevant also in the context of Restoration London.

Satan's Cheering Address to his Army (522-669)

Milton describes the army of the fallen angels with delicacy and care. He emphasises the cruelty and destructiveness of the army as its military bomb. The fallen angels have found 'themselves not lost in loss itself', partly because their leader has succeeded in pretending that he is 'not in despair', and partly because they still fondly believe that they can continue to survive in that abject condition. It was indeed a desperate situation, and Satan's face, in spite of his best efforts to put up a brave front, showed 'doubtful hue' at the spectacle before his eyes. However, Satan, like any military dictator in defeat, gathered together his habitual pride and high-sounding but empty rhetoric—semblance of worth, not substance—and came forward to lift their spirits. This was done with the usual military bomb—flourish of standard, brass music, a great shout of pretended joy at the sight of the leader, and sudden uprising of ten thousand banners and a forest of spears. The packed helmets and locked

shields of an army in close formation are impressively pictured by Milton here. As the army begins to move, there is music such as that which used to rouse heroes of old to a mood of noble courage. Here the ironic reference must not be missed. This music in Hell, instead of breathing deliberate valour, roused only blind rage, instead of lessening pain and sorrow by its sweetening touch, it only charmed the fallen angels to the extent that they could drag themselves painfully over burnt soil. The music drugged them, just as Satan's rhetoric drugged them, and soon they could stand in ranks bristling with spears 'in guise' of warriors. In brute strength they looked formidable indeed. Compared to them, any human army, mythological, historical, or romantic would look a pigmy host.

The 'Arch-angel ruined' looked vastly awesome, like the morning sun behind a mist or the sun eclipsed in a sudden darkness that threatens disaster to nations and kings. Behind his thunder-scarred face could be observed vengeful pride bidding its times to strike. Around him he was pained to see the withered faces of his followers, who looked like oaks struck by lightning. Such similes are meant to direct our imagination towards the expected result of their enterprise.

Satan begins his address with flattery. They are 'Matchless' except against God—who could ever imagine that united force such as theirs could ever be defeated? Or who can doubt their capacity to recover Heaven? It is indeed a clever way of diverting attention from the fact that he himself had brought them into that pitiable misery. But God could still be blamed for whatever had happened. God, by keeping his real strength hidden, tempted them to rebellion. God, as it appeared to them, was upheld by 'old repute, consent or custom', that is empty tradition, 'which tempted our attempt'. In the same breath Satan can accuse God of falsely concealing His strength and also falsely displaying His strength. Now that they had come to know God's real power, there seemed little point in further war. There remained, however, the possibility of revenge through guile, what could be done there was to be considered in detail. Since peace was out of the question, because that depended on submission, war, open or hidden, was the point to be considered in a general assembly.

The Technology of Hell (670-798)

At Satan's bidding, a band of the fallen angels spread out over the area where volcanic smoke and the blackened surface gave evidence of mineral deposits. With spades, they ripped open the bowels of the earth to dig out precious metal. The second band of devils tapped the lake of liquid fire and carried to cells where the ore was melted. A third band channelled the molten mass from the cells to moulds where it was shaped and cooled. All these activities were directed by Mammon, whose mind and heart were

low even in Heaven. He represents materialism. The common saying that man can serve either God or Mammon implies that any one who follows material things cannot advance spiritually. A man who runs after wealth will not enter Heaven. Gold, the 'precious bane' belongs to Hell.

The devils under Mammon's direction, erected a temple like building called Pandemonium by Milton. Pandemonium means home of all demons. This building was great in technology, complete with all arrangements including some kind of artificial lightening and air conditioning. In comparison to it, the greatest architectural achievements of Babylon and Memphis would be insignificant. In this building Satan's heralds announced the forthcoming assembly of 'Satan and his peers', the worthiest from each band were to take their share according to their status. Satan, in his bad eminence, was to occupy the throne.

Milton in his descriptions of Hell, has given some idea of cruel pagan idolatries of history, he has also given glimpses of the sadism, licentiousness, and perversion that have plagued mankind for so long; he has also displayed military dictatorships in their full glory in the rally in Pandemonium. The technological achievements of Pandemonium are noted and condemned. In the context of Christian values, even scientific achievements are vanities.

Summary

In Book I, after stating the subject and invoking the aid of the Muse to his adventurous song, Milton proposes the opening question : What moved our grand parents so happily placed in Eden, to fall off from their Creator ?

It was the infernal serpent, whose guile, stirred up with envy and revenge deceived the mother of mankind.

Chronologically, the story begins with God's announcement that all angels in Heaven will bow before the Son who, on account of his merit, was Vicegerent. Lucifer, an archangel with his followers, revolted against this encroachment on their dignity. This led to a three-day war in Heaven, after which the rebellious angels were buried down into Hell. Thus, the Son's superiority in merit as well as in might was established.

These fallen angels, imprisoned in admantine chains and penal fire were left free by God's 'permissive' will to decide their future course of action as they willed.

Hell as a place of punishment, a kind of concentration camp, has three regions : a pool of dark fire, solid ground of burnt soil, and pandemonium, some sort of an artificially lighted assembly hall.

Satan, the archangel, turned into an archfiend, and his companions in defiance of God and dismal defeat are shown by the poet to retain even in

Hell some attributes of heroism. They can deceive themselves, and on another, are experts in the art of perpetuating falsehood in fine phrases, and are capable of continuing to believe, even in dismal defeat, that they are yet not defeated. Hell is not only a place but also a condition of perverse mind. Deadly sins like jealousy and envy are the hell that accompany Satan where he goes.

