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Introduction: — Paradise Lost is an epic poem in blank verse by the 17th-century English poet John Milton. John Milton was born on December 9, 1608 and died on November 8, 1674. The first version, published in 1667, consists of ten books with over ten thousand lines of verse. A second edition followed in 1674, arranged into twelve books (in the manner of Virgil's *Aeneid*), with minor revisions throughout. It is considered to be Milton's master piece, and it helped solidify his reputation as one of the greatest English poets of all time.

The desire for freedom extended in his style: he introduced new words into the English language, and was also one of the modern writers to employ non-rhymed verse outside the theatre. Milton travelled, wrote poetry mostly private, studied, and launched his career as pamphleteer.

He was also a secretary for the Foreign Tongues in the Council of states and had written many political tracts opposing the monarchy. One of them was Eikonoklastes (1649). After Charles II was crowned Milton was dismissed from the government service and was imprisoned. He composed many mature works like Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes in 1640s, all these were completed and revised much later.

and were not published until after Restoration.

Paradise Lost Book - 1 :-

This greatest epic poem begins with a prologue where Milton performs traditional epic tasks to invoke Muse. Following the prologue Milton begins the epic describing Satan and other rebellious Angels, chained on a lake of fire. As epics generally commences from the middle, Satan also known as Lucifer with his compatriots started a war against God. They were defeated and thrown from Heaven to the fires of Hell.

Over the lake, Satan has been described as gigantic or a titan, next to whom lies Belzebub his second command. He comments on the book of Belzebub which has transformed into worse due to the punishment of the god. Still he continues his intention to struggle against god, saying "better to reign in hell than serve in Heaven".

Satan is able to free himself from the chains and he flies to a barren plain, followed by Belzebub. He calls all the fallen angels motivates him and when they come to their leader Milton lists the major Devils like : Moloch, Baalem, Chemos, Ashtaroth, Astarte, Dagon, Rimmon, Iris, Orus, Belial and Mammon and many more. The fallen angels think they have escaped from the chains by using their power but Milton makes it clear that God alone has allowed them to do so. The army

made by Satan was large and impressive. He addresses them that they still have the power to oppose God. At the last they find minerals in mountains of Hell and quickly begin to construct a city that symbolized the capital Hell, Pandemonium. In the Pandemonium all the devils assemble for the great councils.

Critical Appreciation on Milton's Paradise Lost Book-1 :-

Milton's Paradise Lost is rarely read today. But this epic poem, 350 years old this month, remains a work of unparalleled imaginative genius that shapes English literature even now.

In more than 10,000 lines of blank verse, it tells the story of the war for heaven and of man's expulsion from Eden. Its dozen sections are an ambitious attempt to comprehend the loss of paradise - from the perspectives of the fallen angel Satan and of man, fallen from grace. Even to readers in a secular age, the poem is a powerful meditation on rebellion, longing and the desire for freedom.

Despite being born into prosperity, Milton's worldview was forged by personal and political struggle. A committed republican, he rose to public prominence in the ferment of England's

bloody civil war: two months after the execution of England's King Charles I in 1649, Milton became a diplomat for the new republic, with the title of Secretary for Foreign Tongues.

In Paradise Lost, Milton draws on the classical Greek tradition to conjure the spirits of blind prophets. When Milton began Paradise Lost in 1658, he was in mourning. It was a year of public and private grief, marked by the deaths of his second wife, memorialized in his beautiful Sonnet 23, and of England's Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell, which precipitated the gradual disintegration of the republic. Paradise Lost is an attempt to make sense of a fallen world: to "justify the ways of God to men", and no doubt to Milton himself.

But these biographical aspects should not downplay the centrality of theology to the poem. As the critic Christopher Ricks wrote of Paradise Lost, "Art for art's sake? Art for God's sake". One reason why Milton is read less now is that his religious lexicon - which sought to explain a 'fallen' world - itself has fallen from use. Milton the Puritan spent his life engaged in the theological disputation on subjects as diverse as toleration, divorce and salvation.

The poem begins with Satan, the "Traitor Angel", cast into hell after rebelling against

his creator, God. Refusing to submit to what he calls "the Tyranny of Heaven", Satan seeks revenge by tempting into sin God's precious creation: man. Milton gives a vivid account of "Man's First Disobedience" before offering a guide to salvation.

