



1st – Grade

School Lecturer

Rajasthan Public Service Commission (RPSC)

Volume - 2

Paper 2 - English

Graduation Level



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An Acquaintance with English, American and Indian Authors Poetry

Sonnet 18: Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?

By William Shakespeare

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of
May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date;
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course
untrimm'd;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his
shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Paradise Lost: Book1 (1674 version)

By John Milton

1. OF Mans First Disobedience, and the Fruit
2. Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal tast
3. Brought Death into the World, and all our
woe,
4. With loss of *Eden*, till one greater Man
5. Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat,
6. Sing Heav'nly Muse, that on the secret top
7. Of *Oreb*, or of *Sinai*, didst inspire
8. That Shepherd, who first taught the
chosen Seed,
9. In the Beginning how the Heav'ns and
Earth
10. Rose out of *Chaos*: or if *Sion Hill*
11. Delight thee more, and *Siloa's* brook that
flow'd
12. Fast by the Oracle of God; I thence
13. Invoke thy aid to my adventrous Song,
14. That with no middle flight intends to soar
15. Above th' *Aonian* Mount, while it pursues

16. Things unattempted yet in Prose or
Rhime.
17. And chiefly Thou, O Spirit, that dost
prefer
18. Before all Temples th' upright heart and
pure,
19. Instruct me, for Thou know'st; Thou from
the first
20. Wast present, and with mighty wings
outspread
21. Dove-like satst brooding on the vast Abyss
22. And mad'st it pregnant: What in me is
dark
23. Illumin, what is low raise and support;
24. That to the highth of this great Argument
25. I may assert Eternal Providence,
26. And justifie the wayes of God to men.
27. Say first, for Heav'n hides nothing from
thy view
28. Nor the deep Tract of Hell, say first what
cause
29. Mov'd our Grand Parents in that happy
State,
30. Favour'd of Heav'n so highly, to fall off
31. From thir Creator, and transgress his Will
32. For one restraint, Lords of the World
besides?
33. Who first seduc'd them to that foul revolt?
34. Th' infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile
35. Stird up with Envy and Revenge, deceiv'd
36. The Mother of Mankind, what time his
Pride
37. Had cast him out from Heav'n, with all his
Host
38. Of Rebel Angels, by whose aid aspiring
39. To set himself in Glory above his Peers,
40. He trusted to have equal'd the most High,
41. If he oppos'd; and with ambitious aim
42. Against the Throne and Monarchy of God
43. Rais'd impious War in Heav'n and Battel
proud
44. With vain attempt. Him the Almighty
Power

-
45. Hurl'd headlong flaming from th' Ethereal Skie
46. With hideous ruine and combustion down
47. To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
48. In Adamantine Chains and penal Fire,
49. Who durst defie th' Omnipotent to Arms.
50. Nine times the Space that measures Day and Night
51. To mortal men, he with his horrid crew
52. Lay vanquisht, rowling in the fiery Gulfe
53. Confounded though immortal: But his doom
54. Reserv'd him to more wrath; for now the thought
55. Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
56. Torments him; round he throws his baleful eyes
57. That witness'd huge affliction and dismay
58. Mixt with obdurate pride and stedfast hate:
59. At once as far as Angels kenn he views
60. The dismal Situation waste and wilde,
61. A Dungeon horrible, on all sides round
62. As one great Furnace flam'd, yet from those flames
63. No light, but rather darkness visible
64. Serv'd onely to discover sights of woe,
65. Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
66. And rest can never dwell, hope never comes
67. That comes to all; but torture without end
68. Still urges, and a fiery Deluge, fed
69. With ever-burning Sulphur unconsum'd:
70. Such place Eternal Justice had prepar'd
71. For those rebellious, here thir prison ordained
72. In utter darkness, and thir portion set
73. As far remov'd from God and light of Heav'n
74. As from the Center thrice to th' utmost Pole.
75. O how unlike the place from whence they fell!
76. There the companions of his fall, o'rewhelm'd
77. With Floods and Whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,
78. He soon discerns, and weltring by his side
79. One next himself in power, and next in crime,
80. Long after known in *Palestine*, and nam'd
81. *Beelzebub*. To whom th' Arch-Enemy,
82. And thence in Heav'n call'd Satan, with bold words
83. Breaking the horrid silence thus began.
84. If thou beest he; But O how fall'n! how chang'd
85. From him, who in the happy Realms of Light
86. Cloth'd with transcendent brightness didst out-shine
87. Myriads though bright: If he whom mutual league,
88. United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
89. And hazard in the Glorious Enterprize,
90. Joynd with me once, now misery hath joynd
91. In equal ruin: into what Pit thou seest
92. From what highth fall'n, so much the stronger prov'd
93. He with his Thunder: and till then who knew
94. The force of those dire Arms? yet not for those,
95. Nor what the Potent Victor in his rage
96. Can else inflict, do I repent or change,
97. Though chang'd in outward lustre; that fixt mind
98. And high disdain, from sence of injur'd merit,
99. That with the mightiest rais'd me to contend,
100. And to the fierce contention brought along
101. Innumerable force of Spirits arm'd
102. That durst dislike his reign, and me preferring,
103. His utmost power with adverse power oppos'd
104. In dubious Battel on the Plains of Heav'n,
105. And shook his throne. What though the field be lost?
106. All is not lost; the unconquerable Will,
107. And study of revenge, immortal hate,
108. And courage never to submit or yield:
109. And what is else not to be overcome?
110. That Glory never shall his wrath or might
-

111. Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace
112. With suppliant knee, and deifie his power,
113. Who from the terrour of this Arm so late
114. Doubted his Empire, that were low
indeed,
115. That were an ignominy and shame
beneath
116. This downfall; since by Fate the strength
of Gods
117. And this Empyrean substance cannot fail,
118. Since through experience of this great
event
119. In Arms not worse, in foresight much
advanc't,
120. We may with more successful hope
resolve
121. To wage by force or guile eternal Warr
122. Irreconcilable, to our grand Foe,
123. Who now triumphs, and in th' excess of
joy
124. Sole reigning holds the Tyranny of
Heav'n.

Holy Sonnets: Batter my heart, three- person'd God

By John Donne

Batter my heart, three-person'd God, for you
As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to
mend;
That I may rise and stand, o'erthrow me, and
bend
Your force to break, blow, burn, and make me
new.
I, like an usurp'd town to another due,
Labor to admit you, but oh, to no end;
Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,
But is captiv'd, and proves weak or untrue.
Yet dearly I love you, and would be lov'd fain,
But am betroth'd unto your enemy;
Divorce me, untie or break that knot again,
Take me to you, imprison me, for I,
Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me.

To His Coy Mistress

By Andrew Marvell

Had we but world enough and time,
This coyness, lady, were no crime.
We would sit down, and think which way
To walk, and pass our long love's day.

