

# Epic Poem: A Comparative Analysis of John Milton's 'Paradise Lost' with Michael Madhusudan Dutt's 'Meghnadbhadh Kavya'

Mr. Arghya Chakraborty

Assistant Professor, Parul University, Vadodara, Gujarat(India)

## ARTICLE DETAILS

### Article History

Published Online: 10 June 2019

### Keywords

Epikos, Grandiose style, Comparative Analysis, Bravery, Courage.

### \*Corresponding Author

Email: arghyarony95[at]gmail.com

## ABSTRACT

An epic in its most specific sense is a genre of classical poetry originating in Greece. The word epic is derived from the ancient Greek adjective, epikos, which means a poetic story. In Literature, an epic is a long narrative poem, which is usually related to heroic deeds of a person of an inexplicable courage and unequalled bravery. In order to depict this bravery and courage, the epic uses grandiose style. An Epic poem is a lengthy narrative poem ordinarily concerning a serious subject containing details of heroic deeds and events significant to a culture or nation. In this paper, I will give a comparative analysis of two epic poems from different time periods-one is Milton's Paradise Lost and the other is Michael Madhusudan Dutt's "Meghnadbhadh Kavya"(The Slaying Of Meghnad). One is written in the 17th century(Paradise Lost)and the other in the 19th century(Meghnadbhadh kavya). One is taken from the sacred texts of Christianity "Bible" and the other from the great Indian epic "The Ramayana". But there is a common underlying principle that marks these two epic poems.

## 1. Introduction

An epic in its most specific sense is a genre of classical poetry originating in Greece. The word epic is derived from the ancient Greek adjective, epikos, which means a poetic story. In Literature, an epic is a long narrative poem, which is usually related to heroic deeds of a person of an inexplicable courage and unequalled bravery. In order to depict this bravery and courage, the epic uses grandiose style. An Epic poem is a lengthy narrative poem ordinarily concerning a serious subject containing details of heroic deeds and events significant to a culture or nation. *Milman Pary and Albert Lord* have argued about the forms of Homeric epics, the earliest works of western literature which is in Oral poetic forms. Another type of Epic poetry is Epyllion, a brief narrative poem with Romantic or Mythological theme in it. Some of the most famous example of epic poetry include the Ancient Greek *Iliad and Odyssey*, *Virgil's Aeneid*. The ancient Indian *Ramayana and Mahabharata*, *Dante's Divine Comedy*, *John Milton's Paradise Lost* and several others.

## 2. Objective

In this paper, I will give a comparative analysis of two epic poems from different time periods-one is Milton's Paradise Lost and the other is Michael Madhusudan Dutt's "Meghnadbhadh Kavya"(The Slaying Of Meghnad). One is written in the 17<sup>th</sup> century(Paradise Lost)and the other in the 19<sup>th</sup> century(Meghnadbhadh kavya). One is taken from the sacred texts of Christianity "Bible" and the other from the great Indian epic "The Ramayana". But there is a common underlying principle that marks these two epic poems.

## 3. Methodology

The analysis is divided in five parts. The first part deals with the idea of an epic poem. The second part deals with the Conventions of an epic poem. The third part shows Milton's Paradise Lost as an epic poem. The fourth part shows Michael

Madhusudan Dutt's Meghnadbhadh Kavya as an epic poem. The fifth part of the paper will provide a comparative analysis of both the epic poems in context of Invocation and prologue, epic hero, epic similes and structure of both the epics.

## 4. Scope

The slaying of Meghanad(translated in English)gives us idea about the original version of "Meghnadbhadh kavya" written in Bengali by Michael Madhusudan Dutt. The central proposition of this paper is to provide a comparative analysis of both the epics, taken from two different time periods and two different nationalities.

## 5. Definition of Epic

### Origin

Late 16<sup>th</sup> century(as an adjective): via Latin from Greek epikos, from epos word,song.related to eipein say.

## 6. Characteristic Features

- An epic is a long poem or other work of art celebrating heroic feats.
- Epic comes from the Greek for song because Greek poets like Homer sung their poems.
- A long, narrative poem written in elevated style
- The heroes is of great historical or legendary importance performing valorous deeds.
- The setting of an epic is vast covering great Nations, the world, or the Universe.
- The action is important for the destiny of the Nation or of the people.
- It leaves or inculcates moral values or ideas.
- Examples:- *Homer's Iliad*, *Virgil's Aeneid*, *Milton's Paradise Lost*, *Michael Madhusudan Dutt's Meghanadbhadh Kavya*.

