Criticism reflects both on the subject and on the critics. So, proper assessment of it requires, at the very outset, a preliminary knowledge of the subject that is criticised and that of the tenets that are applied in criticism.

The Eighteenth Century criticism of Milton simultaneously focuses on the poet and on his Eighteenth Century critics, as it was, so to speak, the outcome of the encounter between Milton and his Eighteenth Century critical readers.

To discuss the subject of criticism first, Milton was both a poet and a prose-writer. In fact, his prose works cover three-fourth area of his literary productions, though the author himself recognised them only as the work of his left-hand and his readers, in general, recognise him primarily as a poet. With the exception of a few miscellaneous items like the two school text books, an unfinished History of Britain and long unpublished De Doctrina Christiana - these prose-pieces of Milton are

1. J. Milton, The Reason of the Church Government urged against Prelacy (1642), The Second book. "..........I should not choose this manner of writing, wherein, ......I have the use, as I may account it, but of my left hand."
all either ecclesiastical or political tracts, provoked by the contemporary circumstances and mostly catering to contemporary interest. To illustrate, the first five antiepiscopal pamphlets (1641-42) deal with 'Church-reform' which was a burning question of Milton's day. After the long parliament had pacified the civil grievances to some extent, by disposing of Strafford, the tyrannical minister of Charles I, the attention of the whole nation was drawn to this issue. Milton's teacher Young was a leading participant in the debate and Milton initially joined the fray in defence of his old tutor.

In 1644, Milton published the Divorce Tracts. These pamphlets have been thought by many biographers to be associated with the author's own unhappy matrimonial venture with Mary Powell. Milton wrote Of Education.

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2. The most authoritative version of the fact that Milton, being deserted by his first wife, sought to justify himself by writing the Divorce Tracts appears to be that of the anonymous biographer. The anonymous biography was discovered in 1889 among the papers of Antony Wood and first published by Parsons in 1902 under the title of The Earliest Life of Milton. Supposition suggests Dr. Paget, (Milton's friend and physician), Cyriack Skinner, John Phillips (Milton's younger nephew) - all three as its writer.
at the request of Samuel Butler, a famous public reformer of those days, and Areopagitica, the great defence of the freedom of press, in protest against an ordinance of the 1643 parliament which required, among other things, prior censuring of books, in matters of publication.

Milton composed Of the Tenure of Kings and Magistrates, designedly, to silence the opposition of the presbytarians to regicide and to reconcile the public mind to the event itself.

After this treatise, the remaining prose works of Milton were written in the capacity of the author's Official designation. As the secretary of the foreign tongues to the council of states, Milton's most significant work was Eikonoclastes. It was composed as parliamentary order to counteract the menacing effect of Eicon Basilike or King's book. The earlier book had been written by Bishop Gauden who portrayed the character of the king as a saint and martyr. It appeared immediately after regicide in February, 1649, and achieved enormous circulation within a short period.

Milton added two more tracts to this issue of regicide viz. (i) The Defence of the English people against Salmiasi (ii) The Second Defence of the English
People by John Milton, Englishman - in reply to an infamous book entitled, The Cry of the King's Blood. These pamphlets were written in controversy with Salmasius and Morus (1651-1655). Milton also wrote a self-defence at this period. Of these three defences, the earliest was written in Latin as it was addressed to the then intellectuals of the whole of Europe.

Around this period, Milton composed a theological treatise *De Doctrina Christiana* and that too in Latin. Milton took up the issue of Church reform once again only after the death of Cromowell and wrote two more tracts on this topic viz. (i) *A Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes*: Shewing that it is not Lawful for any Power on Earth to Compel in Matters of Religion (1659) and (ii) *Considerations Touching the Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings out of the Church, Wherein is also Discussed Tithes, Church Revenues, and whether any Maintenance of Ministers can be Settled by Law*.

During 1659-1660 the Rump parliament was extremely busy with the controversy over the form of Government.

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3. This manuscript first came to light in 1823 and it was published for the first time in 1825. John Phillips' statements indicate that Milton began to compose it round about 1655 while Milton himself revealed that his preparation to write this thesis was going on from his youth. Anyway, the work, as the preserved manuscript gives evidence, was complete by 1661.
that England would finally adopt. At this stage of affairs, Milton again came forward with his plea against monarchy and a recommendation of a constitutional scheme. He wrote the tract, *The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwelth and the Excellences thereof with the Incoveniences and Dangers of Readmitting Kingship in the Nation* and sent it to General Monk as 'the last words of our expiring liberty.' The then deciding authority of the country however did not give sufficient response to it.

Restoration silenced Milton for years at a stretch. It was only after the king issued, in 1672, the Declaration of Indulgence that his voice was heard again. The Declaration granted freedom of worship to the nonconformists. But both the Dissenters and the Anglicans raised such a cry against it, that the parliament rescinded it in the following year. At this stage, Milton published his tract, *Of True Religion, Heresy, Toleration and the Growth of Popery* in 1973. Through it he gave a call to all the protestant sects to assemble in mutual charity and hold a tolerant attitude towards differences on non-essential points of doctrine.

Milton's last recommendation for republicanism to
his supine countryman was A declaration of the Election
of this Present King of Poland, John III, i.e. the
National Hero Sobeiski who had Manfully Defended the.
Country against the Turks. Here the author made a study
of contrast between the courageous patriot Sobeiski and
the hypocrite idler Charles II.

Milton, beside the above mentioned significant
pieces, also wrote a number of miscellaneous prose items
which however never did matter to his literary critics.

Now regarding Milton's poetical productions - the
poet made luxurious excursions in the world of poetry
in as many as four languages\(^4\) and utilised all important
forms of poetry.

The poet himself divided his Latin poems, as published
in 1645 edition, into two categories, from metrical point
of view, viz. (a) poems in elegiac meter (which include
eight of his epigrams) and (b) poems in miscellaneous
meter. The subject-matters of these Latin poems vary
from one another. For example, in Elegies I, V, VII the
poet seems to luxuriate in sensuous beauty and the
thought of love. Elegy I further reveals Milton's dis-
comfort in the atmosphere of the University and his
enthusiasm for a life of culture and leisure. In Elegy IV,
the poet expressed his personal loyalty to his boyhood

\(^4\) Viz. Latin, Italian, Greek and English.
tutor Young. Ad Patrem conveys Milton's gratitude to his father for providing him opportunities to live up to his taste. In Mansus, Milton seems to be proud of his association with this great Italian patron of Arts. The poet wrote some other poems also in Latin like those on Gunpowder plot, in quintum Novembris; and the elegies commemorating the death of university dignitaries as impersonal academic exercises.

Milton presented his readers half a dozen Italian Sonnets. These, he described as his "attempt to grow the flower of a foreign speech in the climate not its own". In these poems, the poet luxuriated in a purely romantic mood with which we can hardly associate the Milton we generally know. Here the poet imagined him to be surrounded by youths and maidens who were expostulating with him for writing in an alien or unintelligible tongue (lingua ignota/strana). He also described how he was punished by cupid for his former stubbornness against love and revealed the name of the lady as Emelia in a riddling fashion. Milton addressed these sonnets to Charles Diodati.

Milton's Greek poems were mostly written during his school days. Only a few like the Greek translation of

Psalm 144 (c. Dec, J, 1634), or Philosphus and Regem were written afterwards. But none of the whole lot gained much significance or drew any mentionworthy attention.

The majority of Milton's poetical productions were written in English. These English poems are usually categorised as major poems and minor poems. The former group consists of a long epic on classical model viz. Paradise Lost, a brief epic on biblical model viz. Paradise Regained and a tragedy on Greek model viz. Samson Agonistes. The list of Milton's minor poems includes numerous and various items like:

1. **On the Death of a Fair Infant, Dying of a Cough**, in seven line stanzas - a b a b c c - with final Alexandrine,
2. **At a vacation Exercise (Part English, Part Latin)**, in heroic couplet,
3. **Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity** in the metrical scheme of a6, a6, b10, c6, b10, d8 d12.