Thou by the Indian Ganges' side
Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide
Of Humber would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the flood,
And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews.
My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires and more slow;
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast,
But thirty thousand to the rest;
An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart.
For, lady, you deserve this state,
Nor would I love at lower rate.
But at my back I always hear
Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.
Thy beauty shall no more be found;
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
My echoing song; then worms shall try
That long-preserved virginity,
And your quaint honour turn to dust,
And into ashes all my lust;
The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace.
Now therefore, while the youthful hue
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,
And while thy willing soul transpires
At every pore with instant fires,
Now let us sport us while we may,
And now, like amorous birds of prey,
Rather at once our time devour
Than languish in his slow-chapped power.
Let us roll all our strength and all
Our sweetness up into one ball,
And tear our pleasures with rough strife
Through the iron gates of life:
Thus, though we cannot make our sun
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

Alexander's Feast; or, the Power of Music

John Dryden 1631 –1700

A song in honour of St. Cecilia's day, 1697.

'Twas at the royal feast for Persia won
By Philip's warlike son—

John Milton: Paradise Lost- Book 1 (Lines 1-124 “Of Mans First Disobedience ... Tyranny of Heav’n”)

Original text (Lines 1–124)

Of Mans first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the World, and all our
woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, Heavenly Muse, that, on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That shepherd who first taught the chosen
seed
In the beginning how the heavens and earth
Rose out of Chaos: or, if Sion hill
Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that
flowed
Fast by the oracle of God, I thence
Invoke thy aid to my advent'rous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above th' Aonian mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.
And chiefly, Thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for thou know'st; thou from the
first
Wast present, and, with mighty wings
outspread,
Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast Abyss,
And mad'st it pregnant: what in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support;
That, to the height of this great Argument,
I may assert Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.
Say first, for Heaven hides nothing from thy
view,
Nor the deep tract of Hell, say first what cause
Moved our grand parents, in that happy state,
Favour'd of Heaven so highly, to fall off
From their Creator, and transgress his will
For one restraint, lords of the world besides.
Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?
Th' infernal serpent; he it was whose guile,
Stirr'd up with envy and revenge, deceiv'd
The mother of mankind; what time his pride
And had cast out from Heav'n, with all his
host

Of rebel angels, by whose aid aspiring
To set himself in glory above his peers,
He trusted to have equald the Most High,
If he opposed; and, with ambitious aim,
Against the throne and monarchy of God
Raised impious war in Heav'n and battle
proud,
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
Hurl'd headlong flaming from th' ethereal sky
With hideous ruin and combustion down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In adamant chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy th' Omnipotent to arms.
Nine times the space that measures day and
night
To mortal men, he with his horrid crew
Lay vanquish'd, rolling in the fiery gulf
Confounded though immortal: but his doom
Reserved him to more wrath; for now the
thought
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
Torments him; round he throws his baleful
eyes,
That witnessed huge, and on the fiery lake
Of burning sulphur, tost and whirl'd
perplex'd,
He sleeps not, but his mind is rent with care
Pondering eternal vengeance, deep within
And secret murmurs; for from proud desire,
And obsolete envy, sprung this dire revolt.
At last, as favoured of Heaven and his pow'r
Were spent, he call'd a council of his peers;
And, in a circular pavilion high
Built on the burning marl, and in the midst
Sat, like a demi-god, bold, though in pain.
The formal synod thus began to treat;
What motion first, what counsel fit to hold
With such dire multitudes: what policy,
How they might highest inur'd the world and
make
Their mischiefs common; or, with old design,
To win our knowledge lost, and underhand
Trace his old way back, or by a ladder climb
To heaven again. There were assembled all
Those angelic powers that had rebelled;

Short summary

Book 1 opens with the poet announcing his subject: "man's first disobedience" and its consequences — death, sorrow, and the loss of Eden. He asks for a heavenly Muse or Spirit to inspire his lofty poem and help him "justify the ways of God to men." Then Milton moves to Satan and the fallen angels, describing their defeat and fall into Hell, their suffering and anger, and their gathering for counsel to decide how to continue opposing God and harm mankind.

Word meanings

- disobedience — refusal to obey; in context, Adam's first act of disobeying God.
- fruit — result or consequence; also literal fruit of the forbidden tree.
- mortal — causing or subject to death; here "mortal taste" means the taste that brings death.
- Muse — a divine inspirer of poets; in epic tradition, the poet invokes a Muse for help.
- Oreb / Sinai / Sion — mountains tied to Hebrew religion: Oreb (another name for Mount Horeb), Sinai (where Moses received the law), Zion (Sion), each invoking biblical authority.
- Aonian mount — Mount Helicon in Greek myth, home of the Muses (classical poetic reference).
- abyss — a deep, bottomless space (here primordial Chaos).
- brooding — sitting and thinking deeply; Milton uses the image of a bird brooding over the waters of Chaos.
- justify — to show something is right; Milton wants to explain God's ways to man.
- infernal — relating to Hell.
- guile — deceit, trickery.
- perdition — ruin, eternal punishment.
- adamant — unbreakable, like diamond; used to describe chains.
- baleful — harmful, deadly, full of evil.
- sulphur — brimstone, a poetic element of Hell's fires.
- synod — assembly; here a council of fallen angels.
- demi-god — half god; used to show Satan's proud self-image.

Line-by-line explanation and commentary

Lines 1–6 (Opening statement and purpose)

Of Mans first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the World, and all our woe,

With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, Heavenly Muse, that, on the secret top

Explanation:

- Milton states the subject: the first human disobedience and its consequences (death and sorrow). The "forbidden tree" is the Tree of Knowledge; eating its fruit brought death and expelled humans from Eden.
- "Till one greater Man restore us" looks forward to the coming Redeemer (Christian Messiah) who will recover humanity's lost happiness — a Christian frame for an epic about human fall and redemption.
- "Sing, Heavenly Muse" shows Milton following the classical epic tradition (Homer, Virgil) by invoking a divine inspirer, but his "Muse" is Christian (a Heavenly Muse, or the Holy Spirit).

how Milton blends classical epic convention (invocation of the Muse) with Christian theology (the Redeemer)

John Milton masterfully fuses classical epic tradition with Christian theology in *Paradise Lost*, particularly through his invocation of the Muse in Book I. Here's how he blends the two:

Classical Epic Convention: Invocation of the Muse

- Milton begins *Paradise Lost* with a traditional epic invocation, a hallmark of classical epics like Homer's *Iliad* and Virgil's *Aeneid*.
- However, instead of invoking a pagan Muse, he calls upon the **Heavenly Muse**—the **Holy Spirit**—who "instructed the shepherd" (Moses) on Mount Sinai.
- This shift signals Milton's intent to elevate his poem beyond classical mythology and root it in **divine revelation**.

Christian Theology: The Redeemer

- Milton's subject is not heroic warfare or mythic journeys, but **man's first disobedience** and the promise of **redemption through Christ**.
- He seeks divine aid to "justify the ways of God to men," aligning his poetic purpose with **theological inquiry** rather than mere entertainment.
- The Redeemer—Christ—is central to the poem's structure and message, foreshadowed in the invocation as the one who will restore humanity after the Fall.