Milton in his earlier years, was ambitious to write a heroic poem celebrating the worldly exploits of national hero such as King Arthur or Alfred. Intense thinking and experience of men and their doings drove him ultimately to the realization that the glories of man are nothing as compared to the glory of God. The only real kingdom is the kingdom of Heaven. Non-Christian heroism in this plan of men's salvation belongs to Hell. Satan's barbaric heroism, so brilliantly displayed through perverse speeches and actions, is hollow and false. Book I shows hellish hate in defeat, yet still in battle array against heavenly love. **Explanation of some important passages :**

- (i) Sing Heavenly Muse that on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai didst inspire
That shepherd who first taught the chosen seed,
In the beginning how the Heaven and Earth
Rose out of Chaos.

Milton, in the magnificent opening blank-verse paragraph of *Paradise Lost* Book I, states the theme of epic, the Fall of Man and then invokes the Heavenly Muse (Urania), who inspired the Hebrew prophets of old, to inspire him as Moses, the great leader of the Israel and their law-giver, was inspired on Mount Horeb or Sinai twice. Once, when he was acting as shepherd to Jethro, his father-in-law, he drove the flock of sheep near Mt. Horeb, called the 'Mount of God'. He was called by the Divine Spirit to climb the top of Horeb where God appointed him leader of the Israelites and commanded him to liberate them from 'the slavery of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. For the second time, Moses as inspired by God on the top of Mount Sinai, after the deliverance of the Israelites from the Egyptian bondage while leading them to the Promised Land, Moses reached Mount Sinai. He was summoned by God to the secluded and inaccessible top of Mount Sinai, where he gave him His 'Ten Words' or 'Ten Commandments', which became 'His Law to the Israelites', 'His favourite people'. Moses was the first to relate to them the history of the creation of the world which forms, the subject of Genesis, the First Book of the Bible, known as the Book of Moses.

- (ii) What though the field be lost ?
All is not lost : the unconquerable will,

And study of revenge, immortal hate,
 And what is else not be overcome ?
 That glory never shall his wrath or might
 Extort from me.

These lines from Satan's first speech in Hell give a peep into his dauntless courage and indomitable spirit which could not be subdued even by a crushing defeat.

Satan spoke to Beelzebub that though the battle in Heaven ended in a defeat for him, it could not crush his spirit and weaken his resolve to pursue his eternal revenge upon and hatred of God. He would never acknowledge Him as his victor and if his mind remained unslaved, it could not be claimed by God, that Satan was vanquished. The real defeat would be the conquest of his spirit, a privilege which neither God's fury nor his great power, could ever compel Satan to yield,

(iii) Thick as autumnal leaves that strow the brooks
 In Vallambrosa, where the Etrusian shades
 High over-arched embower

In these lines, Milton uses a suitable simile to give an idea of the vast multitude of the fallen angels as they lay floating unconscious on the surface of the fiery lake in hell by comparing them to countless leaves scattered upon the surface of the streams in the shady valley of Tuscany in North Italy.

The fallen angels were as innumerable as the leaves that fall in the autumn season and float on the streams in the shady valley of Tuscany. The high trees growing in that valley spread their branches overhead and with thick foliage form a shady retreat. It is one of the best and most exact similes of Milton. It conveys not only the sense of a vast multitude but also the posture and situation of the fallen angels.

The fallen angels, like the leaves, fall from a height. Lastly, the fallen angels, like the leaves, are pale and faded.

(iv) or scattered sedge
 Afloat when with fierce winds Orion armed
 Hath vexed the Red-Sea coast, whose waves o' erthrew
 Busiris and his Memphian chivalry,
 While with perfidious hatred they pursued.
 The sojourners of Goshen, who beheld
 From the safe shore their floating carcasses
 And broken chariot-wheels.

Milton, after comparing the countless fallen angels to the innumerable leaves that float on the surface of the streams in Tuscany proceeds to compare them to the numerous seaweeds that are floating on the surface of the Red Sea when it is disturbed by stormy winds which invariably accompany the setting of Orion, a consolation star in November.

The thought of the Red Sea reminds Milton of the biblical account of the destruction of the huge army of Pharaoh, King of Egypt, in the Red Sea. The reference is to the Exodus of the Israelites. The Israelites who dwelt in Goshen, a fertile region of Egypt, the east of the Delta, wanted to leave Egypt and go to their Promised Land. The king of Egypt compelled by the tenth Plague in which all the first born of men and animals in Egypt died, at last gave them permission to quit Egypt. But as they proceeded towards the Red Sea, he broke his promise and treacherously marched with six hundred chariots and numerous foot-soldiers to attack the Israelites. The Israelites however, succeeded in crossing the Red Sea safely, and the army of the Egyptian King perished in the sea.

The Israelites, from the other end of the Red Sea, saw in perfect security the dead bodies of the Egyptian soldiers and the broken chariot wheels floating on the surface of the sea. Milton includes Pharaoh among the dead, but according to the Bible, Pharaoh survived the disaster. Milton makes Busris, the Pharaoh of Egypt but it was not Buari but Menebath during whose regime the Israelites left Egypt.

short answer questions

Q. Why does Satan consider it better to reign in hell than serve in heaven ?

Ans. Satan does not consider God all powerful. He believes that he (Satan) was not created by God. He thinks that Heaven was a totalitarian state where a younger son could be appointed in a superior position by ignoring the rightful position of the angels. Satan feels that he and his fellow-angels can enjoy freedom and equality in hell and God will not envy hell. So, it is better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven.

Q. Describe in a few lines the poisonous nature of fallen angles.

Ans. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton describes the poisonous nature of the fallen angels in similes which emphasize the emerging power of Satan. Milton here recalls Moses waving his rod and calling up to clouds of locusts which brought ten virulent plagues. He also recalled the barbarian hordes, Goths, Huns and Vandals who descended from the frozen North to deluge the

civilization. The rebellion of the fallen angels transforms them from heavenly-virtue to black hordes of locusts and barbarians.