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6. This poem speaks of the poet's patriotic as well as aesthetic enthusiasm for his mother tongue and his intention to celebrate it with some lofty theme, and also reveals Milton's antipathy toward "late fanatics" and his allegiance to the older and more ornate poetic style of Spenser and the Elizabethans.

7. This poem is pervaded by a religious fervour and characterised by subtle poetical devices.
(4) Song: of the May Morning - a pure lyric in Jonsonian style,

(5) On Shakespeare - a sixteen-line epigram in heroic couplet,

(6) Two poems on university career, in heroic couplet, commemorating the death of the University Beadle,

(7) An Epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester in couplets of seven or eight syllables and mixed iambics and trochaics, marked by a Jonsonian simplicity,

(8) The pair-lyrics - L'Allegro and II Penseroso,

(9) The three lyrics in the forms of ode with irregular rhyme and line-length viz. At a Solemn Music, On Time and Upon Circumcision,

8. Both the poems are full of typical Seventeenth Century punnings and conceited epigrams, reflecting a mood of humour.

9. The subjects of these two poems have raised much controversy.

10. The first in the list shows Milton's enthusiasm for Sphere-born harmonious sisters—voice and verse, the second has the character of its inscription as is suggested by its concealed manuscript—"Set on a clock-case", the last piece commemorates the religious event which however did not seem congenial to the poet and the poem lacks creative inspiration.
(10) Two masques, viz. Arcades and Comus,
(11) A Pastoral viz. Lycidas, and
(12) Eighteen Sonnets, celebrating mainly three kinds of subjects like significant public events, great personalities and personal emotions.

11. The former of the two masques, i.e. Arcades consists of three songs and a recitation in pentameter couplets and the latter viz. Comus celebrates the triumph of virtue through chastity.

12. It is a pastoral elegy in iambic pentameter which is occasionally varied by the introduction of three-foot lines and closing with a stanza in Ottava-Rima. The poem mourns the death of Edward King, a college mate of the poet, who was drowned in the Irish Sea and embodies all the setconventions of Elegy like the mourning of nature, the representation of the poet and his friend as shepherds who feed their flocks together, a tendency to introduce an attack on the corruption of church, ecclesiastical allegory, meditation on fame etc.

13. The first category may be exemplified by On the Late Massacre in Piedmont, two poems on the reception of his Divorce Tracts and the twenty line sonnet On the New Forces of Conscience under the long Parliament; personal emotions are celebrated in 'To the nightingale' On his being Arrived to the Age of Twenty-three, two poems on his blindness and one poem written in memory of his Second wife; the third category consists of the sonnets to Cromwell, Vane, Fairfax, and addresses to Lawes, Skinner, Edward Lawrence, Lady Margaret Ley, and the unidentified virtuous young lady of Sonnet IX and the elegy for Mrs. Katherine.
After enumerating Milton's works, we may now discuss their most prominent literary characteristics that became the main point of issue in Milton criticism. The very bibliography of Milton's prose works and poetical productions focuses on the nature of the Milton's subjects. From it alone, one can gather that religion and politics are the most attended topics in Milton's works. In prose, the five anti-episcopal pamphlets (1641-1642) and a good number of later tracts like - *A Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes; Shewing that it is not Lawful for any Power on Earth to Compel in Matter of Religion, Considerations Touching the Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings out of the Church, wherein is also Discussed Tithes, Church Revenues, and whether any Maintenance of Ministers can be Settled by Law, Of True Religion, Heresy, Toleration and the Growth of Popery* and *De Doctrina Christiana,* deal with ecclesiastical topic exhaustively. Among poetical works, all the major poems of Milton and among his minor poems, *the Nativity, ode, the Passion* and *Upon Circumcision* deal with theology.

Milton's treatment of religion however caused
many controversies due to some heterodoxical beliefs expressed by the author. Some of the most significant of Milton's heterodoxies, (as also enumerated by Lewis), are his view of Christ as a being divine but distinctly lower than God, and of holy Ghost still lower in importance, his denial of the almost universally accepted doctrine that God created the world out of nothing and his conviction that matter was as eternal as the spirit and even a part of God Himself which implies that at death the whole man dies and there is no separate continued existence of the spirit.

Milton dealt exhaustively in his works with politics too. In prose, The Defence of the English People against Salmasius. The Second Defence of the English people, by John Milton, Englishman; in Reply to an Infamous Book Entitled "The Cry of the Kings' Blood in Controversy with Salmasius and Morus. The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth and the Excellence there-of with the Inconveniences and

15. De Doctrina Christiana, Chap.V, 'On the Son'
17. Ibid.
Dangers of Readmitting Kingship in the Nation, and
A Declaration of the Election of this Present King
of Poland, John III, i.e. the National Hero Sobieski,
who had Manfully Defended the Country against the
Turks — all these pieces are concerned with contempo-
rary politics. Among his poetical productions
Paradise Lost mirrors the poet's political ideology
in a subtle manner. Through all these prose and
poetical works Milton advocated republicanism and thus
gained the favour of the whigs and antipathy of the
Royalists simultaneously.

Beside his thelogical and political convictions
Milton's works also provide the readers with numerous
snaps of the author's personal life. The Reason of the
Church Government, The Second Defence and Paradise Lost,
in particular, are full of such autobiographical digre-
sions and they give us more or less a complete picture
of Milton the man.\footnote{18 From the three pieces mentioned above, we can gather
information about Milton's childhood (1608-25) his
voyage abroad (1638-39), return to the motherland, his
career as a teacher, matrimonial adventures, days of
literary activities (1640-49), his Latin Secretaryship
(1649-60), his blindness and also about his retire-
ment and last years.} Such coexistence of religious
beliefs, political ideologies and autobiographical
elements in Milton's literary works were responsible
for the three distinct dimensions in Milton criticism
as a whole.

Milton's diction also caused great critical controversy from the very beginning of the poet's critical heritage. Critics do not vary so much in their opinions about its nature as they do in their reactions to it. Both Milton's admirers and adversaries agree that his diction is something 'unique'. This 'uniqueness' was created by the poet by some obvious rhetorical devices.

Among them the most important are inversion of the natural word-order or phrase-order\textsuperscript{19}, omission of words not necessary to the sense\textsuperscript{20}, Parenthesis and apposition\textsuperscript{21}, the use of one part of speech for another\textsuperscript{22}, archaism and Latinism in vocabulary\textsuperscript{23}, fondness for collections of more or less exotic proper names\textsuperscript{24} and use of unusual compound epithets analogous to those in Homer\textsuperscript{25}. In prose, Milton's language is marked by the

\textsuperscript{19} Paradise Lost, bk V 11 219-20, \\
\textsuperscript{20} Paradise Lost, bk V. 11 1047-48, \\
\textsuperscript{21} ibid bk I, I 469; bk II,11 552-4, \\
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid, bk I, I 798. \\
\textsuperscript{23} eg, 'areed', 'wons', 'emprise', 'nocent', 'attire', \\
\textsuperscript{24} ibid bk XI 11 388-91. \\
\textsuperscript{25} eg, 'night warbling bird', 'a three bolted thunder'.
length of his sentences and use of bombastic, pedantic words in general. These rhetorical devices of Milton's works, however, do not appeal to all. The critics, who praise Milton's diction, appreciate these devices all right, but those, who do not relish Milton's diction, condemn it for these very devices. The literary characteristics of Milton's works, as discussed above, have remained what they are for all ages. But readers of different ages, with different critical tenets in their mind, came to interpret them in various ways and either praised or discarded them according to their different taste and temperament.