Fusion of Traditions

- By invoking the Holy Spirit as his Muse, Milton **redefines epic inspiration**: not from mythic deities, but from the Christian God.
- He retains the grandeur, scope, and elevated style of classical epics, but **infuses them with Christian doctrine**, making *Paradise Lost* a theological epic.
- This blend allows Milton to position his work as both a literary masterpiece and a spiritual meditation.

Lines 7–15 (Biblical places and scope of the poem)

Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That shepherd who first taught the chosen seed
In the beginning how the heavens and earth
Rose out of Chaos: or, if Zion hill

Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flowed
Fast by the oracle of God, I thence
Invoke thy aid to my advent'rous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar

Explanation:

- Milton names biblical places (Oreb/Horeb, Sinai, Sion/Zion, Siloa) to connect his work to biblical revelation and authority.
- He references Moses ("that shepherd who first taught the chosen seed") as the Hebrew prophet guided by God to teach creation and law.
- "No middle flight intends to soar / Above th' Aonian mount" — Milton claims his poem will not be modest; it intends to soar higher than classical poetry (Aonian mount = Helicon, the Muses' home).

Note Milton's deliberate fusion of classical epic ambition with biblical authority — this supports his claim to write a Christian epic that will match or surpass pagan epics-

Milton's Fusion of Classical Epic and Biblical Authority

1. Epic Ambition: Classical Foundations

- Milton adopts **classical epic conventions**: grand scale, invocation of the Muse, elevated diction, and cosmic conflict.
- He aligns himself with **Homer and Virgil**, aiming to write an epic of equal or greater stature.
- His subject—**man's fall and redemption**—is framed with the same gravity as the Trojan War or Aeneas's journey.

2. Biblical Authority: Christian Recasting

- Milton replaces the pagan Muse with the **Holy Spirit**, invoking divine inspiration from the Christian God.
- His narrative draws from **Genesis, Revelation, and Christian theology**, not Greco-Roman myth.
- The hero is not a warrior but **the Son of God**, whose sacrifice redeems mankind.

3. Deliberate Fusion

- Milton blends **epic form** with **biblical content**, creating a new genre: the **Christian epic**.
- He uses epic machinery (catalogues, battles, invocations) to dramatize **spiritual truths**.
- This fusion allows him to **surpass pagan epics** in moral purpose and theological depth.

4. Claim to Supremacy

- Milton asserts his poem will "justify the ways of God to men"—a **higher aim** than mere heroic glory.
- By elevating Christian doctrine through epic artistry, he **redefines poetic greatness**.
- His ambition is not imitation but **transcendence**: to write an epic that is **morally, spiritually, and artistically superior**.

Lines 16–25 (Invocation of the Spirit)

Above th' Aonian mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.
And chiefly, Thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for thou know'st; thou from the first

Wast present, and, with mighty wings outspread,
Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast Abyss,
And mad'st it pregnant: what in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support;

Explanation:

- Milton shifts from the classical Muse to the Christian Spirit ("O Spirit") and emphasizes moral purity as the true temple.
- The Spirit is described as present at creation, "brooding on the vast Abyss" like a dove (image from Genesis and Christian symbolism of the Holy Spirit).
- Milton asks the Spirit to enlighten his darkness and support his poetic power.

Explanation of the symbolism of the "dove" (Holy Spirit, creation) and Milton's theological claim: true poetic inspiration is moral and spiritual, not merely artistic

The Dove as Symbol: Holy Spirit and Creation

1. Biblical Symbolism of the Dove

- In Christian theology, the **dove** is a sacred symbol of the **Holy Spirit**, most notably appearing at Christ's baptism:
- "And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him..." (Luke 3:22).
- The dove also appears in **Genesis 1:2**, where the Spirit of God "moved upon the face of the waters"—a moment Milton reimagines in *Paradise Lost*.

2. Milton's Invocation and the Dove

- In *Paradise Lost* Book I, Milton invokes the **Heavenly Muse**, identifying it with the **Holy Spirit**:
- "And chiefly, Thou O Spirit, that dost prefer / Before all temples th' upright heart and pure..."
- He refers to the Spirit as the one who "dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast Abyss / And mad'st it pregnant" (Book I, 20–22).
- This image fuses **Genesis** with **maternal imagery**—the Spirit as a nurturing dove, **brooding** over chaos to bring forth **cosmic order and life**.

3. Creation and Poetic Parallels

- Just as the Spirit brings **form out of formlessness**, Milton sees his own poetic task as **mirroring divine creation**.
- The poet, like the Spirit, must bring **order, meaning, and moral clarity** out of the chaos of human history and sin.

Milton's Theological Claim: Poetic Inspiration as Moral and Spiritual

1. Beyond Pagan Artistry

- Classical poets invoked the Muses for **aesthetic inspiration**—to craft beautiful, moving verse.
- Milton critiques this as **aesthetic idolatry** if it lacks **moral purpose**.
- For Milton, true poetry is not just ornamentation—it is a **vehicle of divine truth**.

2. The Poet as Prophet

- Milton aligns the poet with the **prophet**, inspired by the **Holy Spirit**, not by mythic deities.
- His goal is to "justify the ways of God to men"—a **moral and theological mission**, not merely an artistic one.

3. Purity of Heart as Prerequisite

- Milton insists that poetic inspiration requires **spiritual purity**:
- "What in me is dark / Illumine, what is low raise and support..." (Book I, 22–23)
- The poet must be **morally upright**, receptive to divine illumination, not just skilled in rhetoric.

Summary: The Dove and the Divine Poet

Symbol/Concept	Classical Epic Tradition	Milton's Christian Recasting
Muse	Pagan goddesses of inspiration	Holy Spirit (Heavenly Muse)
Dove	Rare or absent	Symbol of Holy Spirit; divine presence at Creation
Inspiration	Artistic, aesthetic	Moral, spiritual, prophetic
Poet's Role	Bard, entertainer	Prophet, moral teacher, divine instrument
Creation Parallel	Artistic creation (poem)	Mirroring divine creation (order from chaos)

Lines 26–33 (Poet's aim — to justify God)

That, to the height of this great Argument,
I may assert Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.
Say first, for Heaven hides nothing from thy view,
Explanation:

Nor the deep tract of Hell, say first what cause
Moved our grand parents, in that happy state,
Favour'd of Heaven so highly, to fall off
From their Creator, and transgress his will

- Milton's declared aim is bold: he aims to "assert Eternal Providence" and "justify the ways of God to men." That is, he will explain why God's actions are just even when they lead to suffering.
- He asks the Spirit to reveal why Adam and Eve, in a privileged state, disobeyed God.