Q. How does Satan inspire his companions ?

Ans. Satan himself possesses the qualities of leadership. He has unconquerable in will and indomitable courage. He tells his companion - "What though the field be lost, All is not lost". He encourages Beelzebub and his fellow devils to muster strength and rebel against the authority of God. They can overthrow God and regain the power lost by them. He asserts that they have escaped from the pool of fire by their own recovered strength and not by the help of any supreme authority. They themselves possess enough power to oppose God. He uses the Phrase, "Awake, arise or be for ever fallen."

Q. Give a few examples of Satan's vanity.

Ans. Satan pretends in the presence of his fallen angels that he is still powerful, though in reality, his power is limited. Satan does not accept that God has created him and other fallen angels. Though he, along with his companions, has been thrown in hell, yet he does accept his defeat. In his heart of hearts Satan knows that God is superior and more powerful to him. He makes pretensions of his strength.

Q. Discuss Milton's description of the chief rebels.

Ans. Milton describes the chief rebels who have challenged the authority of God. He points to the poisonous nature of the hovering multitudes. Milton recalls Moses waving his rod and calling up to cloud of locusts black as night, which caused plagues. He compares the fallen angels with barbarian hordes, Goths, Huns, and Vandals who were determined to destroy Roman Civilization. Milton also describes the former grandeur of the fallen angels. They were "Princely Dignities and Powers".

Q. What is the significance of Pandemonium ?

Ans. Pandemonium is a temple like building built by the devils. It is the home of all demons. This building has architectural design and possesses artificial lighting and air-conditioning. Pandemonium is so grand and majestic that even Babylon's buildings look poor in comparison to it. Satan has built Pandemonium out of envy towards God's Heaven. He satisfies his ego by sitting majestically in the chair in Pandemonium.

Q. What is the main cause of Satan's revolt ?

Ans. God creates the Son who is much junior to Satan. God also announces that all angels in heaven will bow before the Son, who on account of his merit, wait Vicegerent. Satan thinks that the Son has encroached upon his power and that God has not done justice to him by ignoring him altogether.

Q. Describe the muster-roll of the rebel-chiefs ?

Ans. Milton describes twelve of Satan's followers - Moloch, Chemos, Barlian, Ashtaroth, Thammuz, Dragon, Osiris, Isis, Belial, Titan, Saturn and Jupiter. This is a travesty of Christ's twelve disciples.

Q. How does Milton describe Hell ?

Ans. Hell is a place of punishment. It has three regions : a pool of dark fire, a solid ground of burnt soil and Pandemonium (assembly hall). It is fiery lake- with fire all around, but no light. There is darkness all around and an atmosphere of deep gloom.

Q. What kind of simile does Milton use to describe the fallen angels ?

Ans. Milton uses the following similes : Thick as autumn leaves that lay on the brooks. Milton compares the multitude of the fallen angels with the pale and dry leaves of the autumn season. There fallen angels were lying unconscious on the fiery lake like the countless leaves scattered on the dry earth.

Q. What do you know about the 'Son of God' ?

Ans. The Son was created by God and given full authority in preference to Satan. The Son is 'the effulgence of the father's glory' shining like God himself. The Son defeats Satan in the War in Heaven. The Supreme Father God ordains that obedience to the Son means obedience to God. The Son is blessed with the power of granting salvation to mankind. The Son is acceptable to all except Satan and the falling angels. Satan thinks that the Son has encroached upon his authority.

Suggested Questions

1. Can you justify Milton's narrative strategy in beginning his epic with the Fall of Man, giving a description of the fallen angels in Hell ?
2. However impressive Satan's art of making false speeches may be, do you find any substance in his high sounding rhetoric ?

A Review of Some Topics on Paradise Lost

The Theme

The subject, scope and purpose of *Paradise Lost* are indicated in the opening paragraph, Man's disobedience, loss of Paradise, and its restoration by a greater man. The poet illustrates Eternal Providence and justifies the ways of God to men. The poem, however, is meant not so much to defend God as to instruct man. It seeks an answer to the problem of evil in a world created and governed by an all knowing and all powerful God. The presence of evil and all our woes is explained through a myth (fable). Man was created happy in the garden of Eden, which he lost by tasting the fruit of the forbidden tree of knowledge. The disobedience brought death into the world and all our woe.

But why does a poem, concerned with Man's first disobedience, begin with an account of the fallen angels in Hell ? The answer to this question depends on the answer to another question : What cause seduced our grandparents in that happy state, favoured of God so highly, to fall off from their Creator and transgress His will ? According to the myth, the Infernal serpent (Satan, the enemy of God and man, whose guile, stirred up with envy and revenge) deceived the mother of mankind after he had been cast into Hell on account of his revolt in Heaven. So behind Man's disobedience there was the Infernal Serpent's guile. In the first two books, the poet proposes to demonstrate the Serpent's guile. In Book III, he shows God's Providence in the form of heavenly love in contrast to hellish hate, shown in action in the first two books.

