

VOICES OF SUPREMACY: NARCISSISM AND POWER IN MILTON'S SATAN AND HUGHES'S HAWK**Dr. Priyanka Mishra**

Assistant Professor, Dept. of English, SBU, Ranchi, India

Article Received: 09/11/2025**Article Accepted:** 10/12/2025**Published Online:** 11/12/2025**DOI:**10.47311/IJOES.2025.7.12.146**Abstract:**

Voices of supremacy: narcissism and power in Milton's Satan and Hughes's hawk, this paper investigates the thematic overlap of narcissism and dominance in two fabulous literary characters: Satan from John Milton's Paradise Lost and the Hawk from Ted Hughes's Hawk Roosting. Although they come from different time periods and genres, both figures carry a message of superiority that questions honest frameworks and declares control through their proud speeches. By analysing their oral techniques, symbolic significance, and psychological profiles, this study proves how literary narcissism serves as a lens for comprehending authority, independence, and the human conspiracy with power. The discussion places these characters within their historical and metaphysical settings, providing a comparative assessment that highlights the lasting worth of narcissistic dominance in literature.

Key Words: Narcissism, convergence, dominance, monologues, self- aggrandizing**Introduction:**

For a long time, literature has acted as a window into the workings of human mind, providing a wealth of opportunities to exaggerate characteristics that border on the extreme in order to illuminate more general philosophical, social, and detected issues. Among these characteristics, narcissism which is a complex personality based on control, superiority, and self-image, emerges as a particularly powerful narrative force. It is a psychological phenomenon that goes beyond medical diagnosis and into symbolic representation, where characters serve as vehicles for examining the human need for self-definition, autonomy, and supremacy. In literature, narcissism frequently takes the form of voices that claim dominance, reject outside authority, and create self-centred realities. Whether tragic, heroic, or hideous, these voices force readers to face the attraction and danger of unchecked self-belief.

This essay examines the ways in which narcissism appears in two different but related literary voices: the hawk in Ted Hughes's *Hawk Roosting* (1960) and Satan in John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667). Despite being separated by centuries, genres, and cultural settings, both individuals express a vision of supremacy that is unaffected to moral limitations and outside authority. They are more than just characters; they are bombastic devices that represent narcissistic power and overthrow accepted ideas of justice, order, and decency.

“Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heaven.”

(Book I, line 263).

Above line from *Paradise Lost* Book-I, shows the confidence of Milton's Satan who is among the most complex and quarrelsome characters. Satan is depicted as a fallen archangel expelled from heaven because of his disobedience. His talks are distinguished by fluency, boldness, and untiring quest for independence. Instead of submitting to God's authority, he chooses to rule in Hell, which he transforms using linguistic force and pure willpower. The philosophical and tragic nature of Satan's narcissism stems from a deep sense of hurt and a yearning to regain lost grandeur. He has an inflated but shaded view of himself; he is capable of introspection, envy, and doubt, which make him both evil and profoundly human. Milton examines the psychological aspects of pride, disobedience, and the appeal of self-glorification through Satan.

Hughes's hawk from ‘*Hawk Roosting*’, on the other hand, is an animal creature whose brief statements reveal an unreserved, rude dominion over the natural world. The hawk's powerful, ornament-free discourse reveals an awareness that is solely concerned with survival and domination. The hawk declares its dominance with a bluntness that limits on dictatorship:

"I kill where I please because it is all mine."

The hawk, in contrast to Satan, does not struggle with existential issues or moral dilemmas; it just exists as the top predator, secure in its position at the top of the natural hierarchy. Its self-love stems from the belief that nature has conspired to lift it above all others, devoid of regret or introspection. Hughes's hawk is a metaphor of nature's disregard for human ethics and the pure force of instinct rather than a sorrowful person.

Satan and the hawk both express a voice of superiority that resists moral limitation and outside authority, despite their disparities in shape and setting. Their perceptions of themselves, which influence how they relate to control and power, bind them together. While the hawk represents control via biological certainty and intuitive clarity, Satan creates his identity through rebelliousness and bombastic mastery. Both individuals oppose change and compromise because they want to maintain their independence and status at any cost. By doing this, they expose the selfish tendency to define reality in accordance with oneself, to take charge of the outside world, and to oppose any force that challenges their authority.

Studying these characters provides a rare chance to investigate how narcissism functions in literature—not just as a psychological characteristic but also as a symbolic force that challenges the concepts of confrontation, identity, and power. This study seeks to understand how narcissistic voices influence literary depictions of supremacy by analysing the rhetorical devices, thematic issues, and philosophical foundations of Satan and the Hawk. Additionally, it looks at how Milton's religious epic and Hughes's post-war poetry reflect larger concerns about power, autonomy, and the human condition in order to place these characters within their historical and cultural settings.

Satan's revolt can be interpreted as a reflection of the political unrest and religious strife that Milton's *Paradise Lost* was written during. His disobedience of divine rule speaks to the revolutionary spirit and challenges established hierarchies. In contrast, Hughes's *Hawk Roosting* appears in the post-World War II era, which is characterized by discouragement and a revision of human nature. The hawk's voice, lacking sentimentality and moral complexity, expresses a worldview in which authority is merely implemented rather than justified. In different ways, both books push readers to reevaluate the basis of authority and the place of the individual in broader control structures.