Like the critics of any other age the Eighteenth Century literary critics also had their own tenets of literature and when they judged Milton they applied these criteria. So, to properly appreciate their criticism of Milton we must be thoroughly acquainted with their peculiar tenets which have been, of course, already hinted at in the study of Eighteenth Century literary background in the introduction. The Eighteenth Century men of letters, being primarily humanists, held that the main aim of literature was to produce social man according to
the canons of the age old civilization. Accordingly, they selected the models of their own from the past. They went to the major authors of antiquity like Chaucer, Shakespeare, Cerventces, Rabelais and Moliere who best understood human nature and to Milton also, who understood moral truth. Much else they ignored. With such restricted reading they avoided the confusion of omnivorous cosmopolitanism and revitalised among themselves a responsible sense of literature and a care for coherent civilisation. This basic sense of responsibility and care for civilisation were at the root of all other literary tenets of the age.

For the Eighteenth Century men of letters, the guiding principle of literature was the age old injunction "follow nature", which for them meant the ideal of expressing the lasting truth about humanity in accomplished and convincing words. Again, the Eighteenth Century intellectuals had their own grasp of this lasting truth. It was a conception of the universe as governed

27. For the whole idea of following nature, Vide J.E. Spingarn, Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century, (1908), PP. IXVII ff; B.Willey, Eighteenth Century Background (1940), passim.
by some divinely sanctioned laws with general human nature as the microcosm of this mechanical order. It also cherished a notion that with respect to man there is a permanent truth of human behaviour and also a principle of reason and order which men should obey.

To reveal this grasp of reality properly, the Eighteenth Century men of letters forsook 'heroes' and took 'ordinary man' in the form of a variety of living persons, as the basic material for literature and with regard to language, they advocated the ideals of propriety, perspicuity, elegance and cadence in place of the experimenting exuberance of the complex and unstable fashion of the Seventeenth Century speech. They cherished these ideals also to satisfy their craze for the rule of order which, they thought, had a divine sanction behind it, and accepted it also as a natural counter-balancing measure against the disorder, eccentricity and extravagance of the literature of the previous age.

But the Eighteenth century literatures, however, were not obsessed by their ideal of the rule of order and reason. Enlightened by Longinus' Treatise On the Sublime

28. For further elaboration of these four ideals Vide F.W.Bateson English Poetry and English Language (1934) PP 47-58.
they learnt to prefer creative genius to it and came to
maintain that the rule of order and reason in
literature was to be valued only when it would prove
itself the disciplinary action of some thing energetically
alive.

With much understanding they did welcome "Wit" in
their literature, which, for them, would copy out the ideas
of the mind in exact concrete correlatives of plain
expression. But Wit would not only recite the familiar
truths. It would also discover fresh ways of impressing
them and sometimes even find out new truths, especially
of non-human subjects.29

The Eighteenth Century men of letter also cherished
the ideals of 'energy' and "clarity" which Dryden first
inherited from Corneille and subsequently were reinforced
by the influence of Boileau.30 On the other hand, the
revival of classicism encouraged them with a vigorous
grasp of social themes and a strengthening concern for
discipline and verbal skill and also with a range of
literary kinds in which their orderseeking mind easily
fitted. This Neo-classicism was, however, also responsible

29. Atkins. English Literary Criticism; 17th and 18th
centuries (1951), pp. 40-1, 56, 63, 99, 163.
30. J.E. Spingram, Critical Essays, introduction,
for some of their external conceptions of literary graces which ultimately led to the loss of certain linguistic subtleties in their literature. For example, it introduced an undesirable lump of unassimilated Latin diction into their language and made the Eighteenth Century poetry, in particular, grossly heavy and artfully deliberate. But, still, no words would suffice to describe what the Eighteenth Century literature owed to the fire of Homer, dignity of Virgil, energy of Juvenal, eloquence of Cicero, pith of Seneca or urbanity of Horace.\footnote{A.R. Humphreys, The Literary Scene, The Pelican Guide to English Literature, bk IV, ed. Boris Ford (1968) pp. 58-59.}

Spreading over the whole of a century, the conditions of the Eighteenth Century literary world, however, underwent many changes in course of time. These changes were brought about by a basic temperamental evolution in the literary outlook which was, again, correlated with a transitional process in the general temper of the age. By this evolution a psychology of reason and the conscious mind, which was the underlying literary spirit in the first half of the century, turned into a psychology of subtle intuition in the later half, and in matter of language, the experimenting exuberance of Jacobean speech moderated into sensible,
well-directed idioms with the Hanoverians.

Thus, the literary men in the late Eighteenth Century came to possess a growing sensitiveness and spirituality in art. They showed an increasing pleasure in natural landscape, a prepossession for the primitive and renewed interest in a pre-restoration style. On the other hand, they reviewed concern and sensitiveness to all human activities, in general. They regained interest in nature, colour and romance. This developing 'romantic' attitude and humanitarian sentiment in the second half of the century along with the political and religious liberalism and the influence of Longinus in the first half, made the atmosphere of the whole of the Eighteenth Century very much congenial for the proper understanding and appreciation of the essential qualities of Milton's works. To elaborate, political and religious liberalism neutralized, to a great extent, the critical antipathy towards Milton as a man and thinker and gained for him immense praise as an advocate of republicanism and divine poet. Longinus taught the critics to appreciate the sublime qualities of Milton's works and with the oncoming of the Romantic current Milton began to be all the more recognised and appreciated as the representative of true ideal from which poetry had since declined, and accorded the same rank as that of Shakespeare and Spenser,
which was far above that of the accepted writers of the day. Eighteenth Century offered Milton maximum number of readers and provided him with maximum critical appreciation. Thorpe said, "it is difficult to imagine a more exalted poetic reputation, and the Eighteenth Century attitude towards Milton will never be duplicated in favour of any other Writer."

32. For further elaboration of the point Vide J. Thorpe, Milton criticism (1951) introduction, PP 4-8.
33. Ibid., p 8.
GENERAL STUDY OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY
MILTON CRITICISM.

The hold of moral and religious faith being the most deeprooted aspect of Eighteenth Century life, the literary critics of the age, in their assessment of Milton, attached maximum value to the poet's religious teachings. They considered *Paradise Lost* as the most significant work of the poet. They made exhaustive study of the epic and came to look upon it as a poetical version of their universally accepted theology. *Paradise Lost* was venerated as a principal support of the orthodox creed and appealed equally to Anglicans, Dissenters, Roman Catholics and the Deists. All the important critics of the age like Dennis, Addison, Defoe, John Hughes, Elijah Fenton, Dr. Johnson, and Nathaniel Salmon, devoted their studies exclusively on this poem and in their discussions, the critics scattered the epithets "sacred" and "divine" with a lavish hand.

However, the heterodox elements in Milton's theology which were later confirmed by the discovery of *De Doctrina* did not go totally unnoticed by his Eighteenth Century critics. Its affinity with Arianism and Socianism was hinted at by Toland. Jonathon Richardson too focussed on

34. For further elaboration of the fact Vide, O. S. Lewis *De Descriptione Temporum*, (1955) passim
it in his *Explanatory Notes and Remarks on Paradise Lost* in 1734. Again, in 1738-9 a German Magazine and *the Daily Gazette* to which J.T. Shawcross had referred in the introduction to his *Milton and Critical Heritage* (1970) debated the issue whether Milton corrupted our notions of spiritual things deliberately and wantonly, by gross and sensual representation and blending heathenism and christianity in an unnatural medley. But after all, such issues did not get much circulation among the Eighteenth Century readers as they felt sort of uneasy to question what appeared to them only a poetic version of their own religious beliefs.