Milton's "Justify the Ways of God to Men": Meaning and Significance

1. What Does "Justify" Mean Here?

- "Justify" in Milton's usage means to **explain, defend, and vindicate** God's actions and divine plan to humanity.
- It does **not** imply that God needs human approval, but that the poet's role is to help humans **understand divine justice**, especially in the context of **the Fall of Man**.
- Milton seeks to show that even suffering and sin are part of a **larger, benevolent design**.

2. Theological Implications

- Milton's epic is rooted in **Christian theology**, particularly the doctrines of **free will, original sin, and redemption**.
- He presents the Fall not as a flaw in divine governance, but as a **necessary step** toward the greater good: the coming of the **Redeemer**.
- The phrase reflects **Augustinian and Protestant beliefs**: evil exists not because God wills it, but because humans misuse their freedom.
- Thus, Milton's justification is a **theodicy**—a literary defense of God's goodness in the face of evil.

3. Poetic Implications

- This line sets the **epic's moral purpose**: unlike pagan epics that glorify war or heroism, *Paradise Lost* aims to **illuminate spiritual truth**.
- Milton elevates the poet's role to that of a **prophet or theologian**, inspired by the **Holy Spirit**, not by mythic Muses.
- His epic ambition is not just artistic excellence, but **moral clarity and divine insight**.

4. Why Is This Significant for an Epic?

- It redefines the **epic genre**: from tales of physical conquest to a **spiritual journey**—from Eden to redemption.
- Milton claims a **higher authority** than Homer or Virgil: his source is **Scripture**, his inspiration is **divine**, and his theme is **universal salvation**.
- The phrase becomes a **mission statement**: the epic will explore cosmic justice, human frailty, and divine mercy.

Summary Table: The Phrase in Context

Aspect	Explanation
"Justify"	To explain and vindicate divine justice to human understanding
Theological Role	Acts as a theodicy; defends God's goodness despite the existence of evil
Poetic Role	Sets the poet as a moral guide, not just an artist
Epic Significance	Transforms the epic into a spiritual and theological exploration
Milton's Claim	His Christian epic surpasses pagan epics in purpose and divine authority

Lines 34–45 (The serpent and Satan’s revolt)

For one restraint, lords of the world besides.
Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?
Th’ infernal serpent; he it was whose guile,
Stirr’d up with envy and revenge, deceiv’d
The mother of mankind; what time his pride

And had cast out from Heav’n, with all his host
Of rebel angels, by whose aid aspiring
To set himself in glory above his peers,
He trusted to have equald the Most High,

Explanation:

- The cause is the infernal serpent — Satan — who, driven by envy and revenge, deceives Eve ("the mother of mankind").
- Milton introduces Satan's background: pride, a revolt in Heaven, and his attempt to set himself equal to God.

Milton's characterization of Satan and how pride and envy motivate rebellion

Milton’s Satan: Pride, Envy, and Rebellion

1. Epic Anti-Hero, Not a Comic Villain

- Milton’s Satan is **complex, rhetorically powerful, and tragically grand**—a figure of immense ambition and defiance.
- He is portrayed with **epic stature**, echoing classical heroes like Achilles or Odysseus, but his heroism is **morally inverted**.

2. Pride: The Root of Rebellion

- Satan’s pride blinds him to divine hierarchy:
- “*Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.*” (Book I, line 263)
- He refuses to accept the Son’s elevation, believing himself **equal to God**.
- Pride leads him to **reject obedience**, viewing submission as weakness.

3. Envy: The Spark of Hatred

- Satan envies the Son’s exaltation and the creation of **Man**, who is given dominion over Paradise.
- His envy turns to **malice**, driving his desire to corrupt humanity:
- “*Revenge, at first though sweet, / Bitter ere long back on itself recoils.*” (Book IX)
- Envy fuels his **strategic deception** of Eve, not just to ruin Paradise, but to **wound God’s plan**.

4. Psychological Depth

- Milton gives Satan **interior monologues** that reveal his inner torment:
 - ✓ He is torn between **remorse and defiance, guilt and ambition**.
 - ✓ His fall is not just physical (from Heaven to Hell), but **spiritual and moral**.

5. Classical Echoes, Christian Morality

Element	Classical Epic Echoes	Milton’s Christian Recasting
Heroic stature	Like Achilles or Aeneas	But morally fallen and spiritually corrupt
Pride	Hubris in Greek tragedy	Sin against divine order
Envy	Rivalry among gods	Rebellion against divine love and justice
Rebellion	Epic battles	Cosmic war with theological consequences
Fall	Tragic downfall	Eternal damnation and moral degeneration

6. Thematic Significance

- Satan embodies the **tragic consequences of unchecked ambition**.
- Milton uses him to explore the **nature of evil**, showing how pride and envy distort reason and lead to **self-destruction**.
- His rebellion is not heroic but **hubristic**, making him a cautionary figure in Christian morality.

Lines 46–61 (Satan's rebellion and fall)

If he opposed; and, with ambitious aim,
Against the throne and monarchy of God
Raised impious war in Heav'n and battle proud,
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
Hurl'd headlong flaming from th' ethereal sky
With hideous ruin and combustion down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell

In adamant chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy th' Omnipotent to arms.
Nine times the space that measures day and night
To mortal men, he with his horrid crew
Lay vanquish'd, rolling in the fiery gulf
Confounded though immortal: but his doom

Explanation:

- Satan leads a failed rebellion and is hurled from Heaven into Hell by God.
- Milton uses dramatic images: "headlong flaming," "hideous ruin," "adamantine chains" — portraying the scale of punishment.
- The fallen angels are immortal but defeated; their punishment is perpetual suffering, not annihilation.
Milton's mixture of tragic grandeur and Christian judgment in depicting Satan's fall — Satan is both majestic and fallen

Milton's Satan: Majestic Yet Fallen

1. Tragic Grandeur: The Epic Scale of Satan

- Milton presents Satan with **heroic stature**, echoing classical tragic figures like Prometheus or Achilles.
- His speeches are **rhetorically powerful**, filled with defiance, ambition, and self-assertion:
- "What though the field be lost? / All is not lost; the unconquerable will..." (Book I)
- He commands legions, builds Pandemonium, and strategizes with fallen angels — all signs of **epic leadership and charisma**.

2. Christian Judgment: Moral Condemnation

- Despite his grandeur, Satan is judged through a **Christian moral lens**.
- His pride, envy, and rebellion mark him as the **arch-sinner**, the origin of evil.
- Milton shows that Satan's greatness is **corrupted**: his eloquence masks deceit, his courage leads to damnation.

3. Duality: Majestic Yet Doomed

- Satan is both **sublime and degraded** — a paradoxical figure who evokes awe and pity.
- His fall is not just physical (from Heaven to Hell), but **spiritual**: from angelic glory to infernal despair.
- Milton's narrative voice often shifts: sometimes admiring Satan's energy, but ultimately condemning his **moral blindness**.