Thus, it will be seen, the poem has a vast scope. The theatre of the poem's action includes Heaven, Earth and Hell; in time, it extends from the beginning of Creation to the Last Judgement. Of course, the vast story cannot be chronologically narrated from the beginning to the end. An epic according to a well established tradition is concerned with one action. So the poem focuses attention on one action : Man's disobedience. The rest of the story is presented through two episodes. One of these episodes, Raphael's dialogue of the consequences of disobedience and by way of an example of disobedience, and punishment narrates the story of Satan's

revolt, the war in Heaven, and the downfall of the revolting angels. The other episode, Michael's prophecy and narration of future history showing the consequences of Man's disobedience and fall, is found in the last two books, XI and XII. Thus, the first two books, which are concerned with the consequences of Satan's revolt in Heaven are balanced by the two last books showing the consequences of Man's disobedience. Bookwise, the poem's great argument can be reviewed in brief in the following manner :

The Great Argument

Book I : In the Hell, Satan and his followers, after lying in the pool of fire for nine days, rally to consult what action could be taken to regain heaven. Satan tells them of his resolve to continue the war against God by force or guile. Perhaps they could assail Man in the newly created world and by seducing him they could take revenge against God. The devils build Pandemonium, some sort of artificially lighted council hall, for debating their future course of action.

Book II : Satan and his chief followers assemble in the Pandemonium to consider their future policy of war. Several suggestions such as open war, wait and watch, another heaven in hell, are given. Ultimately Beelzebub's or rather Satan's suggestion to assail God by assailing man is unanimously approved. Satan undertakes to go on the hazardous and lonely voyage of exploration. On this voyage he finds Sin and Death, both members of his own family, guarding the gates of Hell. The three are pleased to meet and recognise one another and combine together to ruin Man. Sin opens the gates of Hell to allow Satan to plunge into Chaos, through which he has to make his way to the newly created universe. Arriving at the edge of Chaos, he sees the walls of Heaven, and the new world hanging from them by a golden chain.

Book III : It is divided into two scenes. In the first scene in Heaven God the Father, sees Satan approaching the newly created world with the intention of ruining the Man. God also foresees that he would succeed in his enterprise. However, God knows that Man would be saved by the Redeemer, his only begotten Son, born on earth as the greater Man and thus, good will ultimately come to Satan's evil. In the later part of the book, the scene changes and Satan is shown arriving at the outer shell of the created universe. He succeeds in finding the way to the Earth, situated in the centre of the universe. Having reached the Sun, after crossing the Prime Mover, Crystalline Sphere, Eighth Heaven and the planets Saturn, Jupiter and Mars, Satan meets an angel Uriel, and asks him for further direction. The angel Uriel not recognising who he was and why he came directs him to Earth. Satan lands on Mount Niphates, near Eden.

Book IV : Satan, now in sight of Eden, and near the place where he must now attempt the bold enterprise which he undertook alone against God and Man, is filled with doubt of his success. The fear of God, and envy of the happy pair in paradise in each other's arms overwhelm him with despair but he soon recovers after recalling that peace was possible only through submission. Thus, finding himself in the trap of leadership, Satan confirms himself in evil, and proceeds to ruin Man. He overlaps like a wolf into Paradise, and finding the Tree of Life growing high there, sits on it like a cormorant devising death to them. As Satan overhears the discourse of Adam and Eve, he gathers that the Tree of Knowledge was forbidden, under penalty of death. This information gives him an idea for tempting Man to transgress the will of God. His success lies, as he sees, in seducing man to taste the forbidden fruit. Meanwhile, Uriel, who had seen Satan going towards Earth and suspecting that he might be one of the fallen angels meaning harm to Man, informs Gabriel of his arrival and possible mischief. As night draws on, Adam and Eve, after evening worship, retire into their bower of bliss. Gabriel, drawing forth his band of night-watch appoints two strong angels to keep watch at the bower of Adam lest some evil spirit do them some harm while Adam and Eve sleep. There they find Satan at the ear of Eve, tempting her in a dream. They bring him to Gabriel who questions him and is scornfully answered. They both should have engaged in mighty deal against each other but are stopped by a sign from Heaven.

Book V : As morning approaches, Eve relates to Adam her troublesome dream in which she found Satan tempting her to taste the forbidden fruit and as soon as she tasted it, she started flying into the clouds with him when he suddenly disappeared, and she found herself where she was sleeping. Adam comforts Eve, and they sing their Morning Hymn, praying to God to give them peace and dispense evil. Meanwhile God, according to the plan already set forth in Book III, sends forth Raphael to remind Adam of the obedience, of his free state, and of his enemy near at hand, who he is and why he is his enemy. Raphael comes down to Paradise and in a long friendly discourse, reminds Adam of his free state and responsibility to remain obedient. By way of an example of disobedience and its consequences Raphael relates, at Adam's request who that enemy is and how he came to be so, beginning from his first revolt in Heaven, how he drew after him some other like-minded angels, about one-third in number and incited them to rebel against the Almighty Father. Even among those who unmoved, unshaken, unterrified kept his loyalty, his love and his zeal had refused to follow Satan. Thus, by these two examples, the negative example of Satan's faithlessness and positive example of Abdiel's faith, Raphael illustrates the difference

between disobedience and obedience.

Book VI : Raphael, continuing his discourse relates how Michael and Gabriel were, sent forth to battle against Satan and his followers. After two days, during which by God's permissive will, both the loyal and disloyal angels were allowed to show their strength. God sends Messiah, His son, for whom he had reserved the glory of that victory because he reigns supreme in merit. The Son marches forth in the power of his Father, and making all his legions to stand still, with his chariot and thunder drives into the midst of the rebelling angels, and throws them into the fiery Hell prepared for their punishment. After thus defeating the rebels, Messiah, returns to his Father. Book I, beginning the story in the midst of things, opens here.

Book VII : In continuation of the accounts of the war in Heaven, Raphael, at the request of Adam relates how and why this world was first created. God after the expulsion of Satan and his followers declared his pleasure to create another world for other creatures to dwell there. These creations after the trial of their obedience, were expected to ascend to Heaven. The Son to carry out the Father's will, performed the work of Creation in six days. The angels celebrated the work of Creation with Hymns and the Son ascends into heaven. Thus, the war of Heaven, the first of evil, was followed by the Creation, the first ascension of eternal Providence.

