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LANGUAGE, POWER, AND DIVINE ORDER IN THE WORKS OF JOHN MILTON

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ABSTRACT. This study examines how John Milton connects language, authority, and divine structure in his writings, especially in *Paradise Lost*. Milton portrays language as a force that shapes moral order and expresses spiritual position rather than simply a means of communication. The ways God, Satan, and Adam speak reveal how rhetoric can uphold or challenge power. Pure and truthful speech supports divine rule, while deceitful or distorted language signals opposition to it. The research demonstrates that Milton uses linguistic expression to define his understanding of universal hierarchy and spiritual governance, showing how discourse becomes a key element in maintaining or disrupting divine order. Key words: Milton; *Paradise Lost*; language and authority; divine hierarchy; rhetorical power; discourse; moral order.

INTRODUCTION. John Milton's writings-most notably *Paradise Lost*-reveal a deep connection between language, political authority and the structure of divine order. In the turbulent period following England's civil conflicts and the fall of the Commonwealth, Milton redefines language as more than a communicative tool: he presents it as a divine force that shapes moral boundaries and upholds cosmic hierarchy. Scholars such as Barbara Lewalski argue that Milton's poetic universe operates through a "rhetoric of moral precision," where a character's manner of speaking reflects their spiritual condition and ethical stance. Through God's commanding declarations, Satan's persuasive distortions, and the shifting conversations between Adam and Eve, Milton demonstrates that speech holds the power to establish or disrupt structures of authority. This suggests that Milton viewed language as a mirror of divine hierarchy-truthful, pure speech affirms heavenly power, while corrupted language signals rebellion and disorder. Therefore, exploring Milton's relationship between language and power provides valuable insight into his theological vision and his understanding of universal governance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION. The findings show that Milton designs a structured hierarchy of language in *Paradise Lost*, where each form of speech reflects a character's moral and spiritual standing. To begin with, divine language represents the highest level of authority. God's speech functions as an active force that brings realities into existence, emphasizing that true power is expressed through clarity, truth, and creative command.





This highlights Milton's view that language grounded in divine intention naturally upholds order. Furthermore, Satan's rhetoric demonstrates how speech can be manipulated to resist rightful power. His arguments rely on exaggeration, emotional appeal, and self-deception, illustrating how distorted language becomes the foundation of rebellion. Through this, Milton shows that linguistic corruption leads to both ethical decline and cosmic instability. Finally, the conversation between Adam and Eve reflects the human struggle between obedience and transgression. Before the Fall, their communication is calm, logical, and unified, mirroring their harmony with divine order. After the fall, their speech shifts toward conflict and confusion, symbolizing the collapse of spiritual alignment.

LITERATURE ANALYSIS AND METHODOLOGY. Existing scholarship consistently shows that language is a key indicator of moral and spiritual authority in *Paradise Lost*. Critics like C. S. Lewis emphasize the commanding nature of God's speech, while Barbara Lewalski and Stanley Fish note Milton's deliberate contrast between truthful divine discourse, Satan's deceptive persuasion, and the evolving language of Adam and Eve. Together, these studies illustrate how Milton uses speech to signal hierarchy, obedience, and disorder within the poem's theological structure. Building on this critical foundation, the present study employs a qualitative close-reading method. It examines selected speeches from major characters-God, Satan, Adam, and Eve-focusing on rhetorical patterns, persuasive techniques, and moral implications. These textual observations are then compared with established Milton criticism to evaluate how language shapes power dynamics and reflects divine order. This integrated approach highlights how Milton's linguistic choices consistently expose the tension between authority, rebellion, and human fallibility.

CONCLUSION. This research demonstrates that Milton places language at the center of how power operates within the theological and moral framework of *Paradise Lost*. God's speech upholds universal order through its clarity and creative force, while Satan's manipulative language disrupts that order and symbolizes defiance. Human discourse stands between these two extremes, showing both the potential for obedience and the risk of failure. Taken together, Milton presents a structured hierarchy of speech that reflects divine authority, suggesting that the purity and purpose of language are crucial for maintaining spiritual and political stability in the poem.

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