4. Summary Table: The Dual Portrait of Satan

Aspect	Tragic Grandeur	Christian Judgment
Speech and Rhetoric	Majestic, persuasive, defiant	Manipulative, self-deceptive
Leadership	Commands legions, builds Pandemonium	Leads others into damnation
Ambition	Heroic scale, cosmic vision	Prideful rebellion against divine order
Fall	Evokes pity and awe	Moral and spiritual degeneration
Narrative Tone	Sometimes admiring	Ultimately condemning

Lines 62–79 (Satan's suffering and internal torment)

Reserved him to more wrath; for now the thought
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
Torments him; round he throws his baleful eyes,
That witnessed huge, and on the fiery lake
Of burning sulphur, tost and whirl'd perplex'd,

He sleeps not, but his mind is rent with care
Pondering eternal vengeance, deep within
And secret murmurs; for from proud desire,
And obsolete envy, sprung this dire revolt.

Explanation:

- Satan's punishment includes unending mental torment: regret, rage, and desire for revenge.
- "Baleful eyes" scanning the fiery lake show his hatred and planning.
- Milton connects pride and envy as the root causes of the revolt.

Psychological characterization — Satan's political and inner psychology

Milton's Satan: Political Strategist and Psychological Study

1. Political Psychology: The Rebel as Rhetorician and Leader

- **Master of Persuasion:** Satan is a consummate orator. His speeches to the fallen angels in Pandemonium are filled with **rhetorical brilliance**, appealing to **freedom, honor, and resistance**.
- "*Here at least / We shall be free...*" (Book I)
- **Manipulative Tactician:** He frames rebellion as **heroic resistance**, masking his personal ambition as collective liberation.
 - ✓ He **rebrands Hell as a republic**, casting God as a tyrant and himself as a liberator.
 - ✓ His political psychology is Machiavellian: **ends justify means**, and truth is subordinate to power.
- **Council Politics:** In Book II, Satan presides over a **demonic parliament**, showcasing his ability to **orchestrate consensus**, even while secretly pursuing his own agenda (the solo mission to Eden).

2. Inner Psychology: Conflict, Guilt, and Self-Deception

- **Torn Between Remorse and Defiance:**
 - ✓ Satan experiences moments of **self-awareness** and **regret**, especially in Book IV:
 - ✓ "*Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell...*"
 - ✓ Yet he quickly suppresses these feelings, choosing **pride over repentance**.
- **Self-Deception:**
 - ✓ He convinces himself that **evil is good**, that "to do aught good will never be our task."
 - ✓ This is not just rebellion—it's a **psychological coping mechanism** to avoid confronting his fall.
- **Identity Crisis:**
 - ✓ Once the highest of angels, now the Prince of Hell, Satan struggles with a **fractured identity**.
 - ✓ His grandeur is haunted by **loss, envy, and alienation**—he is a **tragic self-exile**.
- **Projection and Revenge:**
 - ✓ Unable to defeat God, Satan redirects his rage toward **humanity**, whom he envies for their innocence and divine favor.
 - ✓ His temptation of Eve is not just strategic—it's **psychological revenge** against God.

3. Summary Table: Satan's Dual Psychology

Dimension	Political Psychology	Inner Psychology
Role	Charismatic leader, rebel strategist	Tormented soul, self-deceiver
Tactics	Rhetoric, manipulation, populist appeals	Rationalization, denial, projection
Motivations	Power, revenge, ideological control	Pride, envy, guilt, identity crisis
Tone	Assertive, persuasive, commanding	Conflicted, bitter, self-pitying
Outcome	Leads others into rebellion	Spirals into deeper isolation and despair

Lines 80–96 (The council and Satan's speech)

At last, as favoured of Heaven and his pow'r
Were spent, he call'd a council of his peers;
And, in a circular pavilion high
Built on the burning marl, and in the midst
Sat, like a demi-god, bold, though in pain.

The formal synod thus began to treat;
What motion first, what counsel fit to hold
With such dire multitudes: what policy,
How they might highest inur'd the world and
make
Their mischiefs common; or, with old design,

Explanation:

- After the initial despair, Satan gathers a council of fallen angels to plan future action.
- Milton models the speech and council on epic conventions (e.g., Homeric councils), giving Hell an organized political life.
- Satan appears majestic ("like a demi-god") despite being in pain — Milton gives him heroic traits.
Milton's council with classical epic councils; note Milton's technique of giving the enemy an organized polity to heighten the epic scale

Epic Councils Compared: Milton vs. Classical Tradition

1. Classical Epic Councils: Homer and Virgil

- **Homeric Councils** (e.g., *Iliad*):
 - ✓ Held among Greek warriors or Olympian gods.
 - ✓ Marked by **debate, hierarchy, and strategic planning**.
 - ✓ Often reflect **military or divine order**, with clear authority (Agamemnon, Zeus).
- **Virgil's Councils** (*Aeneid*):
 - ✓ Trojan leaders or Roman gods convene to discuss fate and war.
 - ✓ Emphasize **destiny, duty, and imperial vision**.
 - ✓ Serve to **advance the hero's journey** and affirm divine will.

2. Milton's Infernal Council (Book II)

- Held in **Pandemonium**, the capital of Hell.
- Attended by fallen angels: **Moloch, Belial, Mammon, Beelzebub**, and presided over by **Satan**.
- Structured like a **parliamentary debate**, with each speaker offering a distinct ideological stance:
 - ✓ **Moloch**: open war.
 - ✓ **Belial**: passive resistance.
 - ✓ **Mammon**: pragmatic self-sufficiency.
 - ✓ **Beelzebub**: strategic corruption of Man.

3. Milton's Technique: Organized Enemy Polity

Feature	Classical Epics	Milton's Infernal Council
Setting	Olympus, Greek camps, divine halls	Pandemonium: architecturally grand, infernal
Participants	Gods, heroes, kings	Fallen angels with mythic and biblical roots
Purpose	Strategy, fate, divine will	Rebellion, revenge, corruption of creation
Tone	Heroic, divine, orderly	Rhetorical, ideological, morally inverted
Outcome	Supports hero's journey	Launches Satan's mission to Eden

- Milton gives the **enemy a structured polity**, complete with **architecture, debate, and hierarchy**, to:
 - ✓ **Match the grandeur** of classical epics.
 - ✓ **Heighten dramatic tension** by showing evil as **organized and persuasive**.
 - ✓ **Invert moral order**: the council mimics divine order but serves **damnation**.

4. Theological and Poetic Implications

- The infernal council is a **mockery of divine governance**—a parody of Heaven's harmony.
- Milton uses this structure to show that **evil is not chaotic**, but **strategically seductive**.
- It elevates Satan's rebellion to **epic scale**, making his fall and mission a **cosmic drama**, not a mere act of defiance.

Lines 97–124 (Plans of revenge and strategy)

To win our knowledge lost, and underhand
Trace his old way back, or by a ladder climb
To heaven again. There were assembled all
Those angelic powers that had rebelled; the text above continues.