## 7. Conventions of Epic

- All epic begins with invocation (prayer to muse).
- Hero is a figure of great cosmic or national importance.
- He has superhuman traits, he has an expressive physical structure.
- Setting of an epic is vast, it covers a wide surface of geographical distance.
- The action of the hero showcases deeds of valour and courage.
- Intervention of supernatural forces.
- The style of writing the epic is ceremonial with the use of Homeric similes in it.
- Narrative opens in "In medias res" (in the middle of things).
- The hero is in such a point of juncture that he has lost everything.
- Use of catalogues or Genealogy.
- Use of formal speeches and monologues.
- Every epic should describe the armament of a hero.
- Use of stock phrases (which repeat phrases again and again).

## 8. Milton's Paradise Lost as an Epic poem

Paradise Lost is an epic poem in blank verse by the 17<sup>th</sup> century English poet John Milton (1608-1674). The first version published in 1667, consisted of ten books with over ten thousand lines of verse. A second edition published in 1674, arranged into twelve books (in the manner of Virgil's Aeneid) with minor revisions throughout the book and a note on the versification. The poem concerns the biblical story of the fall of Man; the temptation of Adam and Eve by the fallen angels Satan to their utter damnation (i.e. their expulsion from the Garden of Eden). Milton's purpose of writing this epic poem as stated in Book-1, is to "justify the ways of God to Men". The poem is separated into twelve books or sections, the length of which vary greatly. The poem follows the epic tradition of starting "In Medias Res" (Latin for in the midst of things), the background of the story being recounted later. Milton's story has two narrative arcs, one from the perspective of Satan (Lucifer) and the other following the downfall of Adam and Eve. It begins after Satan and the other rebel angels have been defeated by the Almighty God and thrown to Hell as a punishment. The poem begins from Satan's perspective- his deliberate plans to reconquer Heavens and shook God's position from there, his indomitable courage and unconquerable will that enables him to put forth the battle forward. It has also the story of Adam and Eve, their temptation and finally their ultimate downfall which makes it a new kind of epic- a domestic one. It follows the other epic conventions i.e;

1. It begins with Invocation.
2. It has a hero of national importance.
3. The action of the hero showcases deeds of valour and courage.
4. Homeric Similes.
5. It opens with "In Medias Res".
6. Use of Catalogues or Genealogy and others.

It is long (epics usually are, although that is not their defining characteristic!) and addresses the collective imagination of his culture—the identification of Christians with their own foundation myths as described in Hebrew scriptures. This is part of what makes Milton's poem an epic.

## 9. Michael Madhusudan Dutt's Meghnadbadh Kavya as an epic poem

Meghnadbadh kavya (The Saga of Meghnad's killing) is the most famous and most acclaimed poem by the poet Michael Madhusudan Dutt. It is based on the demise of Meghnad (a.k.a. Indrajit), son of Ravana, the villain of the classic Sanskrit epic Ramayana. It was first published in 1861, incidentally the year of birth of the Bengali Author Rabindranath Tagore, who afterwards wrote a review on it. The Ballad is divided into 9 different Sargas, i.e.; parts. Each part exhibits different incidents. Starting from the death of Beerbahu, son of Ravana, it is continued till the Sati-daha of Prameela, Meghnad's beloved wife. Ravana, along with his sons were the ones performing evil deeds in the Ramayana, which was originally written in Sanskrit by the sage Valmiki. But Dutt claims to have found a tragic hero in Ravana, as he was conversant with Western literature. He feels a shadow of Hector of Troy in Meghnad. According to him, he realized the cause of Ravana's heinous crimes. He says that Meghnad was worshipping Lord Shiva, while Lakshmana attacked him with help of Meghnad's uncle, Bhivishana. This unfortunate hero twice endangered Rama but could not survive in this relentless battle. This is the central theme of this epic. Here Meghnad is shown to be a Patriot, a loving husband, a caring son and a friend to his countrymen. There are some necessary points that Dutt kept in mind for the completion of this kind of epic:-

1. First and foremost he needed a language.
2. His invention of Blank Verse.
3. He also needs a Subject.
4. The slant or tone of the epic.
5. His influence from West like Mahabharata and Ramayana and also from European sources of Inspiration.