This study explores the narcissistic aspects of Satan and the hawk in order to comprehend how their voices function inside the creative imagination. In this situation, narcissism serves as a lens through which to study the dynamics of power, the development of self-love, and the conflict between independence and submission. It challenges readers to encounter the attractive pomposity of dominance and consider the moral and logical results of voices that are unwilling to back down.

In the end, a literary range where self-love functions as both a psychological and symbolic force is revealed by contrasting Milton's Satan with Hughes's hawk. These figures represent the human obsession with control, the urge to exceed limitations, and the dangerous attraction of self-centred power, despite having quite different styles and substances. Their voices echo throughout history, pushing readers to face the difficulties of power, identity, and the limits of moral imagination.

Discussion

Satan's narcissism is extremely deep-rooted in both his intellectual revolt and oratorical action flourished in *Paradise Lost*. His well-known declaration,

“The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.” perfectly captures his arrogant self-perception and boldness of religious authority (Milton, Book I). This convincing fluency characterizes Satan's talks, which are projected to both guard his disobedience and lure others to adopt his worldview. His ability to be charming and dishonest are some qualities frequently linked to narcissistic personality structures which is further demonstrated by his seduction of Eve in Book IX (Campbell & Miller, 2011).

Narcissistic character of Satan is cosmic rather than just personal. In an attempt to change the moral order in accordance with his own vision, he presents himself as a challenger to God. Beneath this arrogance, however, is a sad depth: periods of uncertainty, envy, and existential distress point to a broken self that finds it difficult to balance pride with loss. Because of his complexity, Satan is a classic example of a literary narcissist both sympathetic and horrible, rebellious and hopeless.



Figure showing Fall of Satan from Heaven to Hell

Source: https://i.etsystatic.com/27155371/r/il/d5b5e7/5106099818/il_fullxfull.5106099818_91b5.jpg Ted Hughes's

The tone and manner of Ted Hughes's *Hawk Roosting* clash sharply. The hawk's speech lacks stylistic exaggeration and is direct and declarative. The hawk declares,

"I kill where I please because it is all mine,"

showing pure, primal power (Hughes, 1960). In contrast to Satan, the hawk just acts without providing an explanation. Its vital self-love stems from the belief that nature has conspired to make it superior to everyone else.

The hawk's monologue exposes a worldview that holds that power is inborn and not acquired nor contested.

"My eye has not allowed any alteration."

It also says,

"I am going to keep things like this,"

rejecting change, empathy, and outside influence. Demanding ideologies, which prioritize durability and power over flexibility and communication, are reflected in this static view of control (Fromm, 1941).

Hughes's hawk represents nature's neglect for morals rather than being a tragic figure. However, human echoes may be heard in its voice: the illusion of strength, the drive to rule, and the refusal to compromise. In this way, the hawk, devoid of guilt and ornamented with natural belief, becomes a metaphor for the worst inclinations of human power.



Figure showing Hawk sitting on the top of a tree

Source:<https://i0.wp.com/mylibrarycardworeout.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/hawk-swainsons-buteo-swainsoni-laramie-2.jpg?fit=2048%2C1606&ssl=1>

Satan and the hawk both have egotistical voices, but the tone and superiority of their expressions differ. Satan is moulded with religious revolt and observed turmoil which shows his rhetorical and philosophical self-love. The hawk is influenced by natural hierarchy and instinct which shows its genetic and declarative narcissism.

This comparison between Satan and hawk shows how the psychology of control can be explored by dramatizing self-admiration in various genres and historical periods. Literature continues to explore the limits of selflove, control, and the appealing power, whether through Satan's tragic grandeur or the hawk's inborn superiority.

Conclusion

The voices of Hughes's hawk and Milton's Satan echo across literary history as replicas of narcissistic power, each claiming a self-shaped worldview. Despite having different contexts, one religious and epic, the other natural and lyrical, their verbal attitudes are similar in that they both have a need to rule, an unwillingness to submit, and self - belief.

After being expelled from heaven, Milton's Satan recovers through rebellious speech. His has a narcissistic belief that autonomy is preferable than obedience, even at the expense of undying suffering.

His revolt is philosophical rather than just political or spiritual. Satan creates a world where his downfall is a kind of victory and a reinterpretation of power according to his own standards. In addition to his fellow fallen angels, generations of readers who struggle with the paradox of a villain portrayed with tragic grandeur are drawn to his speech, which is full of rhetorical flourishes.

"I am going to keep things like this"

When taken as a whole, both the characters highlight the range of narcissistic power in literature. Fall and ambition have formed Satan's voice tragic and argumentative. The hawk's voice is confident and primal, moulded by power and character. Whether either natural predation or heavenly revolt, both represent the human preoccupation with control, reject external authority, and demand their own superiority.

Their lasting worth stems from both their symbolic power and literary mastery. They force readers to face the tempting rhetoric of superiority, the dangers of unchecked autonomy, and the attraction of self-centred power. The hawk and Satan serve as a reminder that power, when separated from empathy and introspection, becomes a voice that just echoes itself in a world increasingly shaped by voices that aim to dominate rather than engage in discourse.



<https://thumbs.dreamstime.com/b/narcissism-word-cloud-hand-sphere-concept-white-background-127727203.jpg>

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