

Introduction

John Milton is one of the most brilliant writers of the late Elizabethan period. Paradise Lost is a master piece of his genius. Critics like Samuel Johnson, Walter Raleigh and Prof. Waldock tried to interpret Paradise Lost in their own way. In the present study, I have made an attempt to work out his use of language and present a modest stylistic analysis of Book I. I have discussed only a limited number of significant features of the epic considering the limitations of the dissertation.

Milton is unique with regard to his technique, style and the use of language in Paradise Lost. I have given the critical assessment of Milton as an epic writer. I have also given the critics' evaluation of Paradise Lost with regard to its formal structure, theme, style, the use of language, versification, similies and imagery.

I have analysed the text paying attention to different stylistic devices used in this epic. Generally, poets do "interesting things" with language. Language of poetry creates aesthetic effect and it can't be separated from aesthetic effects. I have therefore chosen a few significantly foregrounded stylistic devices for my analysis.

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The design of this dissertation is as follows :-

The first chapter discusses the concepts, style and stylistics in brief. I have highlighted the use of stylistics in the study of literature and its goal of analysing, interpreting and evaluating literary texts. I have also discussed the problems of defining style as well as the meaning of style with the help of various definitions. I have made an attempt to show how stylistics bridges literary criticism and linguistics and have illustrated how, by using them, a given literary text can be interpreted.

The second chapter deals with Milton as a poet. I have discussed his craftsmanship as a poet. I have given a critical assessment of Paradise Lost Book I. I have introduced the text in brief paying special attention to its theme, unique characteristics of its genre and the character-sketches. I have discussed in brief Milton's use of language in Paradise Lost Book I. I have given the interpretation of different aspects of the text which throw light on the use of language, diction, versification, syntax, similes and other poetic devices.

The third chapter comprises the stylistic analysis of the Book I. First of all I have commented on Milton's versification. Then I have discussed his use of lexis or diction. I have made comments on Milton's use of syntax which includes

his use of inversions, sentence patterns, rhetorical questions, syntactic parallelism, repetitions creating structures of meaning effectively in the poem.

In the conclusion, my observations and findings derived from chapters I, II, & III are given.

I would like to mention here that a modest attempt has been made to analyse Paradise Lost Book I from the point of view of the use of stylistic devices. I am aware of its limitations in the absence of a set model for analysis. As a result, the statements made in the analysis are often tentative and therefore open-ended.

In the analysis of Milton's epic Paradise Lost Book I, I am going to use a linguistic approach. I have concentrated my attention more on how Milton uses his language and style in order to convey the theme.

My approach is not rigid but it is an open-ended one. My effort has been to use insights derived from the works of several stylisticians relevant to the analysis of Milton's text chosen for my analysis.

I am aware that mere analysis of a literary text worked out for its own sake is of no great value and may sound uninteresting and a futile exercise in linguistic

..III..

analysis.

That is why I have taken into consideration the critical assessment wherever available and have attempted to show the relevance of my analysis to the thematic concerns of the text. The approach in this dissertation is based on the linguistic observations of a number of stylisticians already mentioned earlier in the first chapter. However, as no one model can be used in carrying out the analysis of the text, the approach followed here is an eclectic one.