Madhusudan wanted to be like Homer: to take an inchoate tradition and give it lasting, cogent literary shape. So, he wrote an epic in nine books: everything planned and controlled the climax- the actual slaying of Meghnad, carefully placed at the end of Book vi- not too near the end of the poem, any more than Milton placed the eating of the forbidden fruit too near the end of Paradise Lost. It comes in Book ix, proportionally similar in position in Milton's twelve book epic to the death of Meghnad in Madhusudan's nine book epic.

## 10. Comparison of both the epics (Milton's Paradise Lost and Michael Madhusudan Dutt's Meghnadbadh Kavya).

### • Invocation and Prologue.

Every now and then in the history of Literature, a poet comes along with a truly ambitious project: to embody his entire language in a major work, to speak for a whole nation or community to give it a classic touch to which subsequent generations can again and again be recapitulated. In Europe, one thinks of Dante, setting out "to purify the dialect of the tribe"; Edmund Spenser, glorifying in "The Fairie Queene", Queen Elizabeth I and her national and religious settlements; Milton giving covert warnings in Paradise Lost in order for the regicides of Puritanism; or of Wordsworth, linking the English sense of Nationhood irrevocably to her Northern lakes and hills and so on. Madhusudan set out to do that for Bengali, and even today his audacity and his achievement are brilliantly concealed and everlasting in all of his works. He gave Modern Bengali literature, its only true classic "Meghnadbadh kavya" to return in each generation to find new meanings in it every time. In order to start with the structure of Milton's Paradise Lost, I

want to mention some of the Miltonic conception in Paradise Lost which includes the Invocation, prosodic structure, thematic structure and imagery and symbolism.

The invocation in Paradise lost includes the subsequent four invocations distributed at significant points in the course of the poem (Book 1,3,7 and 9). The first is the most important because it begins the whole poem. The second invocation introduces books 3 and 4 in which Satan finds his way to Eden and discovers Adam and Eve. The third invocation introduces Raphael's account of the creation in Book 7 and 8. The fourth and final invocation changes the Poetic mood, acclaiming the Fall which occupies the final four books of this epic poem.

In Madhusudan Dutt's Meghnadbhadh kavya the invocation is also of a Muse which gets reflected in Madhusudan's captivating English letters to find statement after statement of his ebullient, indomitable ambition:-

"There never was a fellow more madly after the Muses than your poor friend! Night and day I am at them. So, you must not lay aside Meghnad. If you do, I shall begin to rave. The Muses before everything" is my motto! ..... I am anxious that the work should be finished by the end of the year, and anxious to know how far I have succeeded in getting into the true heroic style....(14<sup>th</sup> July 1860). Dutt even summed up his project in an eccentric heraldic emblem, little noticed by critics either then or since, but explained by the pioneering editor of Meghnad-badh kavya, Dinanath Sanyal to Madhusudan's biographer Nagendranath Som. The emblem appeared on early editions of the epic and was reproduced as a frontispiece to Dinanath Sanyal's edition of 1917. It shows the Elephant(hati) of India, the Lion(singha) of Europe, the Sun(surya) of Madhusudan's own personality and genius, the Lotus(satadala) that represented the works produced by those three elements combined and finally a sloka in Sanskrit: sariram va patayeyam karyyam va sadhayeyam: "I would rather die than fail to achieve what I have set out to do".

Milton begins Paradise Lost in the traditional Epic manner with a prologue invoking the Muse, in this case Urania, the Muse of Astronomy. He calls her the "Heavenly Muse" and says that he will sing "Of Man's first Disobedience", the story of Adam and Eve and their Great fall from Grace.

"Of Man's 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.....(Book 1 line no 1-10).

Madhusudan Dutt takes European sources of inspiration in his epic poem. Meghnadavadha kavya(1861) reflects such European influences, and through his letters Dutt proudly tells us some of his sources. Mr. Ram is to be conducted through Hell to his father, Dasaratha, like another aeneas. Dante's Inferno and Milton's Paradise Lost are the sources of inspiration in Dutt's narrative. Rama plays a significant role in Meghnadbhadh kavya in comparison with Satan in Milton's Paradise Lost. One is a character of indomitable courage, bravery and truth, the other is a character not of truth, but of

indomitable courage and bravery. It is through Rama, Dutt shows us the defeat of truth over evil when Lakshmana is mortally wounded by Ravana as a revenge for his son's death at the end of Canto-7. Canto-8 opens with Rama bewailing the apparent loss of his beloved younger brother. All this shows Dutt's profound interest towards European sources of inspiration.

