

A Comparative Study of the Islamic Satan and the Miltonic Satan

Jawad Anwari

College of International Studies, Southwest University, China

Abstract—*Paradise Lost* has been treated as a controversial epic in misrepresenting characters among some religious writers. In this wonderful epic or out of that, the Satan's story is a world of ambiguity and bewilderment for human beings, it still continues being obscure. The interpretation of holy scripts causes some misconceptions, overstating and exaggeration especially about Satan. Satan was expelled from the God's mercy and from His forbearance. He continued to justify his disobedience, he was considered to be very arrogant. This research is going to survey or investigate the comparative and contrastive points of the *Holy Quran* and the *Paradise Lost* about Satan. Christian religion is issuing from Heaven and so is Islam. As well as the *Paradise Lost* was inspired from biblical verses. Hence some matters in case of Satan can be traced and surveyed looking to Quranic text and Miltonic text in this paper. Muslims believe and respect Jesus Christ's Prophecy. Islam and Christianity both can be celestial religions with the same roots but some differences. In *Paradise Lost* Satan is presented as magnitude leading character, but from the other side *Holy Quran* presented Satan is a very wicked and outcast character. Milton attempted to draw God as a passive character and from the other side he also drew Satan as a so active character in his epic poem. Therefore, the similarities and some differences in favor of Satan would be discussed in this scholarly research paper.

Index Terms—Allah, Qur'an, Shaitan, Jinn, Iblis, extravagance, obeisance, temptation

I. INTRODUCTION

Paradise Lost is an epic poem considers being a work of theology and cosmology that is written by John Milton (December 9th 1608– November 8th 1674) who was a gifted and intellectual English Poet. He is best known for his valuable masterpiece (*Paradise Lost*). It is one of the greatest works of literary canon ever written. Most of the writers called him as the pioneer and most significant English writer e.g. William Hayley, English poet and biographer, calls Milton: “the greatest English author.” Judging honestly, he remained as a regarded and worthy writer in literature. *Paradise Lost* was first published in 1667 that contains ten books, but later on the second edition was followed being published during 1674 that was arranged in twelve books. This enormous and immense work of English Literature is written in blank verse style, which was considered being as one of the meaningful literary masterpieces for the people of that age, this enriches literature of Renaissance Period as well as it is still regarded significantly. The biographer John Aubrey foretells that the epic was initiated in about 1658 and was ended in about 1663. Presumably Milton wrote the rich and masterful *Paradise Lost* at a time when he has totally gone blind by the assistance of some relatives. This precious literary book connects with Bible and includes a biblical story. Bible is a so majestic and yet a prominent source of information for the *Paradise Lost*. The story revolves or concerns around the temptation of Adam by Satan, the creation of Adam and Eve as well as their expulsion from the Garden of Eden to the earth. The prosperous usage of the language, style, plot and literary elements in the *Paradise Lost*, gives forth the worthy and value of the work itself. This unique usage is by far out of Milton's talent and capacity. It is mentionable that *Paradise Lost* has been a good example for some readers who have been disobedient. For instance, John Dryden– English poet, playwright and first poet laureate– within *The State of Innocence* (1671) was counted one of the most loved adorers of the *Paradise Lost* as two men had different political attachment, John Dryden attempted to uphold John Milton to employ his work to afford or manage his own thoughts. He had thought that Satan was the one who avoids to accept slavery and started rebellion against God to collapse his position, might be an undeniable vivid portrait of the king killer, Oliver Cromwell. So that, does it make sense to represent Satan as the hero of the epic?

II. THE TERMINOLOGY OF SATAN

Celestial Religions have always considered Satan as the prince of evil who created problems and difficulties for Admirers of them. According to *Oxford Dictionary* the word ‘Satan’ has been etymologized from Hebrew ‘שָׂטָן’ (*Satán*) named by ichthyologist Carl Leavitt Hubbs, means ‘adversary’. This word has an etymological equivalent term in *Vulgate Old Testament* as ‘Satan’ from Late Latin. Furthermore, in Arabic language this etymological equivalent term is ‘Shaitan’ or (شیطان). This Arabic version is derived from ‘Shatan’ terminology that means ‘deport away’ or ‘get away’ (Ashori , 2010). So it refers to Satan who had been exiled from the mercy, compassion, grace and blessing of God. In addition, there are many more equivalent expressive terms indicating Satan, e.g. ‘Jinn’, ‘Iblis’, a Greek term, means ‘remain in grief’, or ‘despaired’ (Dehkhoda Dictionary, 1931). In the case that Satan can be intriguingly similar to that