The Eighteenth Century critics highly praised Milton, also for the sublimity of his thought and they maintained that this characteristic of Milton's poetic genius was most impressively displayed in *Paradise Lost*. They, indeed, to speak in Dennis' language, reserved their highest praise for the poet "all for one thing and that is for having carried away the prize of sublimity from both the Ancients and Moderns"\(^{35}\). Simultaneously, Milton was accorded more and more explicit recognition as a champion

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35. Dennis' letter to Dr. S m, *The Critical Works of John Dennis*, ed by E.N. Hooker (1939), ii p. 221.
of the inwardness and freedom of true poetry by the precursors of the Romantic movement who were counterbalancing the rationalising 'correct school of Pope.' But, the Eighteenth Century critics themselves being Neo-classicists, also sometimes felt uneasy with Milton's unconventional craftsmanship. Even such an admirer of Milton as Addison could not but confess that he thought that the fable of Paradise Lost was defective and some of the incidents in the poem lacked in probability. Addison also said that Milton's autobiographical digressions and allusions to heathen fables in his epic were against the canon of unity. John Dennis too declared Paradise Lost to be the most lofty but most irregular poem that has been produced by the mind of Man. Dr. Johnson pointed to the want of human interest, confusion of spirit and matter, and the defect in the conduct of the narrative in the epic.

But a good number of Eighteenth Century critics like Leland were so charmed by the sole characteristic

of the sublimity of Milton's imagination that they, whenever embarrassed by the nonconventional elements in Milton's epic, immediately declared the poet as an artist above the conventional neoclassical codes and maintained that the fine arts have no rules, but genius to direct them.

The Eighteenth Century critics, though they were mostly concerned with Milton's epic, discussed his other works too in a scattered way.

For example, the minor poems were the concern of Sir Trumbull in a letter to Pope. Swift made incidental allusion to the *Divorce Tracts* in 1708. *Samson Agonistes* was praised by Atturbury in 1722. Defoe specifically discussed *Paradise Regained*. Dr. Johnson's biography contained literary criticism of all works of Milton and various notices suggested that at the turn of the century,

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Milton's prose works also drew attention of the literary students.

The Eighteenth Century readers of Milton did not stop only with appreciating and criticising the poet. The practicing poets among them also tried to imitate him. They wrote maximum amount of blank verse, utilising Miltonic mannerisms, like Latinism, inversion of natural word-orders and collections of sonorous proper names. The prominent followers were John Philip (The Splendid Shilling, 1701), Thompson (The Seasons, 1726-1730) and Cowper (The Task). But the sword of Achilles was too mighty for these poets and they, though often succeeded in following the external aspects of Milton's poetry, mostly failed to copy Milton's spirit and inspiration.

The poems which proved most influential were Paradise Lost, L'Allegro and II Penseroso. The pair of lyrics, for their combination of freshness and poetic enthusiasm with precision of workmanship and restraint of mood, made them particularly adoptable to the transitional stage between the passing away of the Neoclassical phase and advent of Romantic period. Cowper, Gray, and Thomson derived much inspiration from them.
The Eighteenth Century critics paid their attention to Milton's biography also. They were able to judge Milton the man with more or less, an unbiased mind as the political problems posed by his debates with Salmasius, More, and Dr. Mouline a half century before had, by this time, almost dissipated themselves. Still, some staunch Tories like Johnson could not so easily forget and forgive Milton the Republican and they could not but always think of Milton's character as obliquely informed by spiteful republicanism and displeasing personal qualities.

During the Eighteenth Century, Milton was, for the first time, introduced to the wide continental stage. His works were translated in Latin, Greek, Italian, French, German and other languages. Paolo Rolli Translated *Paradise Lost* in 1729 and *Comus* in 1737; Handel adopted the companion poems in Italian in 1740. In 1730, translation of all the poems of Milton were published in *The H lagus* in three volumes and to them a critical dissertation on *Paradise Lost* by Constantine de Maguy, and a discussion of *The Fall of Man* by M. Durand were added.
Critical letters on *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* came out in 1731. Further translations of collected or individual poems continued through the century. Theatrical and musical adaptations of parts of *Paradise Lost* were produced in France in 1736, 1742, 1758 and 1763. *Paradise Lost* and the companion poems were translated into German in 1740 and 1782 respectively. Hayden's setting of *The Creation* was written in 1798.

The foreigners were impressed mainly by Milton's ideas. They attached great significance to his political ideology and philosophy. But Miltonic style and technique did not appeal to them much and *Paradise Lost* was mostly censured by them as a violator of classical rules. They did not pay much attention to Milton's prose, neither did they feel much interest about Milton's personal life.43.

During the Eighteenth century, Milton scholarship also advanced to a great extent. A line of distinguished editors and commentators were engaged in study of Milton's biography, explanation and illustration of his


44. Ibid.
poems and discovery of sources and analogues of *Paradise Lost*, in particular.

The most sensational edition of the age was that of Richard Bentley (1732). It reconstituted *Paradise Lost* according to classical methods, amending and slashing many original passages which offended the editor’s classical taste. Bentley had an idea that some former editor, taking advantage of Milton’s blindness, had interpolated some passages of his own in Milton’s poem and made some changes here and there to the detriment of original meaning and metre. In his edition Bentley wanted to make up for such interpolations and changes. But Bentley’s endeavour met only with ridicule instead of appreciation. The single person who appreciated him and is worthy of mention, was William Empson.

The two Jonathon Richardsons, father and son, published *Explanatory Notes and Remarks on Paradise Lost* in 1734. The father provided some biographical details about Milton, while the son offered some learned explanations of the scholarly allusions in the poem. Both were sympathetic in their interpretation of Milton’s life and art.
In 1740, Francis Pick, discussed Milton's style and language and method of composition in *New Memoirs of the Life and poetical works of John Milton* and also made a biographical study of the poet.

In 1749, Thomas Newton published the first variorium edition of *Paradise Lost* and added a new 'life' to it. It was highly appreciated by contemporary readers. Later, it provided the basis of Henry Todd's complete variorium of Milton's poetical works in 1801.

The Eighteenth Century Milton scholars also investigated the sources of the poet's literary borrowings. William Landor, in 1749, claimed to have traced the originals of *Paradise Lost* in Hugo Grotius' Latin drama *Adamas Exul*. On the other hand, Hayley, being a follower of Voltaire, discovered similarities between *Paradise Lost* and *Adamo* of Andreine, while Dunster thought that Sylvester's *Du Brutus* exerted the primary formative influence on Milton's style in *Paradise Lost*.

Thus, the above study shows, throughout the Eighteenth Century, critics, scholars, biographers—all were deeply concerned with Milton and reacted to his thoughts and art with a congenial and appreciative attitude.

For a better appreciation of the unique character of Eighteenth Century Milton criticism, a brief study of Milton Criticism of other ages also is necessary by way of comparison and contrast.

To start with Milton's contemporary reception, the poet, to speak the naked truth, failed to procure the 'fit audience though few among his contemporary readers who only paid some attention to his political and religious pamphlets and were, more or less, indifferent to his literary works. Ironically, immediately after the poet's death, critics started their discussions both about his life and his literary works in full swing, covering all the three main areas of edition, biography and literary criticism.

Some idea about the contemporary reception of Milton may be partially formed from re-issues of Milton's works within the seventeenth century. Among Milton's prose

46. For contemporary reception of Milton vide W.R. Parker, Milton's Contemporary Reputation (1940) passim, B. Rajan, Paradise Lost and the Seventeenth Century reader (1947)
works, The Reason of the Church Government and An Apology against a pamphlet called a Modest Confutation did sell well in their first edition (1642). It is obvious from the fact that they were reissued in 1654 with new title pages. They did not, however, call forth any literary criticism though they caused many rebuttals like John Bramhall's stinging words in The Serpent Salve or a Remedie for the Biting of an Aspe (1643) 47.