Book VIII : Encouraged by Raphael's account of war in Heaven and Creation of the world, Adam enquires about the movements of the heavenly bodies. He is doubtfully answered and asked to search other things more worthy of knowledge. Adam accepts this advice and by the way of detaining his angel guest a little longer, relates to him what he remembered of His creation and his placing in Paradise. After once again reminding Adam to be strong, and to love, but "first of all for whom to love is to obey", Raphael went up to Heaven. The concluding advice of Raphael is the central thesis of the poem : Take heed lest passion way the judgement to do aught, which else free will would not admit. To stand or fall lies in the free choice of a rational creature, it must be added, this free choice is made difficult by swaying passion.

Book IX : Turning back to Satan, who had been going round Eden in search of some instrument of his mediated guile, the poet shows him entering into the serpent. This is indeed a parody of the Son incarnating as Man. Meanwhile, Adam and Eve go forth to the labour in the garden separately as proposed by Eve, and somewhat reluctantly agreed to by Adam. The serpent finds her alone, and by flattery and some sort of miracle making, finds a way to her ear. Once allowed to talk, he succeeds in talking to her about the forbidden tree and offering her the mortal fruit. Eve, pleased with the taste of the fruit, deliberates long whether to

give the fruit to Adam. At last, she brings the fruit to Adam who against his better reason, but overcome with female charm, agrees to eat the forbidden fruit and share with, her 'the doom of mankind'. As an immediate effect of their guilt, Adam and Eve lose their innocence and the sense of shame prompts them to cover their nakedness, and they quarrel and accuse each other.

Book X : After Satan's success in seducing Man to transgress the will of God, the effect of Adam's sin was visible on mankind and Nature. God sends his Son to judge the transgression. Meanwhile, Sin and Death, sitting till then at the Gate of Hell, by some wonderful empathy, sensed the success of Satan in the New World. They make a bridge along the path of Satan from Hell to the new world, thus making their path easy. Satan returns to the Pandemonium to report to the waiting devils how he seduced Adam with an apple. But he and the other devils are suddenly turned into hissing serpents at the supposed moment of their triumph. In Paradise, Adam and Eve lament their loss, and consider various ways to regain their former happiness. At last they are reminded of the promise that her seed would bruise the serpent's head. They both in repentance and supplication, seek pardon of the offended Deity.

Book XI : The Son of God, interceding on behalf of Man, presents the prayers of Adam and Eve. God accepts their repentance, but declares that they must no longer remain in Paradise. God sends Michael, with a band of Cherubim, to expel Adam and Eve but first reveals to them the future history of the world and consequences of their disobedience till the flood.

Book XII : The angel, Michael, continues now through narration instead of vision, the history of the world beyond the Flood to the Last Day of Judgement. In course of time, as Michael relates, the Son of God will be born on Earth, but even after his Incarnation, Death, Resurrection and Accession, the world particularly the Church, will continue its fallen ways till the Second Coming. Consoled by this Panorama of Future history, Adam descends from the hill with Michael and awakens. Eve from her peaceful sleep. Michael leads both of them out of Eden as fiery sword waves behind them. Thus Adam and Eve, hand in hand, with wandering steps take the solitary way through Eden, though rowing yet in peace, because Providence was their guide.

Milton's Cosmos

The foregoing summary of the poem's great argument is meant to give an idea of its narrative structure. It should show, however, inadequately, the poem's movements from Heaven to Hell through Chaos and again through Chaos to Earth. It is a story of Man's fall, but is also a story of the fall of

Man's tempter, Satan. While the story of Man's fall is confined to Earth, that of Satan's fall from Heaven is cosmic in scope. Satan fell from Heaven through Chaos into Hell and from there again through Chaos, he came to Earth to tempt Man. In Books I and II, not the main story of Man's Fall, but a stage in the preparatory story of Satan's Fall is described. We must have some idea of Milton's cosmos to appreciate this part of the story. We may have to gather information from some other books also to fill in the sketch.

In Book V, from line 563 onward, Raphael describes the events before the War in Heaven and the Creation of the World, which are repeatedly mentioned by the Devil in Book I and II. At this stage in story, "When yet this Earth was hot and Chaos wild/Reigned where these Heavens now roll". Earth now rests upon her Centre posted, When there were only two divisions of space Heaven and Chaos, God elevated his only begotten Son, who rules by merit in Heaven and above all other angels. From this event sprang forth the first seeds of discord in Heaven and the need to create Hell and the World. Thus, before the Creation of the world, Space came to be divided into Heaven (the abode of God and His angelic subjects) and Hell (dark pool of fire, surrounded by dry soil burning like fire and dreary regions of excessive heat and cold interspersed by four infernal rivers), and the intervening Great Gulf, Chaos. Immediately after the expulsion of Satan and his followers, the world came to be created. By the world is meant, not only the Sun and Earth, but what now is called the Universe, all that the eye of man can behold. We may now have a closer view of each, beginning with Heaven, from where the angels fell.

Heaven is vast (not an infinite region because 'empyrean bound' battlements, and 'crystal wall' are mentioned) realm of light. God is 'fountain of light' of dazzling nature and the angels, who are themselves creatures of pure light, must see Him only through a veil that surrounds Him like a 'radiant shrine'. When God speaks, ambrosial fragrance fills all heaven. His Son is the 'effulgence' of the father's glory, and shining most glorious himself. It is in this light that he defeats Satan in the War in Heaven. If the angels are less luminous than he, it is because they shine in rainbow colours as does Raphael when he appears in heaven in Eden. According to the tradition which Milton seems to accept : the angels were creatures made of the light that came into being on the first day of Creation when God said, "Let there be light". The fallen angels, however, repeat again and again the claim, that their Empyrean substance cannot fail, that is they are immortal and God has no power to destroy them.