#### • Epic Hero

The epic must center around the Hero. This seems obvious. But in the "idea" or "thesis" epic the poem centers around the hero in such a way that through the hero the secondary purpose of the epic is fulfilled. First of all, the hero is always a noble character. Secondly, he is an important person among his fellow men. Thirdly, he is a friend of the Gods(or of God) and receives favours from them. Finally, around him the poem centers or to sum it all up in a definition, we may say that an epic hero is an important person of noble and generosity who is divinely favored by Gods and Goddesses and around whom the poem centers.

Milton devotes much time and energy to portraying Satan and his supporters. Many more rebel angels than good angels are mentioned in the poem and they are more efficiently characterized. Satan himself is by general agreement the most vivid and lucid character in Paradise Lost, indeed for some readers he is also the de facto hero of the poem. So marked is his dominance as to lead doubts in the mind of some critics, notably William Blake about the success of Milton's essential enterprise and the central theme of the poem-"to justify the ways of God to Men". Writers and critics of the Romantic era advanced the notion that Satan was a promethean hero, pitting himself against an unjust God. Satan himself is a character of indomitable courage and unconquerable will. He does not repent or changes, he boasts. Though he is thrown out of Heaven by the Almighty God for his evil purpose to deceive others, still he possess his indomitable courage to transform Hell into Heaven through his willpower and his unconquerable mindpower and this gets reflected in his speeches:- "The mind is its own place

And in itself can make a Heaven of Hell,  
A Hell of Heaven".

For Satan, it is better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven. He does not want himself to become a slave to God in order to serve him, but wants to become the king of Hell in order to reign freely and securely in Hell. This shows his positive qualities to become an epic hero. Milton has chosen to treat the Satanic predicament in the epic form and has therefore subordinated the absurdity of Satan to the misery which he suffers and inflicts. There is a real offence in Milton's Paradise Lost because Milton has imprudently made his Divine persons so anthropomorphic that their laughter arouses legitimately hostile reactions in us- as though we were dealing with an ordinary conflict of wills in which the winner ought not to ridicule and criticize the loser. The satanic predicament is made clear in Satan himself as Mr. William points out on his own showing he is suffering from a "sense of injure'd merit"(1,98). "He thought himself impaired"(v,662). He thought himself impaired because Messiah had been pronounced Head of the Angels. There are the 'wrongs' which Shelley

described as 'beyond measure'. Hence his revolt is entangled in contradictions from the very outset, and he cannot even raise the banner of liberty, equality and justice without getting admitted in a tell-tale parenthesis that "orders and degrees jarr not with liberty (v,789). Throughout the poem he is engaged in sawing off the branch on which he is sitting on, not only in the quasi-political sense indicated, but in a deeper sense still, since a creature revolting against an Almighty or creator is revolting against the source of his own powers-including even one's own power to revolt.

In Meghanadbadh kavya, the title "epic hero" is gifted to Meghanad by Michael Madhusudan Dutt. Meghanad is Michael's expected character. Not only that, the character of Meghanad resembles much more of Dutt's own character, so he put much of himself in portraying Meghanad. How Aryan pundits kills Meghanad without the help of any weapons, that's the main concern of this epic poem. So, the plot of Meghanadbadh kavya is much more important in this case. There is a dramatic rhythm in the character of Meghanad. The character of Ravana became a great challenge for Dutt. So, he portrayed that character very intricately and cautiously. But the reader's sympathy and affection goes for the victimized character. So, in that case the character of Meghanad touches the heart of the readers and this became a huge success for Dutt. The dramatic rhythm in the character of Meghanad lies in his sudden entry in the poem and then his unexpected dramatic disappearance at the end of the poem. In the first Sargas, we met with Meghanad at the end of the night, then in the next morning (3<sup>rd</sup> sargas) his entry in the Nikumbhila puja room for performing yagnas and several rituals and the sixth sarga focuses his bravery and courage when he died in a heroic way in the battlefield fighting a relentless battle with Lakshmana. Nationalism, war and love is intricately woven in the character of Meghanad. In the first sarga, before leaving Meghanad promises his wife Prameela that they will meet very soon. But, he never thought that his wife Prameela will cross the tumultuous seas in order to meet with him. Pridelful Meghanad sexually satisfied his wife. At the end of the third sarga their entry in bedroom together to spend this memorable night, then in the fifth sarga their departure towards the puja-room for performing yagnas and rityals (Matri-Bandana). Then for the last time in sixth sarga, we met with Meghanad. His indomitable courage, religious attitude, nationalism, bravery, respects for elders, hatred towards lower castes, and especially his tremendous struggle and his grief for accepting mortal wounds instead of heroic ends all gets reflected for the last time in the character of Meghanad. Meghanad does not take the shelter of Guile or treachery and that is the ultimate significance of his character.