Of the divorce tracts The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce was in great demand. It first appeared in 1643. A greatly expanded edition was called for in 1644. It was again republished in 1644 and 1645 and apparently pirated edition also came out. Other pamphlets of the series, however, were not able to draw much attention and contemporary reactions to these Divorce tracts were, by no means, literary criticism. To illustrate, Ephraim Bagitt, referring to the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce, wrote, 'one hath published a tractate of divorce in which the bonds of marriage are let loose to inordinate lust, (he) groundeth his Error upon the words of

47. John Bramhall in "The Serpent Salve or a Remedie for the Biting of an Aspe" (1643) commented with reference to Milton's pamphlets: the most contemptible persons ever have the loosest tongues.
God" and Robert Baillie with reference to the same tract observed, "Mr. Milton permits any man to put away his wife upon mere pleasure, without fault and without the cognisance of any judge". 48

Of Education and Areopagitica received scanty attention. The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates (1649), however attracted the attention of the then Government and a slightly amplified edition was called for in the next year.

Among Milton's works as Secretary of Foreign tongue, Eikonoclastes and the first Defence were frequently noticed or referred to by the contemporary detractors of the poet and they evoked a number of rebuttals 49. In 1660, they were destroyed in 'public burning of seditious materials' by parliamentary order. The First Defence was also burned in continent in 1651. This First Defence was the most republished and revised of all Milton's works during the author's life-time and it was translated into Dutch and in other languages including English in 1692.


The two other Defences were not much known or read. The controversy over regicide and that with Salmasius, however, became the topic of two German dissertations, published in 1653 and 1657.

Of the four pamphlets of 1649–60, the first two received no notices at all. But The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free commonwealth was accorded immediate citation and two lengthy answers. The work was so much in demand that a Second edition was called for within a month of its first appearance. But, it was after all, unable to make any impact, either in stemming the Restoration or in altering its nature. The fourth pamphlet viz. Brief Notes upon a Late Sermon also drew attention and was regarded by a stinging attack in Sir Roger De Strange's No Blinde Guides. Of True Religion, Heresie, Schism, and Toleration was alluded to by Leigh in his The Transposer Rehearsed.

Of the remaining items of Milton's prose works 'Accedence Comment Grammar, History of Britain, The Art of Logic and Familiar Letters or Prolusions, The Character of the Long Parliament, and Declaration or letters Patents of the Election of John Sobeiski of Poland had gone quite unnoticed by his contemporaries,
except a side glance to the Grammar and one or two advertisements and some manuscript notations of the History of Britain.

The contemporary reception of Milton's poems was more pathetic. The collected edition of Milton's minor poems was first issued in 1645 with separate title pages and paginations, obviously to appeal to different kinds of readers. Prior to this edition, certain number of poems like On Shakespeare, An Epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester, (1632-1640), On Time, two or three poems on Hobson, A Maske (1637) and Epitaphium Damonis (1640) had been already in print. This new collected edition printed all the earlier publications, with a few exception. The contemporary reception of this volume, however, was not at all encouraging. Copies of it laid unsold for years and allusions to it also were pathetically lacking. Indeed, there is no evidence at all of contemporary awareness of this collected edition.

Even such a literary event as the publication of Paradise Lost did not seem to be of much significance to Milton's contemporaries. In 1668 and 1669, unsold copies of the epic were offered to the public with new
title pages to give the impression of new edition. Moreover, to aid the unfit audience and increase the sale, prose arguments were added to the finished poem. Such bibliographical evidences point to the obvious fact that Paradise Lost did not sell well among the poet's contemporaries. Still, a new edition was called for in 1674. In this edition book VII and Book X were divided into two each and fifteen lines were added here and there. But even such alterations could not improve the sale of the epic and there was a reissue of 1674 edition with the new title pages in 1675. During Milton's life-time, the epic was able to exact two allusions only, one by Edward Philips, and the other by Richard Leigh.

Paradise Regained, on the other hand - however unexpected it may seem when one considers the contemporary reception of Paradise Lost, was accorded the honour of being examined in a full study by Richard Meadowcourt. Samson Agonistes, with all its ideas about tragedy elaborated in its preface, however, failed

50. R. Meadowcourt, A critical Dissertation on Milton's Paradise Regained (1732)
to draw the attention of the literary critics of the day. Both *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes* had to wait until 1680 for a second edition.

Ironically, there was a sudden surge of critical discussions both about the poet's life and his works, immediately after his death.

In the field of edition, Sir Thomas Pope Blount and Patric Hume, were the first to offer Milton a purely scholarly treatment by pulling together references and extensive annotations on him and his works. Sir Blount, in his edition (1694), assembled the rather incidental comments of Dryden, Thomas Rhymer and the Aethenian Gazette. Patric Hume printed extensive learned annotations to *Paradise Lost* in 1695, and also provided biblical, Classical and etymological sources and analogues. From 1690 onward, the number of the editions of Milton's works was ever increasing. But unfortunately, no bibliography of them has remained for us. We are moreover baffled over reprints and slightly altered editions in various sizes or papers.

Milton, immediately after his death, drew the
attention of the biographers also\^{51}. The earliest biographers of the poet were John Aubrey, Edward Phillips, Cyriack Skinner (the so-called anonymous biographer) John Toland and Jonathan Richardson.

These men, in their works, supplied concrete data about the poet's life and a major area for the discussions and evaluations of the author and his works.

The most complete of Seventeenth Century Milton biographies was Edward Phillips' account. Phillips being Milton's nephew and pupil, his statements carried special significance though he was often discovered to have erred in dates and specific facts\^{52}.

The so-called Anonymous Biography of Milton is almost equally important. The author (whether he was Dr. Paget, or Cyriack Skinner or John Phillips) wrote, with an intimate and sympathetic understanding of the poet's political and religious ideas and seems to be particularly well informed about his literary habits and amanuenses. This biography has got a special significance as it furnishes a systematic account of Milton's life, parallel to or independent of that of Phillips'\^{53}.


\^{52} Edward Phillips' biography of Milton was first printed in 1694.

\^{53} The Anonymous biography was first discovered in 1889 among the papers of Antony Wood and first published by Parsons in 1962.
John Aubrey was another supplier of first hand materials of Milton biography. Aubrey himself knew the poet personally. Moreover, he collected materials also from the poet’s relatives whom he gave due recognition, in his notes, by acknowledging the sources of his information. Though Aubrey occasionally did gossip, his notes are, on the whole, trustworthy.\footnote{John Aubrey’s notes of Milton were first published by William Godwin in his Life of E & J. Phillips and subsequently by Andrew Clark in his edition of Aubrey’s Brief Lives.}

John Toland and Jonathon Richardson also contributed some new items.\footnote{John Toland’s The Life of Milton was first published in 1698 and Jonathon Richardson wrote Explanatory Notes and Remarks on Milton’s Paradise Lost in 1734.} Toland’s biography is full of critical comments on Milton’s works. It seems the biographer was very antipathetic to Milton’s political ideology and his anathema caused him much troubles in 1699.

Soon, after his death, the literary critics also accorded Milton a warm reception. They, from the very beginning, recognised him as the chief representative of the heroic tradition and often compared him with Homer and Virgil. Paradise Lost drew their attention most and influenced by the translation of Longinus,
the leading critics of the day like Dryden, Roscommon, Buckingham and Gildon, labelled him as the most sublime poet that England had ever produced. In 1692, Samuel Wesley made a comparative study of Milton and Edward Waller in the Athenian Gazette. There, the author maintained that Milton was not so much a general poet as a sublime and great one, for despite the length of Paradise Lost, the corpus of his poetry was relatively small, when one considered the number of individual poems. The comments is indicative of a knowledge of Milton's minor poems, critical considerations of which were however pathetically lacking until Thomas Warton's edition in 1785.