Ricks note that Paradise Lost is "a fierce argument about God's justice" and that Milton's God has been deemed inflexible and cruel. By contrast, Satan has a dark charisma ("he pleased the ear") and a revolutionary demand for self-determination. His speech is peppered with the language of democratic governance ("free choice", "full consent", "the popular vote") - and he famously declare, "Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heaven". Satan rejects God's "splendid vassalage", seeking to live:

Free, and to none accountable, preferring
Hard liberty before the easy yoke
Of servile Pomp.

Nonconformist, anti-establishment writers such as Percy Shelley found a kindred spirit in this depiction of Satan ("Milton's Devil as a moral being is..... far superior to his God", he wrote). Famously, William Blake, who contested the very idea of the Fall, remarked that "The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels & God, and at liberty when of Devils & Hell, is because he was a true poet, and of the Devil's party without knowing it."

Like Cromwell, Milton believed his mission was to usher in the kingdom of God on earth. While he loathed the concept of the 'divine right of kings', Milton was willing to submit himself to God in the belief, in Benjamin Franklin's words, that "Rebellion to Tyrants Is Obedience to God".

The story of Adam and Eve differs somewhat from that told in Genesis. In Paradise Lost they are presented as distinct personalities with personalities and passions, enjoying a romantic and sexual relationship without its being sinful. Satan disguises himself as a serpent and successfully tempts Eve to eat from the tree, using persuasive language and playing on her vanity. Adam commits himself to Eve and knowingly also eats from the tree, because of his love for her. Once they have both eaten the fruit they commit their first sin - lust - something that has been absent from their ideal, romantic relationship. They experience that has been absent from their ideal, romantic relationship. They experience guilt and shame for the first time and quarrel bitterly, each blaming the other for the transgression.

Satan is welcomed back to Hell as a hero. He has fouled God's creation and caused His greatest creation to fall. But all the fallen angels, including Satan, turn into snakes, without limbs and unable to talk. All they can do is hiss.

Adam and Eve are cast out of Eden and condemned, along with all their descendants, to live with guilt and shame forever. The only hope for human beings' redemption is through the coming, in the future, of the 'King Messiah', the Christ who will eventually come to redeem Mankind. From now on God will still be there, but distant from Mankind, and invisible.

The creation myth in Genesis is short and sketchy. It is from Paradise Lost that we get most of our notions about the Fall of Mankind and its imagery is ever present in the discourse about it.

Apart from that, Milton's epic has been enormously influential on subsequent writers. Countless writers have been inspired to write their own versions of the Genesis myth and, in effect, to rewrite Paradise Lost. For example, the romantic writers. Milton's Satan has been described as 'literature's first Romantic'. Mary Shelley's Frankenstein offers a strong parallel regarding the same questions of authority, the relationship between creator and created, and the created yearning for a female partner.

Milton's sympathy for Satan, a theme taken up by William Blake, spawned a dominant

20th Century literary debate.

There have been many films and musical works based on Paradise Lost, and the poem has inspired a host of paintings and sculptures.

Paradise Lost, substantially influenced the emergence of feminism in the 19th and 20th centuries. Milton exemplified the patriarchal tradition that persisted until then, with its several incidences of misogyny. Emily Bronte was one of the writers who felt it important to break from the tradition by female writers of feminist literature, which became an important force and which is continues to grow in the 21st Century.

Conclusion: -

The epic is praised for its imagination and Milton's knowledge which is expressed in Paradise Lost. Milton shows the sorrowful consequences. Paradise Lost is written on the concept from the Bible. It comprises of various symbolisms and mysteries. According to what all is discussed above comprises criticism which are put on Milton's Paradise Lost. While the epic was written many critics were against Milton's thoughts but a few were in favour too. In the later years Milton's Paradise Lost was appealing to the people and

was also admired as he had excessive
interpretation of nature.

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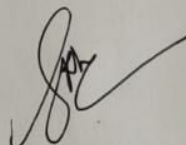
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Halima Khatun
Student's Sign


Teacher's Sign.