Milton's Satan is indomitable, while Dutt's Meghand is domitable but not by courage and strength. Meghnad's grief for accepting mortal wounds instead of heroic ends makes his character more irreplaceable in the eyes of readers. Milton's Satan still possess his undying will and indomitable courage wile he was thrown out of Heaven by Almighty but at the end of the poem, we have seen Satan transforms himself into a smallest creature like Serpent. Doesn't this a sign of cowardness? Whereas Meghanad grieved for not accepting heroic ends, Satan planned to transform himself into a serpent

at the end of the poem. Milton's Satan is gradually deteriorating while Dutt's Meghanad is gradually improving throughout the poem, but at the end of the poem when he was banished by Lakshmana, his position in the eyes of the readers shook a little but still clings to his heroism for not accepting mortal wounds instead of heroic ends.

#### • *Epic Similes*

In the context of figure of speech, the next comparison comes between the epic similes of Paradise Lost and Meghanadbadh kavya. Epic simile, also called Homeric simile, an extended simile often running to several lines, used typically in epic poetry to intensify the heroic stature of the subject and to serve for decoration. The epic similes used by Homer in his epic poem is long tailed, detached, digressive and illustrative. Same as, the similes used by Milton is also long tailed, detached, digressive and explanatory. According to Walter Raleigh; "the epic similes ennoble though it does not illustrate". Sometimes the epic similes used by poet is also treated as an instrument to deceive or cheat the readers. They serve as the secondary function of the poem. Same as, Milton has also used the epic similes to deceive and cheat the readers in an implicit way. Appropriately the first epic simile in Book-1 describe the poem's main character, Satan;-

[Satan] lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge/ As whom the Fables name of monstrous size,/ Titanian, or Earth-born, that warr'd on Jove,/ Briareos or Typhoon whom the Den/ By ancient Tarsus held....(1.196-200). Milton establishes, again using an epic convention in comparing Satan's huge stature with Titans, the physically huge precursors of the Greek and Roman gods. Satan's shield hung on his shoulders is described in epic terms: "the broad circumference/ Hung on his shoulders like the Moon, whose Orb/ Through Optic Glass...." This simile is particularly important because it emphasizes the large scale of everybody and everything in the poem and it also shows that Milton was interested in Astronomy. His mention of the inventions of Galileo's telescope shows his utmost interest for Astronomy. The simile in which Milton establishes not only the size (numberless) of Satan's army of fallen angels but also compares them to the Locusts called up by Moses in order to get the Pharaoh to release the Israelites from bondage in Egypt is also remarkable. There are also other such similes as Vallombrosa simile, Leviathan simile all used to indicate the huge stature of Satan and also the innumerable fallen angels who lay prone on the flood. Milton's goal in using such similes is to create a Christian epic, using the conventions of Homeric epic.

Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1824-1873) stated quite candidly:

" People here grumble that the sympathy of the poet in Meghanad is with the Raksasas. And that is the real tryth, I despise Ram and his rabble, but the idea of Ravan elevates and kindles my imagination; he was a grand fellow".

