

Milton's View on Good and the Evil in Paradise Lost

T. Jennifer

II M.A. English Literature, Dr. Umayal Ramanathan College for Women, Karaikudi
Mail Id: jennithomas2004@gmail.com

Abstract:

This paper explores John Milton's sight of good and evil in *Paradise Lost*. The study investigates how Milton's defines goodness through Obedience, justice, divine order while representing evil as a product of rebellion, pride the abuse of freewill. Good and Evil are central themes in *Paradise Lost*. God and Satan, good and evil are personified individually. Despite of the seeming dichotomy of either pure evil or total goodness, for much of paradise lost the distinction between good and evil is not very vague. The goodness of man conquer by sin and the fall of god's holy angles to hell are the examples of the intersections of good and evil with characters. Through the thematic reading of the epic, the paper examines Milton's complex presentation of Satan, the moral struggles of Adam and Eve and the central role of human freedom in shaping moral decisions. The discussion represents that Milton does not treat good and evil as simple opposites but as moral conditions shaped by aim and choices. The paper concludes with Milton's view on triumph of good through divine justice and human redemption. The research focuses on the portrayal of morality in *paradise lost*, examining poem's moral framework, characters and themes.

Keywords: Temptation, Redemption, Disobedience vs Obedience.

I. INTRODUCTION:

John Milton's *paradise lost* stands as a heartfelt exploration of the nature of good and evil, weaving together theological, philosophical and moral questions within the epic narrative of humanity's fall. Rather than presenting good and evil as simple opposites, Milton blurs the boundaries between them, particularly through the character of Satan, who openly declares, "Evil, be thou my good" Book IV, Line 110. Adam and eve who personify both virtue and vice whose choices shape the destiny of human kind. The poem's portrayal of Satan as a mesmerizing at times, sympathetic figure challenges readers to grapple with the evil and the uncertainty of moral benevolent, yet allows evil to exist as part is a greater providential place, raising enduring questions about theodicy and the possibility of redemption through suffering. *Paradise lost* invites readers to reflect on the ethical virtue, the dangers of pride and ambition and the transformation potential of knowledge and repentance.

II. DIVINE GOODNESS:

God the father symbolizes sovereignty, infinite might and righteousness, creating a perfect world while granting free will to his creations. The son(Christ) personifies divine sacrifice and love,

volunteering atone for humanity's sin and offering hope amid the fall. Angels like Raphael and Micheal further upload good by guiding Adam and Eve toward obedience and revealing future salvation. The divine freedom is affirmed by the loyal angels who declares, "Freely we serve, because freely we love" Book V, Line 538. Heaven and Eden depict good as luminous harmony, celestial order and unfallen purity, contrasting hell's chaos' obedience to god, even past fall, underscores good's triumph through grace over sin's disruption these elements highlight Milton's theme of good prevailing despite Evil's temptations.

III. SATAN AND THE ORIGIN OF EVIL:

God represents absolute good through his almighty power, divine knowledge and mercy, foreseeing the fall yet granting free will to angles and humans. The Son(Christ) exemplifies sacrificial love by offering himself to atone for sin, renewing unity between creation and divine. This harmony magnifies in heaven's celestial order and Eden's innocence, where obedience fulfills that created by god. Satan personifies moral corruption not as an independent force, but as a privation of original goodness, rooted in hubris, jealous resentment, and willful defiance of divine authority. His revolt, aided by fallen angels like Mammon(Greed) and Moloch(Violence),

introduces sin and death into the world through temptation. Evil thrives in chaos, falsehood and self-ruin, sharply contrasting heaven's truth and unity.

IV. THE FALL OF ADAM AND EVE:

Eve first surrenders to Satan's sweet persuasion and promise of godlike knowledge, privileging free will and intellectual curiosity over obedience. "Sufficient to have stood, Though tree to fall" Book III, Lines 99-100. Her mental predate physical appetite, desire echoing Satan's quarrel dispute eating the fruit viewing the serpent as a patron. This act dishonest her selfless love, introducing selfishness and envy towards Adam. Adam knowingly eats the fruit out of devotion to Eve, choosing emotional connections over faithfulness to God and letting instinct override reason. He drops a representative coronal of pure love upon seeing her fall. Marketing the shift to lustful, animalistic relations post fall. His clear minded decision emphasized conscious sin preferring human companionship to divine order instantaneous effects include shame, nightmares anguish and mutual condemn, transforming innocence into awareness of sin. Their lustful encounter depraved prior consonance but Michael's visions reveal future redemption through Christ's surrender, affirming good's triumph over sin and despair, as Milton promises that "Greater man shall restore us" Book I, Line 4. This arc highlights free will's peril and potential for reconstruction.

V. SUFFERING, REPENTANCE AND MORAL AWAKENING:

Beyond the prompt repercussions of the fall, Milton's describes moral awareness itself as both retribution and probability. Adam and Eve's newly roused moral awareness brings fear, shame, and inner struggle, yet evil, though briefly victorious, cannot destroy the divine image that remains within them. Their sorrow marks the beginning of ethical guilt, suggesting that suffering becomes the route through which fallen human may regain goodness. Milton further difference Satan's impenitent endurance in evil with Adam and Eve's dimensions for self-reflection. While Satan gardens himself by pride and rancor the human pair cautiously learn humility prayer and mutual condonation. This excellence fortify and stasis, whereas good evolves

through recollection of fault and acceptance to divine elegance. The ejection from Eden, for the reason merely penal but educative and restorative even though paradise is lost seeming, an "inner paradise" becomes attainable through compliance, patience, and trust. Milton vetoes true victory as religious endure rather than worldly completeness, affirming that good endures even in exile and distress.

VI. CONCLUSION: FREE WILL AND TRIUMPH OF GOOD:

Finally, paradise lost presents good and evil as vigorous moral choices rather than fixed shapes human beings are neither unholy corrupt nor essentially virtuous but are continually shaped by their determination. Through Adam and Eve's fall and recovery, Milton argue that free will relics humanity's great risk and greatest gift, enabling decay through pride yet offering salvation through compunction and divine mercy.

VII. REFERENCE

- Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*. Edited by Alastair Fowler, 2nd ed., Longman, 2007.
- Lewalski, Barbara K. *The Life of John Milton: A Critical Biography*. Blackwell Publishing, 2000.
- Fish, Stanley. *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost*. Harvard University Press, 1967.
- Lewis, C. S. *A Preface to Paradise Lost*. Oxford University Press, 1961.
- Carey, John. *Milton*. Routledge, 1990.