Explanation:

- The council debates strategies: direct return to Heaven, secret subterfuge to regain influence over mankind, or other cunning means.
- Milton introduces the theme of fallen agency: fallen beings still capable of action, plotting cunning ways to oppose God and harm humans.

Motifs of deceit and subversion; Satan's policy moves from open war to fraud and temptation

Motifs of Deceit and Subversion in Paradise Lost

1. Strategic Shift: From Open War to Subtle Fraud

- In *Paradise Lost* Book I, Satan initially advocates **open war** against Heaven:
- “*War then, war / Open or understood, must be resolved.*” (Book I, 660–661)
- However, after the defeat in Heaven and the failure of brute force, Satan **recalibrates his strategy**.
- In the infernal council (Book II), **Beelzebub proposes a subtler plan**: to corrupt God’s new creation—Man—through **deceit** rather than arms.
- Satan volunteers to undertake this mission, marking a **pivotal shift** from martial rebellion to **psychological warfare**.

2. Deceit as Weapon: The Temptation of Eve

- Satan’s descent into Eden is marked by **disguise and infiltration**:
 - ✓ He enters the Garden **cloaked in mist**, then **inhabits the serpent**, the subtlest of beasts.
 - ✓ His speech to Eve is **rhetorically seductive**, blending **flattery, half-truths, and theological distortion**:
 - ✓ “*Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*” (Book IX, 708)
- This is the **archetype of temptation**: appealing to **pride, curiosity, and desire for knowledge**.
- Satan’s deceit is **not just verbal**—it’s **existential**, presenting evil as good, disobedience as empowerment.

3. Subversion of Order: Inversion of Divine Hierarchy

- Satan’s rebellion is a **cosmic subversion**: he seeks to **invert the divine order**, placing himself above God.
- In Eden, he attempts to **subvert the human hierarchy**:
 - ✓ He targets **Eve**, not Adam, exploiting her **isolation and desire for wisdom**.
 - ✓ His goal is to **disrupt unity**, sowing **division, doubt, and disobedience**.

4. Summary Table: Satan’s Strategic Evolution

Phase	Method	Target	Motif	Outcome
Heavenly Rebellion	Open war, force	God and angels	Pride, defiance	Defeat, fall into Hell
Infernal Council	Strategic deceit	Humanity	Fraud, subversion	Plan to corrupt God’s new creation
Temptation in Eden	Disguise, persuasion	Eve (then Adam)	Flattery, theological twist	Fall of Man, success through deceit

5. Theological and Poetic Implications

- Milton shows that **evil evolves**: when force fails, it turns to **fraud**.
- Deceit becomes Satan’s **most potent weapon**, reflecting the **subtlety of sin**.
- The motif of subversion warns readers that **evil often masquerades as good**, and that **temptation is more dangerous than open conflict**.
- This shift also aligns with Milton’s poetic aim: to explore **moral psychology**, not just physical battles.

Historical and literary context

- *Paradise Lost* was published in 1667 during England’s Restoration-era tensions; Milton was a republican who had defended regicide and the Commonwealth. The poem’s politics, ideas of liberty, authority, and rebellion can be read in the light of Milton’s experience with political defeat.
- Milton writes in blank verse (unrhymed iambic pentameter) and deliberately imitates classical epics (Homer and Virgil) while recasting epic subject-matter in Christian terms: fall and redemption rather than the adventures of heroes.

Connection-Milton’s personal politics and historical background with themes of authority, free will, and rebellion

Milton's Politics and Historical Context: A Thematic Lens

1. Historical Background: Civil War and Republicanism

- Milton lived through the **English Civil War (1642–1651)**, a conflict between the **monarchy (Charles I)** and **Parliament**.
- A staunch **Puritan and republican**, Milton supported the **Commonwealth** and **Oliver Cromwell**, opposing the **divine right of kings**.
- He served as **Latin Secretary** under Cromwell's government and wrote political tracts defending **regicide** and **civil liberty** (e.g., *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*).

Thematic Connections in *Paradise Lost*

2. Authority: Divine vs. Tyrannical Rule

- Milton distinguishes between **just authority** (God's rule) and **tyranny** (Satan's counterfeit).
- God's authority is **rooted in justice, love, and order**, not arbitrary power.
- Satan falsely frames God as a tyrant to justify his rebellion:
- "*Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.*" (Book I)
- This reflects Milton's political belief that **true authority must be accountable and rational**, not inherited or despotic.

3. Free Will: The Foundation of Moral Responsibility

- Milton's theology emphasizes **free will** as essential to virtue:
- "*Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.*" (Book III)
- Adam and Eve are created with **reason and liberty**, capable of choosing obedience or disobedience.
- This mirrors Milton's political stance: **freedom is a divine gift**, and **moral agency** is the basis of both **salvation and citizenship**.

4. Rebellion: Justified or Damned?

- Milton draws a sharp line between **righteous resistance** and **prideful rebellion**:
 - ✓ **Satan's rebellion** is driven by **pride and envy**, not justice.
 - ✓ **Adam and Eve's fall** is a misuse of freedom, not a heroic act.
- This reflects Milton's nuanced view: **rebellion is justified only when authority becomes tyrannical**.
 - ✓ He supported rebellion against Charles I, whom he saw as a tyrant.
 - ✓ But he condemns Satan's rebellion as **egotistical and destructive**, not liberating.

Summary Table: Politics and Poetics Intertwined

Theme	In <i>Paradise Lost</i>	In Milton's Life and Politics
Authority	God as just ruler; Satan as false tyrant	Supported lawful authority; opposed divine-right kings
Free Will	Central to moral choice and divine justice	Advocated liberty of conscience and individual reason
Rebellion	Satan's rebellion is sinful, not noble	Supported political rebellion against tyranny
Accountability	Angels and humans judged by their choices	Believed rulers must be accountable to the people

Major themes in these lines

- Fall and consequence: disobedience leads to death and exile.
- Providence and free will: Milton aims to "justify the ways of God" while showing human freedom to choose.
- Pride and ambition: root motives for Satan's revolt and human fall.
- Epic invocation and authority: blending classical form with biblical subject.
- Deception and strategy: the shift from open war to cunning in the enemies' plan.

Literary devices and notable techniques

- Blank verse: unrhymed iambic pentameter, giving Milton a flexible elevated style.
- Epic invocation: opening plea to a Muse/Spirit, establishing epic scale and high purpose.
- Classical and biblical allusions: Oreb, Sinai, Aonian mount, Moses, Zion, Siloa.
- Simile and metaphor: "Dove-like sat'st brooding" (creation image); "adamantine chains" (unbreakable bonds).
- Dramatic characterization: Satan's heroic features create complexity; Milton's Satan is proud, eloquent, and capable of inspiring sympathy.
- Imagery: cosmic ("vast Abyss") and infernal ("burning sulphur," "fiery gulf").
- Synod/council scene: political and rhetorical strategy, modeled on epic assemblies.