This confession- really more a proud declaration- appears in a letter to Raj Narain Bose during the period when Dutt was writing his Magnum Opus, Meghanadbadh kavya (The slaying of Meghanad), a poem in nine cantos composed in Bengali and published in 1861. The poem focuses on Ravana's son Meghanada, telling of his third and final fight in defense of the

Raksasa clan, his demise and obsequies. If one analyzes Dutt's characters closely, one finds that the main protagonists- Rama, Lakshmana and Ravan- are similar with those characters as found in the 15<sup>th</sup> century Bengali Ramayana by Krittivasa. Dutt did not render Rama and Ravana as equals (as is the case with the Iliad's arch foes, Achilles and Hector) but reversed their conventional roles altogether, fashioning Ravana as the hero- the epitome of the sympathetic and respected raja, beloved by his subjects, a devoted brother, husband and father. Dutt used similes to subvert the reader's preconceptions about the traditional epic tale by consistently aligning the Raksasas with various heroes of Hindu Indian Literature. The similes used by Dutt portrays the Raksasas with heroes in Indian literature such as Ravana, Surpanakha, Meghanad, Bhivisana- the whole Ravana clan. Ravana, though belong from the Rakshasa clan, turns to be a hero in Dutt's eyes. Early in the "Slaying of Meghanad's" first canto, the sumptuous assembly hall in which Raksasa monarch Ravana sits is described;

"....The umbrella-bearer held the Parasol; ah, just as kama might have stood in Hara's anger's flame, unburnt, so he stood on the floor of that assembly room, as bearer of the Royal Parasol!...."

The Nature simile shows the Raksasas in a positive light- like a rich harvest at full maturity. other similes emphasizes the likeness both between Meghanada and Krishna and between Meghanada's wife Prameela and Radha:-

"In Pramoda Park wept Pramila, youthful Danava daughter, pining for her absent husband..... (3,1-9)."

Similes in "The Slaying of Meghanada" have not gone unnoticed. Hem Chandra Banerjee, himself a poet and sympathetic critic of Dutt's poem lists a few flaws in his subsequent editions of the text that the similes are too numerous and not always appropriate. But, the subversive similes, among other narrative strategies, have skewed the reader's usual response to the tale such that we are now quite sure whether to anticipate Ravana's death with joy or with sorrow.

#### • Structural Analysis

In order to give a brief structural analysis of Milton's Paradise Lost, I want to discuss some of the conceptional structure used by Milton in Paradise Lost. They are few in numbers:- Prosodic structure, Syntactic structure and Thematic structure. First come the Prosodic structure which includes the verse structure of the invocation. There is a rhythmic structure that Milton develops throughout the Invocation:- "Of Man's first disobedience,

And the fruit  
Of that forbidden tree,/ whose mortal taste  
Brought Death into the world/ and all our woes....."

It is not easy to read this verse in a mechanical style. Already in the first line, Milton denies the regularity of the pentameter. A regular iambic Pentameter would suggest the following emphases:- "Of Mans First Dis-o-be-dience, and the Fruit".....

Next comes the Syntactic structure. Look more closely, first at the first line. This line begins, as the whole poem does, with a significant word so that it can only have been a conscious and deliberate decision to start with. Even among prepositions, 'of' is singularly lacking in intensity- in contrast, for example, with 'into', a much more assertive preposition. All the other invocation begin in far more decisive fashion:- hail, holy Light, offspring of Heav'n first-born(3.1).

Descend from Heav'n, Urania.....(7.1)

No more of talk where God or Angel Guest(9.1)

The peculiarly Miltonic use of epithets exercises a similar effect. Consider the following List:-

First Disobedience

Forbidden Tree

Mortal tast

Greater man

Blissful seat

Secret top

Chosen/ seed and many others.

We find specific effects of alliteration and assonance used- but not merely for the sake of prettiness. Music is also more than a characteristic of Milton's verse. Next comes the Thematic structure. We know already that the theme of the first Invocation is Milton's request for inspiration in his intention to justify the ways of God to men. Milton uses names for more than their melodious qualities. In the 1<sup>st</sup> invocation, almost all the proper nouns refer to the Old Testament. Only one of these- Eden- is essential to the storyline of the poem. Oreb and Sinai refer to the mountain on which Moses- the 'shepherd'- was called by God to receive the tablets of stone, Horeb (or Oreb) being the major peak, and Sinai a secondary peak of the same mountain. Milton's address to the Muse, therefore is ambiguous. Thus one line of organization of the poem is a balance of the book as here diagrammed:-