The second region for which Chaos seems the simplest name is variously called 'The Wasteful Deep', 'The Utter Deep', or simply 'The Abyss'. Here

rules, as Milton describes metaphorically, Chaos with his consort Night. According to the description in Book II, it is a womb of space, vast enough to engulf the universe and filled with warring atoms, it may be imagined as a hailstorm of formless matter which is being blown into ever increasing confusion by a being who seems both its personification and its ruler. Chaos, here prevails, eternal anarchy of storm and wind and wave and stunning sounds. It is a vast abyss, "Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful wild".

Hell may be supposed to have been created out of Chaos just before the expulsion of the rebellious angels. It was meant as a place of punishment for those angels who had rebelled against the elevation of the Son. When a part of Chaos was taken to carve out hell, Chaos complained (ii, 1002) that his realm was encroached upon by Hell, stretching far and wide beneath. As Milton described it, there is a well of fire around hell and overhead spreads a fiery vault. When he devils fell, Hell lay open to receive them : after their fall the roof closed, and they were left prisoners inside it. Henceforth the outlet from hell into Chaos remained through certain gates put under the charge of Sin and Death. To please Satan, Sin opened the gate of Hell, but she could not shut it back. Later, when Sin and Death built a bridge between the Hell and the world, the Open Gate or Hell became very significant.

The inside of the Hell consists of three different areas; this fiery deluge that scorches the devils with ever-burning sulphur unconsumed; secondly, the dry land that burned with solid, as the lake with liquid fire, and thirdly, the dreary region of excessive heat and cold, the dismal world through which flowed four infernal rivers, Sty and flood of deadly hate : sad Acherson, black and deep river of sorrow Cocytus, the rueful stream of lamentations, and fierce Phlegethon torrent of fire. A little away from them flowed the slow and silent stream Lethe, the river of oblivion.

Beyond this flood a frozen continent,
Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms
Of whirlwind and dire hail, which no firm land
Thaws not, but gathersheap; and ruin seems
Of ancient pile; all else deep snow and ice,
A gulf profound
..... the parching air.

Burns force, and cold performs the effect of fire; (ii, 587-95)

'Burns, force and cold performs', the description is metaphorical and much of it follows classical models such as Dante's description of Inferno. Milton, however, indicates another and more meaningful Hell, the hell inside a

being. When the poet describes the 'devil's torment, like Dante's damned souls by flames and sulphur or alternate frost and fire, we see him following classical and medieval descriptions. But when the devils build their proud place Pandemonium or when they take part in tournaments of the kind that Milton considers unfit as subject of epic poetry : or when they sing ravishing songs of self-praise, or self-pity or when they reason darkly about subject like fixed fate and free will, or when they howl their praise of Satan with one voice like a mob saluting a dictator in short, when we are allowed a glimpse of the 'hell within' we find him giving psychological insights. Milton's hell has not only physical locality, it has spiritual dimension also. Satan's boast of making a hell of Heaven and Heaven of hell is partly but also profoundly true. The worst hell really is in Satan's heart when he cries :

Me miserable : which way shall I fly
 Infinite wrath : where I fly is Hell; myself am Hell !
 And in the lowest deep of lower deep
 Still treating to devour me open wide
 To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heav'n (iv. 73-78)

The Fallen and Unfallen Angels

Not only Satan, but all the fallen and unfallen angels carry the inner hell or heaven within them. When the loyal angels, Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Ithuriel, Zephon, Uriel are seen freely serving and loving God, we have glimpse of heaven. On the other hand, when we see Moloch, Belial, Mammon, and Beelzebub arguing their dark designs, we find a variety of hell. The fallen angels it will be seen, represent the various deadly sins in various proportions. Moloch, horned Kings, is a combination of pride and wrath : Belial has a mixture of sensuality and sloth. Mammon has greed and selfishness. They are all varieties of evil.

The revolt and war in Heaven were a separation of good from evil, of Heavenly love from hellish hate, of pride from self humility or service. A fallen angel in hell represents perversion and ruin of some heavenly virtue. Satan's opening address to Beelzebub draws attention to these differences :

"If thou beest he; but Oh how fall'n ! how changed
 From him, who in the happy realms of light
 Clothed with transcendent brightness didst outshine
 Myriads though bright (-) if he whom mutual league,
 United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
 And hazard, in the glorious enterprise,
 Joined with me once, now misery hath joined

In equal ruin. (i, 84-90)

Even Satan, it will be seen, has some idea of what had happened in Heaven. In realms of light were all clothed in transcendent brightness, they were joined in mutual league, united thoughts and counsels. But the difference was made by equal hope and hazard in the glorious enterprise, that is, their commitment to evil.

Satan as hero

Equal hope and equal hazard in the glorious enterprise, means the choice to be on this or that side, to be committed to good or evil. As St. Augustine and others have pointed out, the deprivation or negation of good is produced by pride, that is self-love in place of abnegation of self in love. In Book I and II, Satan is represented as a voice confessing and vaunting the proud will, and discovering that in his assault on heaven, the speaker has himself created a hell within him. But pride, if anything is self deception, and Milton's Satan deceives him so well that he deceived Romantics like Shelley into thinking him Promethean apostle of human regeneration, and Byron into thinking him an inspiring symbol of revolt against political tyranny. For Milton, Satan was, as he is shown sitting high on throne of royal state, the archetypal tyrant. His reign in Hell is the express antitype of the reign of the Son of God by merit in Heaven. It will be recalled that, at the moment of commitment to the attack on the Eve (Book IV, 394), Satan justifies his act 'with necessity, the tyrant's plea.'