of his *Qur'anic*¹ counterpart Iblis² (Sharihan And Mandy, 1967). Iblis refers to Satan, this term is frequently occurring in the *Holy Quran* in relation to the fall of Adam and Eve. After Satan's disobedience to make obeisance to Adam, his refusal resulted in his exclusion from heaven, but not punished in the Hell. He used to be an angel before his disobedience. Iblis or Shaitan is often compared to Satan in Christian tradition. Though Satan refuse to obey the sanction and obedience of God that's why he was expelled from the Paradise. Satan's development into a heroic character can deteriorate or depict religion less worthy.

III. MILTONIC PURPOSE; GOD VS. SATAN

Seventeenth Century marked one of the affluent literary works which was *Paradise Lost* (1667). This work has been written after Midlevel Age when majority of the people were intricately confused in Religion. After all the epic is concerning around the Original Sin³ and the seduction along with the fall of humankind from the prosperous paradise with the guile or rebellion of Satan that caused all tragedy of men. Milton's purpose beyond the epic might not be well-illustrated; although the *Paradise Lost* asserts, "I may assert th' Eternal Providence, / And justify the ways of God to men." (Milton, 1967, p. 5) But, in some extents his purpose goes confusing through the overstating or exaggerating Satan's role rather than God's. Even though, he attempts to justify or signify God's role, but God's role is very less-explained even it doesn't go to illustrate His real majesty. But still Miltonic purpose is vague; although he tried to justify almighty's way to human beings but failed well. In *Paradise Lost* (1667), Milton proves waging a virtual battle between God and the Satan; this war discredits and degrades God the Almighty other than Satan. Satan's Character and his role are by far magnified and overstated by Milton. In this regard, the Satan is justified more vividly compared with the God's role and His character. Satan is deserved or qualified to control everything into the fiery Hell in the *Paradise Lost*, but *holy Quran* proves Satan as a lamenting creature who tries to deceive the whole world. As Allah says in *An-Nisa* Chapter of *Holy Quran*, "He gives them promises and excites vain desires in them; and the Shaitan (Satan) does not promise them but to deceive." And as well as God allowed Satan to live according to his own desire or will. The spiritual justification is indeed symbolized throughout the epic poem though Satan desired to defile or ruin the creation of God, but God avoids Satan's infernal and mischievous intention invisibly within the *Paradise Lost*. God's pure intention is explained secretly. In *Milton's God*, William Empson (1965) discusses the reason beyond *Paradise Lost's* heartedness, he says, "The reason why the poem is so good is that it makes God so bad." Such depiction may underestimate the worth of religion or God in the eyes of human beings. Thus such comparison is entirely contradicting with celestial religions; moreover, the overstatement of Satan comparing with God is abominable and disgusting. Milton could find another way to make *Paradise Lost* more interesting and heartedness with such an accomplishing and prosperous talent. He could go to make Satan bad other than God. While reading the *Paradise Lost*, every single reader will come out with a heroic point of view regarding Satan other than Almighty God's. Milton's purpose is not very clear and vivid in his work; on the other hand, Akram Nagi Saleh (2020) states that *Paradise Lost* is written in a time when Cromwell was died, it was just to express his grief.

IV. SATAN'S CREATION AND THE PUNISHMENT

The Satan's fiction has been ambiguous and obscure world for human beings. Satan and Jinns⁴ along with their disciples are counted as a very wicked and evil group of invisible creatures (Badruddin, 2001). Prophet Mohammad says that Satan the evil enters to get the human beings tempted or seduced; he comes with the first person into the working area and leaves with the last person for temptation. A large number of scholars have attempted to research and interpret several different holy scripts regarding Satan, so they encountered failure to produce a full detailed description of Satan. Although various scriptural interpretations have been produced; but some of them are neither well-interpreted nor well-explained rather than intemperance. As Tariq Nabi, A professor at Theology and Religion Faculty at Herat University of Afghanistan, remarked in an interview, "Some people state extravagance or excess concerning the holy scripts' interpretation both in Islam and Christianity, and make a false-based conception." Satan's description is considered to be somehow extravagance in *Paradise Lost*.

