

1. I read [✓] 9 hours in secondary sources.

2. John Milton was born in London on December 9, 1608, and grew up there in the family home on Bread Street. His father, who was a scrivener by profession, recognized his son's genius and encouraged him in his studies.

Milton attended St. Paul's and in 1625 entered Cambridge University. It was at Cambridge that he decided to devote his life to the task of writing great poetry. In 1632 he graduated from the university with the M.A. degree.

From 1632 to 1638 he retired to his father's estate at Horton in order to prepare himself as a poet. He devoted his energies to industrious study and to the development of moral character. It was during this period that he wrote "L'Allegro", "Il Penseroso", "Lycidas", and "Comus". In 1638 he left England for a tour of the continent.

In 1641 he returned to England and from 1641 to 1654 wrote a series of prose pamphlets, dealing with church government, divorce, education, political theory, the freedom of the press, and Christian doctrine. It was his task as Latin Secretary of the Commonwealth to answer all prose attacks on England.

In 1643 Milton married Mary Powell, a daughter of a Cavalier family. She bore him three daughters and died in 1652. In 1650 Milton lost the sight of one eye, and in 1652 the sight of his remaining eye. Although he was disappointed with his loss, he never regretted the overwork which hastened its coming.

Following the death of his first wife and the onset of his blindness, he entered semi-retirement. During this period he married his second wife, Katherine Woodcock, who died, after one year, in childbirth.

From 1655 on Milton turned back to the task of writing poetry. It was in the last third of his life that he wrote his greatest works: Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained, and Samson Agonistes. In 1663 he married again. This time his wife, Elizabeth Minshull, was thirty years younger than he.

In 1674, having fulfilled his ambition to write a great epic poem in the English language, John Milton died quietly in his home from an attack of gout.

David Steiner
Lit. 314
First Report

You have included some excellent thoughts. It would have been helpful and would have strengthened your paper had you packed in some of his broad concepts of philosophical patterns.

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