I,ii-vii

iii-viii

iv-ix

v,vi-x

The narrator's bipartite scheme of position: observation may be shown thus:-

I,ii- Heaven:Hell

iii- Heaven:Heaven

iv- Heaven:Earth

v,vi- Heaven:Earth

vii- Earth:Earth

viii- Earth:Earth

ix- Earth:Heaven, Hell, Earth

x- Earth:Earth

Next comes the structural analysis of Michael Madhusudan Dutt's Meghanadbadh kavya. First and foremost, Dutt needed a language. Though it would take rather a lot of technical analysis to demonstrate this, I am convinced that nearly all the other unique and innovative features of Madhusudan's language and style flowed from his invention of Blank Verse. A poet needs a language, he also needs a subject. For the structuring of his epic, however, he did need to look west, for both the Mahabharata and the Ramayana are like sprawling jungles, growing and spreading over time due to

oral transmission. Madhusudan wanted to be like Homer: to take an inchoate tradition and give it lasting, cogent literary shape. So, he wrote an epic in nine books:- everything planned and controlled, the climax- the actual slaying of Meghanad, carefully placed at the end of Book-vi, any more than Milton placed the eating of the forbidden fruit near the end of Paradise Lost. These four vital constituents- language, subject, tone and structure, and many subsidiary but highly characteristic elements such as wit, allusion, similes, eroticism and so on- made up the *satadala* that was Meghanadbadh *kavya*. The *Ballad* is divided into nine different *Sargas* i.e; parts. Each part exhibits different incidents, starting from the death of Beerbahu, son of Ravana, it is continued till the *Sati-daha* (the ancient Indian custom of burning the widows alive with the dead husband) or Prameela, Meghanad's beloved wife. The poem starts with the line:- "The Great Hero being defeated in a face to face battle, Beerbahu, leaves to the Dead's Man world, at an earlier age.....". In the translation of Meghanadbadh *kavya*, Dutt holds to the fourteen syllables, unrhymed line displaying enjambment, though he makes no effort to force his lines to be conterminous with the original.

Madhusudan's dream was to use epic and mythology to create a real, not a fantasy world, and in Meghanadbadh *kavya*

he very largely succeeded. His success was to a considerable extent due to his structural control.

## 11. Conclusion

So from the above thesis we can easily conclude that the two epics I have compared (Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Michael Madhusudan Dutt's *Meghanadbadh Kavya*), though from the two different time periods have common epic conventions. So, we can conclude that:-

- All Epic begins with Invocation and Prologue.
- Hero is a figure of great cosmic or national importance.
- Settings of an epic is vast, it covers a wide surface of Geographical distance.
- The action of the hero showcases deeds of Valour and courage.
- The style of writing the epic is ceremonial with the use of Homeric similes in it.

"It is easy to go down into Hell;  
Night and day, the gates of dark death  
Stand wide;  
But to climb back again, to retrace  
One's steps to the upper air-  
There's the rub, the task". (Virgil, *The Aeneid*)

## References

1. Lewis, C.S. "A Preface to *Paradise Lost*". Capital Creation New Delhi, 2006.
2. Edwards, Mike. "John Milton: *Paradise Lost* (analyzing texts)". Palgrave Macmillan U.K., 2013.
3. Reisner, Noam. "John Milton's *Paradise Lost* A Reading Guide". Edinburgh University Press Edinburgh, 2011.
4. Bandyopadhyay, Jayanta, and Pushpendu Shekhar Giri. "Meghanadbadh *kavya* (Bikolpo Path)". Dey's Publishing House Kolkata, 2006.
5. Sen, S. "Paradise Lost: A Critical Evaluation", revised by G.S. Mansukhani. Unique Publishers New Delhi, 1974.
6. Radice, William. "The significance of Madhusudan Dutt and his Epic". [http:// www.jstor.org/stable/23005843](http://www.jstor.org/stable/23005843). India International Centre. Accessed on 21th October, 2016.
7. Seely, Clinton.B. "Rama in the Nether World: Indian Sources of Inspiration". <http://www.jstor.org/stable/602299>. American Oriental Society. Accessed on 21th October, 2016.
8. Seely, Clinton.B. "Homeric Similes, Occidental and Oriental: Tasso, Milton and Bengal's Michael Madhusudan Dutt". <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40246477>. Penn State University Press. Accessed on 21th October, 2016.
9. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paradise\\_Lost](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paradise_Lost). Accessed on 10th November, 2016.
10. Seely, Clinton. "Seven The Raja's New Clothes: Redressing Ravana in Meghanadavadha *Kavya*" University Of California Press California, 1982.
11. Shawcross, John.T. "The Balanced Structure of *Paradise Lost*". <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4173511>. The University of North Carolina Press. Accessed on 11<sup>th</sup> November, 2016.