Satan's pride is provoked by envy at the Son's elevation. He develops a blinding sense of the injured merit and revolts against what he considers a wrong done to him. When Milton introduces Satan for the first time he draws attention to this basic trait in his character :

..... what time his pride
 Had cast him out from Heav'n, with all his host
 Of rebel angels, by whose aid aspiring
 To set himself in glory above his peers,
 He trusted to have equalled the Most High.
 If he opposed : and with ambitious aim
 Against the throne and monarchy of God
 Raised impious war in Heav'n and battle of proud
 With vain attempt, (i. 35-42)

Satan himself is aware of it and confesses it, in the soliloquy in Book IV :

O sun, to tell thee how I hate, thy beams
That bring to my remembrance from what state
I fell, how glorious once above the sphere
Till pride and ambition threw me down
Warring in Heaven against Heaven's matchless king.

The pride and ambition give Satan the courage to rise in revolt against what he calls the tyranny of heaven. This betrays him into the trap of leadership. Some critics compare him to Hitler and Mussolini, as others have compared him to Cromwell. All these comparisons point to at least one thing : the trap of leadership deprives Satan of all private character and makes him speak to the council in Hell and act in Eden and elsewhere in mechanical response to what he calls 'public reason'.

In addition to the delusion of merit, Satan has a delusion of power. This delusion makes him a fool. The Son is given power because his merit (heavenly love) is established. For this divine love, the Son relinquishes power. Satan on the other hand, wants power by relinquishing love. Obdurate pride combined with steadfast hate makes him an utter fool. In terms of the values of Heaven, Satan is nothing but a fool.

In terms of values of Hell, however, he is heroic. As he is represented in Book I and II, we find his lust for power and domination hardening into revenge and steadfast hate. Instead of force, which was his weapon in Heaven, he now adopts fraud and guile stirred up with envy and revenge. Privately, he is tormented by thoughts of lost happiness and lasting pain. This torment is intensified by memories of afflictions he brought down upon his companions in Heaven; into what misery he threw himself in Hell, what ruin he might bring to mankind, or to himself. But though in pain he has to boast of himself aloud. This is the fate of anyone caught in the trap of leadership. In the well-known soliloquy in Book IV, Satan himself laments his trap :

Is there no place
Left for repentance, nor for pardon left ?
Not left but by submission; and that word
Disdain forbids me, and may dread of shame
Among the spirits beneath, whom I seduced
With other promiser and other vaunts
Than to submit, boasting I could subdue
The Omnipotent Ah me, they little know
How dearly I abide that boast so vain.
Under what adore me on the throne of Hell,

While they adore me on the throne of Hell,
With diadem and sceptre high advanced
The lower till I fall, only supreme
In misery,

This is indeed a telling confession. Publicly, Satan harangues his followers like a great leader, he accepts their salutation like a military dictator; he exalted on throne of royal state. But, inwardly he alone knows that he is supreme in misery. This difference between his public face and private thoughts makes him such a complex character. In hell, Satan looks like a tragic villain hero.

Suggested Questions

1. Bring out Satan's dilemma as he finds himself in the trap of leadership.
2. Milton belongs to the devil's party. Discuss.

Suggested Readings

Brijraj Singh : *Milton, An Introduction*, Macmillan,
1977

John Milton's Style in Paradise Lost

Both Milton's Satan and his style have been the subject of much debate and controversy. Milton's style has been vigorously attacked in the twentieth century, especially by the founders of the new criticism. Leavis has charged that Milton has disowned the English language. The anti-Miltonists have borrowed Johnson's words and alleged that Milton wrote no language but a Babylonian dialect, which is itself harsh and barbarous.

The most controversial feature of Milton's style has been its Latinism. The excessive use of Latin and foreign words, idioms and expressions, it is alleged, has made his style obscure, monotonous and torturous. This according to Eliot, is responsible for the remoteness of Milton's verse from ordinary speech. L.P. Boone believes that Milton's Latinism has been exaggerated. Often what has been taken for an imitation of Latin and Greek is really poetic departure from ordinary usage. This departure has been functional in the sense that it imparts an air of sublimity, grandeur, an artistic detachment necessary for an epic.

When we have a close look at the style of *Paradise Lost*, one of the characteristics which strikes us, is the inversion of word-order. This subject-object-verb inversion (She..... her unadorn'd golden tresses wore, iv 334) is common. Similarly, the object-subject verb inversion (The companions of his fall he soon discerns 1.76-78) is also frequent and the verb-subject inversion (so spake the apostrate angel; 1.125) is much more frequent. Such inversion was irregular order, but Milton was simply unusual in following the order. At places the use of certain words creates ambiguities, but mostly the use of words, and especially the use of key words like 'Fall' and 'Fruit' has been very skilful. There are many key words in *Paradise Lost* and Milton chooses and builds them with awareness of their ideological and moral implications. It is wrong to suggest that the import of these words was of gigantic loftiness. Milton does achieve elevation with the help of words order as well as with the sonority, dignity and the weight of the words themselves. Words in Milton are always functional.

Milton's sentences are generally complex, lengthy and circuitous in their

structure. For example :

If thou beest he; But oh how fall'n' how chang'd
From him, who in happy realms of Light
Cloth'd with transcendent brightness didst outshine
Myriads though bright; If he whom mutual league,
United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
And hazard in the glorious enterprize.
Joined with me once, now misery hath join'd
In equal ruin;

The sentence structure here is quite complicated. Read it without bothering about the syntax and you will receive all the impressions about the lost glories of Heaven : the first plotting and planning, the hopes and hazards of actual war, and the misery and the ruin. The complication of the sentence structure is thus an active complication. It has enabled us to feel the onward pressure of the verse. Almost any sentence in the poem will illustrate the same point.