Milton came out with *Paradise Lost* after Oliver Cromwell's death in order to express his grief about Oliver Cromwell and the commonwealth fall as well (Akram, 2020). But in case of Characters, the essence or existence of Satan is undeniably indisputable and obvious in Abrahamic religions. A number of Islamic scholars consider Satan as the inner forceful instinct that persuades a person toward evil and corruption (Reza, 2010). As well as the creation of Satan is marked to be from intense fire. This fact has been explained both in *Bible* and *Quran*, as Allah the almighty points out in Verse: 26-27, Chapter: *Al-Hijr of Quran*, "And certainly We created man of clay that gives forth sound, of black mud fashioned in shape. And the Jinn We created before, of intensely hot fire." On the other hand, the fire-created feature of Satan is not well-mentioned in *Paradise Lost*, yet John Milton's well-formed descriptive clues imply Satan's power living in fiery dungeon. Accordingly, Milton indicates in *Paradise Lost*, "In Adamantine Chains and penal Fire.

¹ The adjective form of Quran meaning 'related to Quran'

² The abominably devilish name that refers to Satan in the *holy Quran*

³ In Christianity, the Original Sin is Adam's eating of the fruit forbidden by God the Almighty

⁴ Refers to invisible creatures akin to Satan (Shebla 2001)

// So stretcht out huge in length the Arch-fiend lay / Chain'd on the burning Lake. // Here in the Heart of Hell to work in Fire, // That comes to all; but torture without end / still urges, and a fiery Deluge, fed / With ever-burning Sulphur unconsum'd: // the palace of the great LUCIFER," (1667). These hints show the power of Satan living in deep fiery Hell. Therefore, Satan is not burnt by the fire that is why he was created from fire.

The punishment given to Satan is contrasting with the punishment implemented on Satan in Islam; the punishment in *Paradise Lost* is "...Him the Almighty Power / Hurl'd headlong flaming from th' Ethereal Skie / with hideous ruine and combustion down / To bottomless perdition, there to dwell." *Paradise Lost* is concluding the punishment by hurling Satan headlong to the bottom of the Hell. But Allah addresses Satan and those who obey him (Satan) in *Quran*, chapter of *Sad* verse. 84-85, "He said: The truth then is and the truth do I speak: That I will most certainly fill hell with you and with those among them who follow you, all." Therefore, the punishment was not implemented right after Satan's disobedience; the punishment was delayed to the resurrection day, after all the regretful grieving Satan was driven out from forbearance of the Almighty Omnipotent.

V. INFRINGEMENT AND HEROISM IN THE *HOLY QURAN* AND IN THE *PARADISE LOST*

Adam and Eve were living merrily festive in that happy state where their creation was marked. But the seductive and purposive guile of Satan causes them facing the wrath of the God. This is testified very obviously in God's words in Chapter of *Al-Bagara* Verse. 35-37, "And We said: O Adam! Dwell you and your wife in the garden and eat from it a plenteous (food) wherever you wish and do not approach this tree, for then you will be of the unjust. But the Shaitan made them both fall from it, and caused them to depart from that (state) in which they were; and We said: get forth some of you being the enemies of others and there is for you in the earth an abode and a provision for a time. Then Adam received (some) words from his Lord, so he turned to him mercifully; surely He is oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful" Satan is a very self-claimed proud, self-gratified and fire-formed creature whose disobedience for making obeisance to Adam caused him to be punished severely; resulted in Satan's exile from Paradise and was deprived from God's forbearance. The desirous and purposive goal of Satan is to get the human beings tempted or to lead them astray. Furthermore, the mischievously ill-formed purpose of Satan is also well-instructed in the *Paradise Lost*, "Th' infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile, / Stirred up with Envy and Revenge, deceived / The Mother of Mankind, what time this his Pride / Had cast him out from Heav'n, with all his Host / Of Rebel Angels,..." (Milton, 1667). Satan's vicious and infernal guile is to tempt perpetually the descendants of Adam from birth until doomsday on the earth. He is considered to be a cunning proud and seductive creature. God Addresses Muslims that 'Shaitan' desires to cause enmity and hatred to spring in your midst by means of intoxication and games of chance. He also attempts to keep distance between you and God's remembrance. The *Paradise Lost* signifies Satan's seduction of Adam and Eve, but *Quran* reveals both the temptation of Eve by Satan and his disobedience of making obeisance to Adam. Satan's non-obeisance to Adam is proved in *Al-baqara* chapter, verse. 34, "And when We said to the angels; make obeisance to Adam they did obeisance but Iblis. He refused and he was proud and he was one of the unbelievers."

