

JOHN MILTON AS A CENTRAL FIGURE OF THE 17TH CENTURY**Bozorova Mavjuda Ulugbek kizi***Student of Master's degree***Khalilova Shakhlo Jalilovna***Scientifik adviser Economy and Pedagogy University*

Abstract. *This article examines the role of John Milton as a central figure of the 17th century, focusing on his literary, political, and intellectual contributions. The study explores Milton's position within the historical context of the English Revolution, his influence on the development of English poetic tradition, and his engagement with key ideological debates of his time. Special attention is given to Paradise Lost as a synthesis of Renaissance humanism and emerging modern consciousness. The article also highlights Milton's stylistic innovations, his use of classical and biblical sources, and his impact on later literary traditions. Through a multidisciplinary approach combining literary analysis, historical contextualization, and stylistic examination, the research demonstrates that Milton occupies a pivotal place in shaping the intellectual and artistic discourse of the 17th century.*

Keywords: *John Milton, 17th century literature, Paradise Lost, Puritanism, English Revolution, epic poetry, humanism, political prose, literary influence, stylistics*

Introduction. The 17th century in England was marked by profound political, religious, and cultural transformations. The period witnessed the English Civil War, the rise of Puritan ideology, and the reconfiguration of monarchy and governance. Within this dynamic context, John Milton emerged as one of the most influential intellectuals and writers of his time. Milton's significance extends beyond his poetic achievements; he was also an active political thinker, polemicist, and defender of republican ideals. His works reflect the tensions and contradictions of the century, combining Renaissance humanist traditions with the emerging modern worldview. Therefore, analysing Milton as a central figure of the 17th century requires a comprehensive examination of his literary production, ideological commitments, and historical engagement.

The 17th century represents a transitional phase between the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. It was characterized by religious conflicts, political upheaval, and the questioning of traditional authority. The English Civil War and the execution of King Charles I fundamentally altered the political landscape. Milton's life and work were deeply intertwined with these developments. As a supporter of the Commonwealth under Oliver Cromwell, he actively participated in political debates, producing prose works that defended

republicanism and freedom of expression. His famous tract *Areopagitica* (1644) remains one of the most significant early arguments for press freedom. Intellectually, Milton was influenced by classical antiquity, biblical traditions, and Renaissance humanism. His education at Cambridge equipped him with a deep knowledge of Latin, Greek, and theology, which later informed the complexity and richness of his writings. Milton's greatest achievement lies in his poetic works, particularly the epic *Paradise Lost* (1667). This work redefined the epic genre by combining classical structure with Christian theology. Unlike earlier epics, Milton's poem does not celebrate a national hero but explores universal themes such as the fall of humanity, free will, and divine justice.

Paradise Lost is notable for its grand scale, elevated style, and philosophical depth. The poem addresses fundamental questions about human existence, morality, and the relationship between God and humanity. Milton's use of blank verse allowed for greater flexibility and expressive power, distinguishing his work from earlier rhymed epics. One of the most controversial aspects of Milton's epic is the portrayal of Satan. Some critics have interpreted Satan as a tragic hero, embodying rebellion and individualism. This complexity reflects the ideological tensions of the 17th century, particularly the conflict between authority and freedom. Milton draws heavily on classical authors such as Homer and Virgil, while also integrating biblical narratives. This synthesis creates a unique literary form that bridges ancient and modern traditions, reinforcing Milton's central role in the evolution of English literature. In addition to his poetry, Milton was a prolific prose writer. His political writings reveal his commitment to liberty, republicanism, and moral responsibility.

In *Areopagitica*, Milton argues against censorship and advocates for intellectual freedom. He believes that truth emerges through open debate and that individuals must have the right to access diverse ideas. Milton's prose works also address issues such as monarchy, governance, and religious authority. His support for the execution of Charles I demonstrates his radical political stance and willingness to challenge established power structures. Milton's writings are deeply rooted in Puritan theology. However, his interpretation of religious doctrine emphasizes individual conscience and moral autonomy, aligning with broader humanist principles. Milton's contribution to English literature is not limited to thematic innovation; he also transformed poetic language and style. Milton perfected the use of blank verse, employing it to create a rhythmic and flexible poetic form. This innovation influenced later poets, including Wordsworth and Tennyson.

Milton's language is characterized by its complexity, Latinized syntax, and extensive vocabulary. His stylistic choices reflect his scholarly background and contribute to the elevated tone of his works. Milton's poetry is rich in symbolic meaning and vivid imagery. His descriptions of Heaven, Hell, and Eden are not only visually striking but also

philosophically significant, reinforcing the thematic depth of his work. Milton's influence extends far beyond the 17th century. His works have shaped the development of English literature and continue to inspire writers, scholars, and critics. Milton's impact can be seen in the works of Romantic poets such as William Wordsworth and Percy Bysshe Shelley. His emphasis on individual freedom and imaginative expression resonated strongly with later literary movements. Milton's ideas about liberty and governance have also influenced political philosophy. His advocacy for freedom of speech remains relevant in contemporary debates about censorship and media regulation. Today, Milton is regarded as one of the greatest writers in the English language. His works continue to be studied for their artistic excellence and intellectual significance, confirming his status as a central figure of the 17th century.

Conclusion. John Milton occupies a unique and central position in the cultural and intellectual history of the 17th century. His works reflect the complexities of his era, addressing fundamental questions about freedom, authority, and human nature. Through his poetry and prose, Milton not only contributed to the development of English literature but also engaged with the major ideological debates of his time. His ability to synthesize classical traditions, religious thought, and contemporary political concerns demonstrates his exceptional intellectual breadth. As a result, Milton stands as a bridge between the Renaissance and the modern world, embodying the transformative spirit of the 17th century.

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