Character analysis

- Satan: charismatic, proud, resourceful; both villain and epic hero in Milton's portrayal — central to the poem's moral and psychological complexity.
- Fallen angels: numerous, organized, reflecting a state community in rebellion; they give Satan political support and counsel.
- The Poet (Miltonic voice): moral purpose driven — to reconcile God's justice with human experience.

John Donne — “Batter my Heart” (Holy Sonnet 14)

1. Overview and significance

John Donne's poem, commonly called “Batter my heart,” is Holy Sonnet 14 in his sequence of nineteen Holy Sonnets. It is a short but powerful prayer-poem asking God to forcefully change the speaker's heart. The poem is famous for its intense, violent religious imagery, unusual requests to God, and use of metaphysical conceits — surprising comparisons that join spiritual and physical images.

2. Original text (Holy Sonnet 14)

**Batter my heart, three-person'd God; for you
As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend;
That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend
Your force to break, blow, burn, and make me new.
I, like an usurp'd town, to another due,
Labour to admit you, but oh! to no end;
Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend,
But is captiv'd, and proves weak or untrue.
Yet dearly I love you, and would be lov'd fain,
But am betroth'd unto your enemy:
Damn'd sinne, that lowe, whom I retaine, I remaine,
Let mee be loos'd, and that th'inge I love, I mind.
Take mee to you, imprison mee, for I
Except you enthrall mee, never shall be free,
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish mee.**

3. Word meanings (key vocabulary)

- Batter — strike repeatedly, beat hard.
- Three-person'd God — the Christian Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit).
- Knock, breathe, shine — mild actions of God (gentle influences).
- Overthrow — cast down; here: disrupt the speaker's current state.
- Bend your force — direct strong divine power.
- Usurp'd town — a town taken over by an enemy.
- Due — owed to someone; here: the town belongs to God but is held by another.
- Labour to admit you — try hard to let God in.

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- Viceroy — deputy or governor acting for a ruler; Reason is God’s representative in the speaker.
 - Captiv'd — captured, imprisoned.
 - Lov'd fain — would gladly be loved.
 - Betroth'd — promised in marriage.
 - Damn'd sinne — condemned sin; the sin is like a lover or spouse to the speaker.
 - Lowe (lowe) — archaic spelling for "love" or "torch"; here meaning love or burning desire.
 - Loos'd — released.
 - Imprison me / enthrall me — paradoxical: being spiritually imprisoned by God for true freedom.
 - Ravish — to seize by force; used erotically and spiritually (intense union with God).

4. Line-by-line explanation

Lines 1–2: “Batter my heart, three-person'd God; for you / As yet but knock, breathe, shine, and seek to mend;”

- The speaker addresses the Trinity, asking God to “batter” his heart — to use forceful action rather than gentle persuasion. The speaker says God currently only “knock[s], breathe[s], shine[s]” — mild actions that try to repair him gently, but that has not worked. The verbs show God’s usual gentle method (knock = invitation; breathe = give life; shine = illuminate). The speaker demands stronger action because gentleness has failed.

Lines 3–4: “That I may rise, and stand, o'erthrow me, and bend / Your force to break, blow, burn, and make me new.”

- The speaker wants to be raised up spiritually (“rise, and stand”), but paradoxically asks God to “o'erthrow” him first — destroy his current self to build a new one. He asks God to “break, blow, burn” — violent verbs — to purge and remake him. The sequence suggests necessary destruction before spiritual restoration.

Lines 5–8: “I, like an usurp'd town, to another due, / Labour to admit you, but oh! to no end; / Reason, your viceroy in me, me should defend, / But is captiv'd, and proves weak or untrue.”

- The speaker compares himself to a town that rightfully belongs to God but has been taken over by an enemy (sin or the devil). He tries to admit God, but fails. “Reason” is described as God’s representative inside the speaker (viceroy), which should defend the town, but Reason has been captured and is unreliable. This explains why gentle appeals fail: inner reason is enslaved.

Lines 9–12: “Yet dearly I love you, and would be lov'd fain, / But am betroth'd unto your enemy: / Damn'd sinne, that lowe, whom I retaine, I remaine, / Let mee be loos'd, and that th'inge I love, I mind.”

- The speaker confesses love for God and desire to be loved in return. But he feels “betroth'd” to God’s enemy (sin or Satan), meaning spiritually pledged to sin. The line “Damn'd sinne, that lowe, whom I retaine, I remaine” explains that the speaker keeps a sinful love burning in him; by retaining that love, he remains damned. He asks to be freed (“Let me be loos'd”), so he can love God alone.

Lines 13–14 (final tercet): “Take mee to you, imprison mee, for I / Except you enthrall mee, never shall be free, / Nor ever chaste, except you ravish mee.”

- The speaker asks to be taken by God and imprisoned by divine love. Paradoxically, only by being “enthrall[ed]” (enslaved by God) will he truly be free. Only if God “ravish[es]” him — a violent image of spiritual union — will he be chaste (pure). The closing lines show the poem's paradoxical argument: spiritual freedom, chastity, and union require forceful divine action.

5. Paraphrase (short modern version)

I beg you, Trinity, don’t just gently try to fix me. Hit my heart hard and destroy my current self so your strong power can reshape me. I am like a town taken by an enemy; I try to let you in but fail because my reason is captured and weak. I love you and want to be loved, but I’m pledged to your enemy — sin — which keeps me trapped. Set me free by taking me into yourself; only if you seize me completely will I be free and pure.

6. Structure, form, and meter

- Form: Sonnet (Holy Sonnet 14). The sonnet's structure is close to the Petrarchan and Shakespearean mix: generally 14 lines with a volta (turn). Donne often uses irregular sonnet forms that combine features of both traditions. This sonnet has an intense volta and ends with a focused, forceful concluding tercet. The poem's closing three lines form a compact, urgent plea. Scholarly discussions often highlight Donne's flexible sonnet form and inventive syntax.
- Rhyme scheme: The poem shows a mixed rhyme pattern typical of Donne's sonnets; different editions show slightly differing punctuation but the strong cohesion is in the argument, not rigid rhyme.
- Meter: Mostly iambic pentameter with variations; Donne varies rhythm for emphasis. The mix of regular and irregular stresses creates urgency and passion.

7. Imagery, metaphors, and conceits

- Usurp'd town metaphor: The speaker as a town conquered by an enemy captures spiritual occupation by sin. Town imagery emphasizes civic belonging and duty, implying the soul's governance has been taken.
- Military/violence imagery: "Batter," "overthrow," "break," "blow," "burn" — words of siege suggest spiritual warfare; salvation requires forceful divine action.
- Legal/marriage imagery: "Betroth'd" and "retayne" use marriage-like bonds to describe spiritual attachment to sin. The speaker is legally bound to the enemy until freed.
- Erotic language: "Ravish," "enthrall," "imprison" blend sexual imagery with spiritual yearning, a hallmark of Donne's metaphysical style where physical and spiritual love collide.
- Paradox: The poem's central paradox — that imprisonment by God leads to freedom, and being ravished leads to chastity — is a metaphysical twist that forces the reader to rethink ordinary meanings.