Milton developed Satan into a character of heroism (Jamal Subhi Ismail, 2015). He devoted a number of earlier books to characterizing the Satan in *Paradise Lost*. Satan's heroism is almost controversial matter, but many of critics believed Satan as the hero of the story. Regarding Satan's heroism, in a thesis Jennifer Noud (2013) discusses that William Blake and Percy Bysshe Shelley also believed that Satan was the proper hero of the Milton's *Paradise Lost*; they both critiqued Milton's Satan by finding several imperfections in *Paradise Lost*. She also discusses that Shelly goes a step beyond Blake when designing his Satan by producing a new tragic hero that does not have a hamartia. In addition, Percy Bysshe Shelley also recognized that Satan is by far better presented and Devil or Satan is rather superior to his God. Both Blake and Shelley confessed Milton's over exaggeration in favor of Satan. Satan is portrayed highly huge bulk and barbaric creature in *Paradise Lost*. Milton depicted Satan as 'Infernal serpent', 'Prince of evil', 'evil power', 'prince of Darkness', 'infernal Host', and so the like in *Paradise Lost*. He also attempted to describe Satan as the hellish Emperor who rules over his supporters and over the Hell. The rebellious angels raise the palace of Pandemonium (Oxford University, 2005); However, Satan has been extended to build the palace where they sat in council along with other rebellious legions accompanying him. But they are not supposed to make a palace in Hell according to *Quran*, there isn't any clue to prove rebellious intention. Moreover, the Satan is emerged as the adverse opponent and hostile rival of the God in spite of the religious scripts. These Miltonic-written verses in favor of Satan are opposing with what has been explained in *Quran*. Satan has been portrayed as a feeble bulk-holder opponent of Human beings other than God's. This is more vivid in Allah's words in *Quran* Chapter of *Al-Baqara* Verse. 168: "O men! Eat the lawful and good things out of what is in the earth, and do not follow the footsteps of the Shaitan; surely he is your open enemy." Satan is considered to be a very malicious invisible creature who attempts to corrupt human beings in Islam. It is believed that Satan is living along with human beings for their seduction and temptation. Prophet Mohammad says that Satan is like blood circulating or flowing in a human's body. It seems that Satan had attempted to seduce Adam and Eve invisibly rather than being a serpent in Islam as doing so now, Satan's physics and presence in a different figure while seducing Eve, is not clearly mentioned in Islam, but Milton vividly clarifies, in *Paradise Lost*, "Th' infernal Serpent; he it was, whose Guile / stird up with Envy and Revenge, deceiv'd / The Mother of Mankind," (1667, p.1). Satan's heroism is also doubtful for readers, though some of the readers state that Satan is the hero or protagonist of the story for he can struggle to gain victory over his own troubles and weakness, besides his

accomplishment of his goal for seduction human beings. On the other hand some readers assume Adam and Eve as the moral heroes of the *Paradise lost*. At the beginning, Milton proves Satan as the hero of the story, but Satan is far from considering the object of admiration throughout the story. Satan is neither qualified being called God's opponent, nor does it make sense for readers to cherish him as the real hero of the story.