Milton was, at this time, often compared with Francis Quarles, too, of course - by those only, who looked for religious sentiment in poetry. The poet's fame was recorded by William Preston, John Hughes and Charles Goodall.

Paradise Lost brought loftiest praises as well as most serious censures for Milton from his Seventeenth Century critics, of whom Dryden was the pioneer. Dryden's comments represented almost all the censures and appreciations of his fellow critics. He attacked the
stresses of Miltonic verse that seemed to him dull and harsh of sound and criticised the subject of *Paradise Lost* as lacking propriety for an epic. Dryden was unhappy with Milton's language also. It seemed to him antiquated and neologistic. The critic declared Milton's blank verse to be completely indefensible. In 1697, again, Dryden made the historical observation (in terms of the plot-construction of Milton's epic) that it was definitely the devil whom the poet selected as hero in *Paradise Lost*. This observation of Dryden introduced a distinct tradition in Milton criticism which was continued through Blake and Shelley till date.

Indeed, many of Dryden's scattered comments like "his (Milton's) subject is not that of an heroic poem, properly so called", or "antiquated words were his choices, not his necessity", or "neither will I justify Milton for his blank verse"—became the foundation Pillars of the whole complex of Milton's critical heritage in course of time.

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56. Dryden's critical opinions about Milton are scattered in his *Preface to the Second Miscellany, Essay on Satire* (1693), *The State of Innocence*. 
In spite of all his censures, Dryden highly appreciated the excellences of Milton's poetry on various occasions. His "Epigram", his comments in the preface to The State of Innocence bear ample evidence of his appreciative attitude. Dryden declared, Paradise Lost is undoubtedly one of the greatest, most notable and sublime poems which either this age or nation had produced. We may add to this his remarks to Lord Bukhurst about the poet that "This man cuss us all and the ancients too". His Epigram also was an epitome of his critical admiration of Milton.

Both Dryden's censures and praises were repeated again and again by his fellow critics. Edward Pettit and Charles Leslie were among the major Milton detractors of Dryden's day. The former, in a satiric vision of Purgatory, saw Milton as one really on the side of the papal forces because of his arguments against monarchy while the later launched an attack against Milton's unorthodox treatment of the angels, God and the incarnation in his epics.

57. Dryden's epigram was printed beneath Milton's portrait in Paradise Lost, ed. Jacob Tonson, 1688.
The important Milton admirers of Seventeenth Century were Roscommon, Buckingham, Gildon and Ellwood. From the materials collected by Shawcross in his *Milton and Critical Heritage*, (1970) it is obvious that these critics, irrespective of the various levels of their opinions, ranked Milton as a supremely great poet in spite of the irregularity and non-conformity of his epic. Roscommon was a great supporter of Milton's blank verse and he expressed his very support in blank verse. John Dennis echoed Roscommon's conclusions in 1692. But Thomas Rhymer sharply differed from them about this point. Being a strict adherent to rhyme, Rhymer was so disgusted with Milton's blank verse that he labelled *Paradise Lost* as 'a work which some are pleased to call a poem.' This comment of Rhymer was often cited by his followers in later days.

Milton's debate with Salmasius and Morus made him familiar to the international audience even within Seventeenth Century, and English, Latin or German editions of *Paradise Lost* introduced him to an ever-widening continental literary circle. To the foreigners Milton's political ideology seemed to be the most significant aspect of his works and they, generally, did welcome him
as an advocate of republicanism. Milton's politics, of course, was, also, deplored by some. But his epic was appreciated by both the supporters and detractors of his politics all the same.

The Seventeenth Century critics of Milton, both at home and abroad, did their duty by preparing the field for the future critics, though they themselves could not establish any systematic account of Miltonic tradition. To gain a well defined form, Milton's critical heritage had to wait till such epoch-making critics as Addison and Johnson took up the responsibility.

The Eighteenth Century Milton criticism carried on the Seventeenth Century attitudes as well as introduced a few innovations which have been already discussed in the previous chapter. During the Nineteenth Century, the Romantic critics introduced a number of radical changes both in the methods and in emphasis in Milton criticism. Firstly, the critics of the age switched over their attention from Milton's ideas to his artistry, and thereby reversed the approach of their Eighteenth Century counterparts.\footnote{For the Nineteenth Century critic's reaction to Milton's thought Vide J. Thorpe, Milton Criticism Selection from Four Centuries 1962. PP 41-114.}
Only a few critics, like Landor, Hunt, De Quency, Ruskin, Henry Hallam, Macaulay and Emerson showed some concern for Milton's thought. But even they did not find it to be sufficiently attractive and worthy. Thus, their verdict on Milton's thought was diametrically opposite to that of the Eighteenth Century critics. The Majority of the Romantic critics discovered that Milton's thought was primarily theology and that also a worthless one. Thorpe described the present position of Milton criticism with a metaphor that during this period Milton's expression was like a shrine for critical pilgrims while the mansion of his thought was a dilapidated house frequented only by ghosts. 59

Milton's craftsmanship, which did not matter much to the Eighteenth Century critics, appealed to the Romantics very much mainly due to its two characteristics viz artificiality and musical quality.

The most significant admirers of Milton's artistry in this age were John Keats and S.T. Coleridge. Milton's poetic luxury haunted the former for a long time. The restraint and dignity of Milton's utterances taught

59. J. Thorpe, Milton Criticism P.14
Keats the primary lessons of discipline in poetry and the romantic poet clearly acknowledged his debt to his predecessor. He also revealed in one of his letters how he being inspired by *Paradise Lost* once started to compose a blank verse epic himself on the Miltonic pattern. But Keats could soon realise that it was not possible for him to imitate the writer of *Paradise Lost*, for their paths were basically different.

Like Keats, Coleridge, too, was primarily concerned with Milton's craftmanship. He was specially charmed with the epic poet's artistry in the use of his language and the melody of his style. In the former, he discovered a certain degree of highly sophisticated "artificiality" to which he attached great positive value and he spoke very highly about Miltonic music too.

Appreciation of Milton's artistic achievements, in fact, continued throughout Nineteenth Century. In the mid-century, Macaulay, Channing, Emerson and Tennyson

60. For Keats' attitude to Milton Vide his letters dated May 3, 1818; August 14, 1819; September 21, 1819.
61. Coleridge's speech delivered in 1818, Lecture X. Coleridge's speech on Milton was printed in *Literary Remains* in 1836.
expressed unqualified praise for Milton's technique. Some critics like Landor, De Quincey, Hunt, Henry Hallam and Ruskin, however, in spite of their full approbation of the poet's artistry, maintained some reservation with regard to his Latinism, use of unusual rhythm and prepossession with sound effect.

The musical quality of Milton's poetry had tremendous significance for the Victorian critics too. Lowell and Saintsbury openly avowed that the meaning of Paradise Lost appeared to be entirely irrelevant and unessential once its enchanting music paves on the heart through the ears.

Among the Romantics, the single man who might claim to have understood Milton's spirit and taste was William Wordsworth. With his own temperate love of liberty and intense moral earnestness, he was properly equipped to appreciate the essential quality of the Seventeenth Century poet. His sonnet London in which he pleaded "Milton thou should'st be living at this hour" (1802) amply illustrates his attitude towards the epic poet and also reflects the influence of the admired on the admirer in practice. Wordsworth never tried consciously to ape Milton's stylistic peculiarities, but echoes of
Miltonic phrases entered into his utterance of their own accord, as he was often inspired by the very spirit of the epic poet.

