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

Xatamova Marjona Maxammad qizi

Scientific advisor: **Khazratkulova Ezoza Ismat qizi**

ABSTRACT This paper examines the complex interrelation between language, power, and divine order in the works of John Milton. By analyzing *Paradise Lost*, *Areopagitica*, and *Paradise Regained*, the study highlights how Milton treats language as a medium of spiritual truth, political freedom, and moral responsibility. The paper argues that Milton views language as a divine gift embedded in cosmic order and essential to human understanding. It also evaluates Milton's concern about the misuse of language as a tool of deception, tyranny, and rebellion. Through close reading, the analysis reveals how linguistic expression shapes human choice and theological meaning. Ultimately, the study demonstrates that in Milton's poetic universe, language functions both as an instrument of salvation and a potential catalyst for ruin.

Introduction. John Milton, one of the most influential writers of the seventeenth century, constructs a literary and philosophical worldview in which language, power, and divine order form an inseparable triad. Rooted in Protestant theology and classical rhetoric, Milton's works depict language as a central feature of God's creation and a vital component of human reason. For Milton, the spoken and written word are not merely communicative tools but moral instruments capable of shaping political authority and spiritual destiny. This paper explores how Milton's major works articulate the connection between linguistic expression, metaphysical structure, and human agency. In *Paradise Lost*, language appears from the very beginning as the means through which divine order is established. God creates the universe by speaking, illustrating that language precedes and governs material existence [1]. This act situates language at the foundation of cosmic harmony. Humanity, made in God's image, inherits the ability to use language as a rational and moral faculty. Milton also portrays the misuse of language as a disruption of divine order. Satan's rhetoric persuasive, deceptive, and manipulative illustrates the fallen potential of language when severed from truth [1]. Through Satan's speeches, Milton shows how language can operate as a weapon of rebellion. Instead of illuminating truth, it becomes a tool that distorts meaning and tempts sentient beings away from divine authority. This dual potential reveals Milton's belief that language carries immense spiritual weight. Milton's political philosophy appears most clearly in *Areopagitica*, his seminal argument for unlicensed printing. Here, Milton defends the freedom of expression as a prerequisite for moral and intellectual development.



According to him, individuals cannot grow in virtue without encountering a diversity of opinions and testing truth through reasoned debate [3]. Thus, restricting language particularly through censorship threatens the balance between power and divine order. Milton insists that political authority must align with truth rather than suppress it. State control over language is, for him, a dangerous overreach that disrupts God's intended structure of free inquiry. In this view, the power of language becomes a counterbalance to tyrannical governance, enabling citizens to challenge falsehoods and uphold divine justice. Hence, the political significance of language in Milton's works lies not only in its persuasive force but also in its capacity to preserve moral autonomy.

Across *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, Milton emphasizes that language mediates human moral decisions. Adam and Eve's fall occurs through their failure to discern the deceptive rhetoric of the serpent. Their susceptibility to corrupt speech demonstrates the ethical demand placed upon human interpreters of language [1]. Understanding and evaluating language, therefore, becomes a spiritual test. In *Paradise Regained*, Christ resists Satan's temptations through concise, clear, and theologically grounded speech. Unlike Adam and Eve, Christ demonstrates perfect command over language by refusing to distort Scripture or succumb to rhetorical manipulation [2]. Milton uses Christ's restraint to show that language aligned with divine wisdom strengthens moral integrity. The contrast between deceptive eloquence and truthful simplicity underscores Milton's belief that proper use of language reflects inner spiritual order. Milton positions the poet as a mediator of divine truth. By invoking heavenly inspiration, the poet uses language to reassert cosmic order in a fallen world. For Milton, poetry is an elevated form of speech capable of expressing divine mysteries and guiding humanity toward salvation [3]. The poet's responsibility is therefore immense: his words must illuminate truth and counteract the corrupt uses of language that pervade human history. Milton's poetic mission "to justify the ways of God to men" demonstrates his conviction that language can reinforce divine principles. Through epic narrative and theological reflection, he attempts to restore the reader's awareness of God's sovereignty and the moral structure underlying existence.

Conclusion. Language in Milton's works functions as a powerful instrument that shapes spiritual, moral, and political realities. It is simultaneously a divine gift, a medium for expressing truth, and a potential source of deception and disorder. Milton's writings reveal deep concern for how language is used whether to honor divine order or to undermine it. By linking language to both freedom and responsibility, Milton constructs a worldview in which linguistic expression becomes central to the human struggle between obedience and



rebellion. His poetic legacy serves as a lasting reminder of the transformative power and profound moral significance of the word.

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