8. Themes and ideas (basic to advanced)

Basic themes:

- Desperation and prayer: a direct, urgent plea to God.
- Sin and redemption: recognition of being captive to sin and desire for liberation.
- Divine violence: God's force as purifying and necessary.

Advanced themes:

- Free will and coercion: the poem raises theological questions about whether salvation can involve coercion. Donne's speaker seems to ask for coercion — a challenge to simple models of free will and consent.
- Reason's role: Reason is a "viceroi" but captured; Donne explores the limits of rationality in spiritual conversion and suggests that reason alone cannot save.
- Eroticism of spirituality: sexual language for spiritual union complicates the boundary between sacred and profane love. Donne's metaphors question whether spiritual experiences can be described without erotic language.
- Political and civic metaphors for soul: Town imagery links political control and spiritual domination, reflecting early modern concerns about authority, governance, and obedience.
- Theological paradox: The poem can be read within Catholic/Protestant tensions of the period — needing grace versus human agency — though Donne's own religious position (a Church of England priest later in life) complicates easy categorization. Scholarly readings examine these tensions and Donne's complex theology.

9. Tone, voice, and speaker analysis

- Tone: urgent, pleading, violent, paradoxical, intimate. The speaker is both humble and demanding.
- Voice: a first-person confessional voice addressing God directly — immediate and personal.
- Speaker: an individual aware of spiritual failure, yet confident enough to demand radical change. He is introspective, using metaphors to explain his inner state to God and the reader.

10. Historical, religious, and biographical context

- John Donne (1572–1631) is a leading metaphysical poet known for mixing intellectual argument with emotional intensity. He wrote the Holy Sonnets during a period of spiritual anxiety and reflection; many of these sonnets address sin, judgment, and grace. Donne's own conversion from Catholicism to Anglicanism and his later career as an Anglican priest inform the intense religious thought in these poems.
- The poem uses Catholic-sounding sacramental and confessional language but also suits English Protestant concerns about personal faith and the necessity of divine grace. Critical studies place the poem in debates about predestination, free will, and God's sovereignty.

11. Literary devices (with examples from the poem)

- Conceit: The extended comparison of the speaker to an "usurp'd town" is a metaphysical conceit — a striking, elaborate metaphor linking soul and city.
- Paradox: "Except you enthrall me, never shall be free" — freedom through captivity.
- Antithesis: "break, blow, burn" — series of violent verbs contrasted with the desired result "make me new."
- Apostrophe: Direct address to God ("three-person'd God") creates immediacy.
- Alliteration: "break, blow, burn" — repetition of initial consonant sound to intensify force.
- Enjambment: Lines flow into each other, creating rapid argument and building urgency.
- Caesura and punctuation: Donne uses commas, dashes, and exclamations to control rhythm and emphasis ("but oh! to no end;").

12. Final summary

"Batter my Heart" (Holy Sonnet 14) is John Donne's urgent, paradox-rich prayer that asks God to use violent power to free the speaker from sin. Using metaphors of siege, civics, marriage, and erotic seizure, Donne argues that true spiritual freedom and chastity require God's overpowering action because human reason and gentle appeals are inadequate.

Andrew Marvell: To His Coy Mistress

Overview of the poem

- **Poet:** Andrew Marvell (1621–1678), English metaphysical poet and politician
- **Poem:** To His Coy Mistress
- **Genre:** Metaphysical poetry; persuasive love poem
- **Form:** Dramatic monologue in rhymed couplets
- **Rhyme scheme:** AA BB CC (continuous couplets)
- **Meter:** Iambic tetrameter (4 iambs per line, da-DUM da-DUM da-DUM da-DUM)
- **Date of composition:** Circa 1650s (not published in Marvell's lifetime)
- **Publication:** Posthumously in 1681
- **Setting and mood:** Argumentative, witty, urgent; moves from gentle praise to grim reality to passionate call to action
- **Central idea (Carpe Diem):** Life is short; time is fast; love should be enjoyed now

Original text

Had we but world enough and time,
This coyness, lady, were no crime.
We would sit down and think which way
To walk, and pass our long love's day.
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side
Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide
Of Humber would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the Flood,

And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews.
My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires and more slow;
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast,
But thirty thousand to the rest;

An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart.
For, lady, you deserve this state,
Nor would I love at lower rate.
But at my back I always hear
Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.
Thy beauty shall no more be found,
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
My echoing song; then worms shall try
That long-preserved virginity,
And your quaint honour turn to dust,

And into ashes all my lust;
The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace.
Now let us sport us while we may;
And now, like amorous birds of prey,
Rather at once our time devour
Than languish in his slow-chapped power.
Let us roll all our strength and all
Our sweetness up into one ball,
And tear our pleasures with rough strife
Thorough the iron gates of life:
Thus, though we cannot make our sun
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

Word meanings

- **Coyness:** Shyness or modesty (often resisting romance)
- **Ganges:** River in India (exotic, distant place)
- **Humber:** River in England (poet's local river)
- **The Flood:** The Biblical flood of Noah (ancient, far past)
- **Conversion of the Jews:** A prophesied event at the end of time (impossibly distant future)
- **Vegetable love:** Love that grows naturally and slowly, like a plant
- **Vaster than empires:** Larger than empires (extreme exaggeration)
- **Age:** A very long period of time (century/era)
- **Time's wingèd chariot:** A metaphor for time rushing quickly behind us
- **Deserts of vast eternity:** Empty, endless stretches of death and timelessness
- **Marble vault:** Stone tomb (grave)
- **Quaint honour:** Modesty or chastity (delicate, old-fashioned term)
- **Ashes:** What remains after burning (also symbol of death and decay)
- **Sport us:** Enjoy ourselves; play lovingly
- **Amorous birds of prey:** Fierce, passionate lovers (hawk-like intensity)
- **Slow-chapped power:** Time's slow biting jaws (time eats life gradually)
- **Roll into one ball:** Unite all strength and sweetness completely
- **Thorough:** Through
- **Iron gates of life:** Hard barriers in life (limits, time)
- **Make our sun run:** Live so intensely that time seems to move faster

Line-by-line explanation

Section I: If we had endless time (gentle praise and patience)

- **“Had we but world enough and time, / This coyness, lady, were no crime.”**
- If we had unlimited time and space, your shyness would be fine. There would be no hurry.
- **“We would sit down and think which way / To walk, and pass our long love's day.”**
- We would calmly plan our love and spend the whole day enjoying each other slowly.
- **“Thou by the Indian Ganges' side / Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide / Of Humber would complain.”**
- You could be in far-off India finding rubies; I would wait by my local river in England, longing for you. Distance and patience would not matter if time was unlimited.
- **“I would / Love you ten years before the Flood, / And you should, if you please, refuse / Till the conversion of the Jews.”**
- I would start loving you long before Noah's flood; you could delay till the end of time. I would wait forever if time allowed.