Along with dichotomization of Milton's poetry into expression and thought and preference for the former, another novel contribution of the Romantics to Milton's critical heritage was the introduction of "Satanic Cult". Themselves being "spiritual rebels", they found Milton's characterisation of Satan very congenial. Moreover, they interpreted it absolutely in their own way as they lost the capacity to feel the very validity of the theological and moral system which disciplined Milton's poetic mind. Neither could they take the avowed statements of the poet in the epic as honest expressions of his real experience. Rather, they discovered in Milton's epic a breach between his promise and performance which, they thought, reflected a split personality. Milton declared at the very outset of Paradise Lost that in his epic, he was going to justify the ways of God to man. But the Romantics discovered in the poem only a justification of the actions of Satan and his glorification, and ironically, for all these elements
they appreciated the portrayer of this character all
the more. Of the Romantic Satanists, Blake was the leader.

Inverting the avowed ethical code of Paradise Lost he
first in 1793 declared in Marriage of Heaven and Hell
that Milton was of Devil's party in his subconscious
mind, and it was obvious from the very mode of his
writing. He wrote in fetters when he wrote of angels
and God, and at liberty when he wrote of devils and
Hell. Blake believed that the passion and rebellion
typified in Satan was the vital motive of Milton's
poetic inspiration in the epic. With this critic, Milton's
idolatry was indeed like a haunting phenomenon. He saw
the epic poet even in his waking dreams and thereby received
inspirations. He drew ninety paintings and engravings on
Miltonic subjects. Again, he created Urison in his Vala
in imitation of Satan and took Milton as the titular
hero of his another work.

Blake's important descendants were Sir Walter
Releigh, Matthew Arnold, Shelley and Byron. Releigh's book

62. W. Blake, Marriage of Heaven and Hell (1793), Sir
Walter Raleigh, Milton (1900); Matthew Arnold, Milton
(1888) P.B. Shelley, A Defence of Poetry (1821).
on Milton contains the standard opinions of the Romantic school. Matthew Arnold was a great admirer of the character of the Archangel and he observed that the dramatic portrayal of Satan in *Paradise Lost* (bk I and bk II) out-ranked in creative power all the rest of the poem. To Shelley, the archangel proved himself a perfectly moral being while God for him, bore the earmarks of a tyrant. To the romantic poet, Satan's was a very congenial character, and Shelley created a kindred character in his Prometheus who was superior to the Archangel only because of the difference that his action was for the good and not for the destruction of man.

Byron's soft corner and esteem for the character of Satan was reflected in his characterisation of Lucifer in *Cain* whom he represented as a champion of human thirst for intellectual emancipation.

It seems, however, during the Nineteenth Century, Milton's reputation as a religious teacher or divine poet lost its significance. The clearest evidence of this fact was the Romantics' cold reception of Milton's so long

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63. *Viz Milton*, London, Edward Arnold & Co Copyright(1900)
65. P. B. Shelly, *A Defence of Poetry* (1821)
unknown but most controversial theological treatise *De Doctrina Christiana*. Discovered in 1823 this treatise only confirmed the Eighteenth Century suspicion that Milton really had heterodox religious beliefs. Upon its discovery the king asked Bishop Summer to publish it in translation and it appeared in English in 1825. *De Doctrina* was then greeted by a few critical reviews. For example, it was made the subject of a popular study by William Ellery Channing in 1826 and provoked Macaulay's most celebrated essay on Milton in 1825. But no other mentionworthy event can be linked up with the discovery of *De Doctrina* within the romantic age. This rather indifferent reception was a clear indication that the weight of religious authority was no longer a significant support of Milton's reputation among the Romantic critics.

Again, the Nineteenth Century critics, did not show much interest in Milton's private life or political activities. They largely ignored the details of both, though, towards the middle of the century, a new trend grew to eulogise the poet for his private nobility and exemplary life, in particular. Milton's public life was deplored in general through out the century and many peculiar
suggestions began to appeared against him. Critics like Macaulay, De-Quincy, Landor, Tennyson, and Ruskin labelled Milton as a "puritan" - an adjective which proved detrimental to the reputation of a poet in the middle of the century. However, whenever Milton's political activities were discussed, he was praised for his unswearing devotion to the political cause he had espoused, though the critics of the day, broadly speaking, were not much concerned with Milton's political ideology itself.

The Nineteenth Century critics carried Milton scholarship far beyond the achievements of the previous age. The most standard collections of the day were the collected edition of the poetry and prose by John Milford (1851) and the Bonn edition of the prose which included the translations of Milton's Latin pamphlets, and they remained so until the Columbia edition was published in 1938. An indispensable biographical aid to the study of Milton was provided by David Masson in his six-volume Life of Milton—Narrated in Connection with the Political Ecclesiastical or Literary History of His Time. Masson's half century labour from 1840 to the 1890 pulled together every piece of information known about Milton the man,
his works and his time, and on the whole, represented Milton as a solemn, austere, proud, intolerant and scornful man. There were many supporters of Masson, followers. Some of them however held that Milton was at first the child of both the Renaissance and puritanism and a moderately normal young man and it was only after 1640, that he became a puritan in a detrimental sense. Others maintained that the poet was a disagreeable person without the benefit of a party. He commanded respect and reverence but the stern, unpleasant old man could not get admiration from any quarter.

The Nineteenth Century critics particularly Raleigh, Stephen and Gosse were much concerned with Milton's influence on the practicing poets, and on the whole, they held it to be positively harmful. Raleigh openly said that Milton's example had for two hundred years strangled all poets who had ever attempted to write blank-verse. But still, these Nineteenth Century critics never tempered their appreciation of the poet on account of his influence as have done the critics of our age.

66. Thorpe, Milton Criticism, (1951) Introduction,
67. Raleigh, Milton (1900) Chapter V-VII.
Now, to consider modern reception of Milton, the Twentieth Century, in its early years, simply carried on the Victorian traditions of Milton criticism. But in course of time, critics began to add more and more innovations to it and thus, to-day, Milton criticism has taken such a complex form that it is really very difficult to present any systematic account of it. Anyway, just for the sake of convenience, we may analyse it by taking recourse to some artificial divisions without implying any sense of exclusiveness.

Modern Milton critics may be categorised, broadly, into two groups—those who discussed Milton the man and thinker; and those whose concern was Milton the artist.

The aim of the first group of critics was to assess Milton's thought from purely intellectual point of view, without entangling it with theology and to assess Milton the man as he was, without any antipuritan or antirepublican prejudice. But this avowed scheme did not always fetch positive evaluations. Some critics like Hanford and Greenlaw have, of course, following this scheme, discovered many hither-to unrevealed qualities in Milton's thoughts. They have for example discovered in Milton a Renaissance thinker, who was a representative
of Spenser in particular, and they even declared the poet a "humanist". As a man also Milton seemed to them quite an attractive personality along with the broad humaneliness of the Renaissance.68.

But a majority of modern critics, like Dennis Saurat and Liljegran, have offered some rather unfavourable interpretations of Milton's thoughts and made a distorted figure of Milton's personality. To illustrate, Dennis Saurat, in *Milton: Man and Thinker*, attempted to disentangle the permanent human interest in Milton's thought, from theological rubbish and in his effort, he also, discovered in Milton's works a complete ontology, cosmology, psychology, ethics, religion, and politics with many original features in them. The critic believed that Milton had some passionate convictions of his own like his beliefs that the universe was a unit or man was the author of his own destiny or human nature and human race are on their way to good. Saurat observed that Milton's central ethics was guided by a faith in the supremacy of reason over passion while his political gospel was that of freedom. But the moment the critic came to analyse

Milton the man he discovered only a proud egotist in him with the fullest consciousness of a tremendous personality. He found that the poet had an acute sensibility and a powerful force of sensual passion and came to believe that what we call Milton's philosophy was actually the result of the interaction between the poet's personality and his circumstance. Thus, he said, Milton's strong feeling for the rightness of his desires was responsible for his idea of the legitimacy of the sensuous, and his metaphysical conception of the goodness of matter, and experience of his first marriage led him to regard the triumph of passion over reason as the root cause of evil while the obstacle to his freedom of action and speech exacted out of him his passion for a theory of liberty. On the other hand, the thwarting of his hopes for the commonwealth at the restoration drove him to search for the causes of human nature and rationalise the scheme of life a-new in his epic 69.