VI. DEGRADING GOD; SATAN'S POWERFUL POSITION IN THE *PARADISE LOST*

Milton associates Satan as a force assimilating God's that is unaffordable and non-victorious for both Adam and Eve. They are placed amid three forces which are God's, Jesus's and Satan's forces that are unconquerable forces dealing with Adam and Eve. Christians believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God; "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." Matthew 11:27. This is in contrary with Islam. Muslims believe that Jesus is the messenger of God who was born from Maryam⁵ just before Prophet Mohammad who had been appointed to guide people toward monotheism. *Quran* declares, "When the angels said: O Maryam, surely Allah gives you good news with a Word from Him (of one) whose name is the Messiah Isa⁶ son of Maryam, worthy of regard in this world and the hereafter and of those who are made near (to Allah)." In this case, Jesus was neither considered to live in Paradise nor Satan was considered being a force in Islam. And then Adam and Eve have been concerning with God's force rather than Satan's.

Satan has been described highly great and much powerful who could have the capability of seduction, the talent of battling with God the Almighty, skill of speech delivery, ability of leadership, portrayed as huge as Titan (who could endanger Jove with huge or firm feet), big or spread wings, firm and single-minded, immortal being and so the like in *Paradise Lost* (1667). From the other point of view, God says in *Holy Qur'an* in Chapter of *Hijr* verse. 33, "He said: I am not such that I should make obeisance to a mortal whom Thou hast created of the essence of black mud fashioned in shape." In this section of *holy Qur'an*, Satan indicates that Adam is mortal, and also claims that he is immortal rather than Adam; in addition, Satan's immortality is depicted through the *Paradise Lost* too. Moreover, Milton enables Satan to stand like a tower, proudly eminent in shape and gesture whose prey is mankind. Milton must have spent to put his heart and soul into the projection of Satan, in spite of his consciously different purposes beyond the projection of Satan's characterization. This over-focus or concentration over Satan's Character could have something associated with the dominant projection of Satan. The battle between God and Satan can symbolize the turn or transitions of medieval age to Renaissance age. Satan may depict the medieval period for its association with non-logical or non-reasoning nature.

VII. CONCLUSION

The first edition of Milton's masterpiece, *Paradise Lost*, was published in 1667. Literally, *Paradise Lost* was one of the great well-structured and extraordinary work of art for human's knowledge in literature which earned much significance and importance. It has been resulted lots of scholars to conduct investigation or research in favor of literature; likewise, it opens various ties for much more complicated knowledge and it enriches literature of the time. The age when Milton was living called to be the age of reason, but people were still living in a constricted society tied up with religious roots. At last, Milton's use of Satan's intonation is very powerful, deceitful, self-independent and of pride that issues his bulkiness and pride in *Paradise Lost*. In contrary, Satan's intonation is feeble and of lamentation in *Quran*. Moreover, Milton concludes Satan as a very highly-created, proud, independent, forceful, hero, leader and God's opponent, but *Quran* proceeds to consider Satan as a very weak, feeble, lamenting, and human beings' opponent. Furthermore, God the Almighty granted freewill for humankind, they are freely permitted to pursue or go along His blessing way or go along Satan's evil way, besides God the omniscient mentioned the comeuppance to be hurled in the combustive fiery Hell and his followers to be acknowledged with brilliant or splendid Paradise. Islam concludes Satan as the open enemy for human beings so whoever follows the footsteps of him would be punished severely in flaming Hell, unless those who enter into submission would be safe and prosperous into the Paradise. Milton did not portray a threatening or fearful portrait of Satan in the *Paradise Lost*. On the other hand, *Holy Quran* mentions Satan as so poorly qualified with a very abominable and outcast character who attempts to seduce men or to put men into miserably flaring fire. Satan is often considered to be a disgusting figure who implements extreme hatred among men in Islam. On the other hand, Milton granted Satan a character as so fearless and unafraid for being damned ever.

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⁵ The Arabic word meaning Marry, the Mother of Jesus Christ

⁶ Messiah Isa refers to Jesus Christ

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Jawad Afghan Anwari was born in Farah Province of Afghanistan. He is teaching assistant at English Language and Literature Department of Education Faculty at the University of Farah. At the moment, he is studying his master degree in British and American Literature at Southwest University, Chongqing, China. He received many scientific and excellence certificates, including certificates in Journalism and Sports. He used to be a Journalist at the National Radio and Television and spokesperson for Farah Governor. His literary research scope is Orientalism, Post-colonialism, literature and religion.