Milton wrote his epic in blank verse. The standard line in *Paradise Lost* has ten syllables, but it would do good to examine a single line for the secrets of Milton's verse. The verse is not formed in this way. It is the period, the sentence, and still more the paragraph, that is the unity of Milton's verse. He gives a perfect and unique pattern to every paragraph. The full beauty of a line is to be found in its context.

Eliot complains that Milton's syntax is determined by musical significance, by the auditory imagination, rather than by the attempt to follow the actual speech or thought. The emphasis is on the visual aspect. Homer's epic was written to be sung, whereas Milton's epic was meant to be read. More weightage to sound at the cost of the visual aspect can be explained in this light. It is also alleged that in Milton's epic, the sound gets preference over the sense. Richardson refuted this charge by asserting that "a reader of Milton must always be on duty, he is surrounded with sense, it rises in every line, every word is to the purpose. The verse paragraph does not keep us waiting for the sense. Instead, the sense is diffused through a large block of words."

Leavis points out many gaps of sudden falls in Milton's verse. But these pauses are functional. Every word and every syllable, according to Darbishire, is counted, every pause and silence between sound. "Never had a poet known better than he that sound expresses sense." We find a perfect adaptation of the sense to the movement of the verse in *Paradise Lost*.

Critics have condemned the monotonous and brick-laying quality of Milton's verse. But the fluidity, subtlety and sharpness of the verse cannot be overlooked.

Any discussion of Milton's style will be incomplete without reference to epic figures of speech. Milton is the master in the use of epic similes. Book I has a number of Homeric similes. Similes are beautiful as well as close to the subject. Examine the line where Satan is described lying :

Prone on the flood, extending long and large,
Lay floating many a wood in bulk as huge
As whom the fables name of monstrous size,
(I. 195-97)

In the next few lines, Satan is compared to Titans, Giants and the sea monster, Leviathan. Emphasis in the comparison is both on huge size and destructive power. The comparison with Leviathan is so extended that it distracts us from the real subject. Such stretched similes extend a period in Milton's verse and enable the readers to refresh themselves.

Epic similes have been used creatively in a long passage (i, 301-360). The fallen angels :

..... who lay entranced
Thick as autumnal leaves that strow the brooks
In Vallombrosa (i, 301-303)

In the succeeding line angels have been compared with the 'floating carcasses and broken chariot wheels' of Busiris and his 'Memphian chivalry'. 'So thick bestrewn' in the Red sea. Both the similes have concrete precision and lay emphasis on vast numbers and confusion, and death like stupor. Satan's legions are morally unfruitful and withering. Satan's responding call bestirs the angels rolling in the flood. The legions begin, to arouse from stupor like the sentinels caught napping. The fallen angels obey their general's voice and rise from the flood, and fly towards the coast like "a pitchy cloud/Of locusts; warping to the eastern wind/That over the realm of impious Pharaoh hung/Like night, and darkened all the land of Nile."

And they

..... fill all the plain;
A multitude, like which the populous North
Poured never from her frozen loins, to pass
Rhene or the Danaw, when her barbarous sons
Came like a deluge on the South, and spread.
Beneath Gibraltar to the Libyan sands. (1.350-54)

All the five similes referred to above, if taken together, create unified and progressive impression. The confused multitude of the first two similes shakes off their stupor in the third, fly upon their wings like locust in the fourth and finally descend upon the plain like barbarians. Carcasses, Chariots, locusts, barbarians are all things dangerous and destructive representing the evil and destructive nature of the rebel angels. Similes in this long passage deserve high approbation. But at places the similes stand reduced to conceits. Reference may be made here to the description of Satan's shield and appear as the orb of moon and the tallest pine tree respectively. These similes touch the borders of conceit.

Finally, the style of *Paradise Lost* may be judged not mainly as an epic style but as a style for that particular story which Milton has chosen. Milton's theme leads him to deal with certain basic images, with the archetypal patterns and with different locales. The style that releases must be charged with momentum and power.

Paradise Lost encompasses heaven, hell and chaos within its fold. The radically different locales find themselves reflected in the language of the epic. Milton has devised different styles for different locales. Hence *Paradise Lost* has not one but many styles. The fall of Satan and the rebel angels has been described in an infernal style; having a vigour of description through the sweeping, vivid strength of his verse.

Him the Almighty Power
 Hurl'd headlong flaming from the ethereal sky,
 With hideous ruin and combustion down
 To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
 In adamant chains and penal fire
 Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms (i, 44-48)

The glory and the harmony of heaven has been demonstrated in a celestial style in the following lines :

Heaven opened wide
 Her everlasting gates, harmonious sound
 On golden hinges moving to left forth
 The King of Glory, in His powerful Word
 and Spirit, booming to create new worlds (vii, 205-209)

Milton's style becomes pastoral when he describes the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise.

The world was all before them, where to choose
 Their place of rest and Providence their guide;

They hand in hand with wandering steps and slow,
Though Eden took their solitary way (xii, 646-649)

The fall of Lucifer at the end of Book I has also been described in a pastoral style, from morn

To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
A summer's day; and with the setting sun
Dropped from the zenith like a falling star. (i, 742-745)

In addition to this, all these styles have substantial differences in their application. The language of *Paradise Lost* works in conjunction with its structural requirements. The greatest pleasure of reading *Paradise Lost* is to discover the wide differences, the language can accomodate without impairing the narrative power.

In *Paradise Lost*, the style is not the man but the poem. The language can be justified by what it does, and if the style is what it does, it is not because Aristotle says so but because the poem contains specific characteristics in order to bring itself into being. "The poem deals with the reality that is beyond and prior to nature." The language enacts the reality it expresses.