Liljegran is another modern critic of Milton the man who surveyed Milton's background in the cold light

of historical realism and discovered in the poet an extraordinary measure of Renaissance egotism and a machiavellian ruthlessness.

On the other hand, the continental critic, Heinrich Mutschmann detected the secret of Milton's character in his inferiority complex due to a congenital weakness of being an albino.

Alas! what a reception to the man who was venerated as a religious teacher by the Eighteenth Century critics!

In their attempt to organise Milton's thought and personality into something of broader intent and more contemporary relevance, the modern critics thus brought in some preposterous charges against Milton and they crossed the limit by making an antitheologian of Milton.

In the thirties and forties of the century some critics, like Tillyard, Bush and Grierson, attempted a historical balance of such extreme attitudes towards Milton. They for themselves discovered in Milton's thought a fusion of the protestant and Renaissance elements and labelled the poet as a 'Christian humanist'.

72. H.J.C. Grierson, Milton and Wordsworth, (1939)
To these critics, Milton appeared to be just a normal human being, though none the less great, along the line of the poet's early biographers who portrayed him as a pleasant, sociable and agreeable man. These critics did not like to characterise Milton exclusively with Renaissance attributes or puritan traits. Rather, they focussed on the basic fact that many of the chief characteristics of Puritan thought were ingredients of the Renaissance also. Nor did they ever try to make any lawless criminal or physical freak of the epic poet. In their interpretation of Milton as a poet, on the other hand, they emphasised the usefulness of his poetry to the modern world which is groping desperately for Values and Standard.

The modern critics who judged Milton as an artist are mostly Milton detractors. Ezra pound, Middleton Murray, Herbert Read and Bomamy Dobree, T.S.Elict and F.R.Leavis are some of them. These critics normally reflected on Milton through an unfavourable comparison of him with Donne and Dryden. They generally accused Milton of exploiting language as a kind of musical medium outside himself and greatly abused the poet for the absence of any trace of feeling and sensation.
behind his words. They maintained that Milton had
distorted the mother tongue by his use and left it
unsuitable in that form for other practicing poets.
These critics also condemned the influence of Milton
on other poets like Thompson, Gray, Cowper, Wordsworth,
Keats and Tennyson. Modern practicing poets, moreover,
in their attempt to reconstruct the English poetic
diction by bringing it closer to the language of
Shakespeare, Middleton and Tourneur, faced Milton as a
stumbling block and in an enraged tone, they censured
him mercilessly. Their strictures are indeed so pointed
that every Milton-admirer of the day thinks twice before
using such terms as "Organ music", "Planetary circlings"
or the "Grand style" any more with regard to Milton's
writings. They have also turned almost all modern
critics of the poet into a group of "involved persons"
who always suspect a split between Milton's words and
experience73 which T.S. Eliot diagnosed as dissociation
of sensibility.

But, what is most interesting and significant is

73. For a general account of Twentieth Century critical
reaction to Milton, both as an artist and as thinker
Vide, P. Murray "Milton: the modern phase: a study
of Twentieth Century criticism," (1967) Introduction
that even these modern Milton detractors are unable to deny the irresistible charm of Milton. Miltonic greatness indeed is a puzzle to them which they can neither explain nor justify. Recently, however, with a sign of hope, a new group of critics has appeared in the field of Milton criticism with an intention to repel the groundless charges of the foregoing anti Miltonists and the former Milton detractors also are showing a tendency to mitigate their earlier condemnations.

Now, to give a side glance at modern Milton scholarship, it has reached a very mature stage to-day. The official corpus of Milton's writings of Twentieth Century is the Columbia Edition which was completed in 1938. It provides a number of hitherto uncollected works of the poet. Some of them are published from manuscript for the first time. All the Latin pieces, even that of the Commonplace Book, the correspondence, and the Marginilia are translated and there is an excellent subject index also. Though the edition lacks editorial equipment in

74. Viz Tillyard, Grierson, Bush, Lewis.
75. A comparative study of T.S. Eliot's lectures on Milton in 193 and in 1947 will make the point obvious.
the form of annotations and introductions, it is expected to remain a standard collection for what it does supply. Editions of Milton's works by Verity also are very significant. They represent a complete and learned annotating of Milton's poetry. On the other hand, the Yale press published a series of individual editions of Milton's prose which was later continued by the Cornell press, but the task, unfortunately, was not carried to completion. Modern Milton scholarship provides us even dictionaries of Milton's language, his geographical, historical and Biblical allusions, and also with concordance of Milton's Latin poems.

In the Modern age, there are also numerous biographical aids to Milton study. Stevens contributed much in his reference guide (1930), which includes all materials published since 1800 and Fletcher's supplement carries the subject down to 1930. Of late, many works have been done on the problems connected with the early collections of Milton's works. Among the suppliers of smaller general biographies, Mark Pattison, Belloc and Rose Macaulay, are important. They have focussed on the life of Milton from different points of view with varying emphasis. For example Pattison interpreted the life of the poet along
the line of and on the basis of the materials furnished by Masson's book\textsuperscript{76}. Belloc himself being a staunch Catholic was antipathetic to Milton's religious, political and social ideology. But none the less he appreciated Milton as a poet\textsuperscript{77}. Rose Macaulay's book is based on a sound scholarship in the Seventeenth Century literature and history\textsuperscript{78}. Recently, documentary research about the life of Milton has been very active and the accumulations of new data warrant many new undertakings.

Now, to summarise the above survey of Milton criticism from its inception till date, we may observe that Milton died, so to speak, an unrecognised genius, as the Seventeenth Century Milton readers were concerned only with his political and religious pamphlets, though towards the turn of the century, Milton's poetical works, drew the attention of the literary critics, and Dryden laid the foundation of his critical heritage. But 'Miltonic tradition', properly speaking, was established by the early Eighteenth Century critics of the poet. The Eighteenth Century critics studied all the major topics related with Milton's literature, philosophy and biography, and provided the poet a well defined critical tradition. They accorded him maximum praise as a poet, particularly

\textsuperscript{76} M. Pattison, \textit{Milton}, (1879).
\textsuperscript{77} H. Belloc, \textit{Milton} (1970)
\textsuperscript{78} R. Macaulay \textit{Milton} (1934)
for the sublimity of his thought, though they felt a bit uneasy about his artistic craftsmanship. During Nineteenth Century, critical attention changed its focus. The romantic critics were little concerned with Milton's thought and private life. They concentrated their attention mainly on the poet's artistry which highly pleased them. The Milton critics of the Twentieth Century, on the other hand, seem to be concerned both with Milton's thought and his language alike and they interpret both the items more in the line of their Eighteenth Century predecessors than that of the Nineteenth Century Romantics, as they temperamentally like to rely more on rationality than on emotion. The Eighteenth Century critics, having lived in an age of reason and discipline, their interpretation of Milton appears to their twentieth century counterparts quite balanced. The similarities between the attitudes of the two ages towards Milton indeed often present us so many pleasant surprises in our survey of Milton's critical heritage from its inception till date.

Thus, Eighteenth Century criticism of Milton makes us feel its tremendous significance not only as the foundation phase of Miltonic tradition but proves itself indispensable also for the better understanding of Milton criticism of our own day. In our study of Milton and
Milton criticism we are bound to seek guidance from such men as Addison and Johnson.