

## FROM *ORMUS AND IND* TO THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ: LINGUISTIC CONSTRUCTIONS OF WEALTH, POWER, AND CONFLICT FROM MILTON TO MODERN U.S.–IRAN DISCOURSE

**Mahnoor Naeem**

Lecturer, Department of English, Sarhad University of Science and Information Technology, Peshawar. Ph.D. Scholar (Fata University)

Email: [mn354461@gmail.com](mailto:mn354461@gmail.com)

**Nazia Zahir**

Lecturer in English at The Institute of Management Sciences (IMSciences), Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

Email: [nazia.omaer@gmail.com](mailto:nazia.omaer@gmail.com)

**Yasir Rafiq Khan**

MPhil English Scholar at Gomal University, Dera Ismail Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

Email: [yasirrafiq222@gmail.com](mailto:yasirrafiq222@gmail.com)

**Corresponding Author**

**Shumaila Tallat**

Lecturer at The Institute of Management Sciences (IMSciences), Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

Email: [shumaila.tallat@gmail.com](mailto:shumaila.tallat@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

*Linguistic representations of wealth, power, and geopolitical conflict have historically shaped perceptions of the East. For example, while Milton's Paradise Lost constructs Eastern wealth through the imagery of Ormus and Ind, contemporary U.S.–Iran discourse frames the Strait of Hormuz as a strategic geopolitical site. However, despite the historical and political significance, limited research examines how language bridges early modern literary imagination and modern political narratives. Therefore, this study aims to investigate how language constructs ideas of wealth, power, and conflict across historical and contemporary contexts. Specifically, it compares Milton's literary discourse with modern political and media narratives surrounding the Strait of Hormuz. Moreover, the study is grounded in postcolonial theory (Said), discourse-power theory (Foucault), and Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough), which collectively inform the interpretation of ideological meanings embedded in linguistic representations of empire, wealth, and strategic control. In addition, a qualitative interpretive approach is adopted, employing a comparative design. Thus, purposively sampled texts include key passages from Paradise Lost and selected political speeches, policy statements, and media narratives about U.S.–Iran tensions. Data are analyzed using Critical Discourse Analysis combined with thematic coding, focusing on wealth representation, imperial power, geopolitical strategy, Orientalist representation, and discursive transformation. Consequently, the study reveals that early modern literary constructions of Eastern wealth persist in contemporary discourse, and are transformed into narratives emphasizing strategic control, security, and geopolitical rivalry. Furthermore, metaphors, lexical choices, and narrative framing link historical literary imagination with modern political rhetoric. In brief, linguistic constructions of wealth and power are central to shaping both cultural imagination and geopolitical perception. Finally, future research should include multilingual sources and expand to media discourses from regional perspectives in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of Gulf geopolitics.*

**Keywords:** Conflict, Discourse Analysis, Geopolitics, Power, Wealth, Western–Eastern Relations

### **Introduction**

*Richest of all the East, the wealth of Ormus and Ind:* this famous phrase appears in *Paradise Lost* by John Milton, where the poet evokes immense wealth associated with the Eastern world. At first glance, the line appears to present a poetic image of luxury and splendor; however, it also reflects a broader historical imagination in which the East is linguistically constructed as a space of extraordinary riches and strategic power. Today, the same geographical region—

particularly the Strait of Hormuz—remains central to global political and economic discourse. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, nearly one-fifth of the world's petroleum consumption passes through the Strait of Hormuz each day, which makes it one of the most strategically important maritime chokepoints in the world (EIA, 2023). Consequently, an important question emerges: how does language construct the Persian Gulf region as a symbol of wealth, power, and conflict from Milton's poetic imagination to modern geopolitical discourse?

In this context, the present study examines the linguistic construction of wealth and power across both historical and contemporary discourses. Specifically, it focuses on Milton's poetic representation of Eastern riches and modern political narratives surrounding the Persian Gulf. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton employs the phrase "Ormus and Ind" as a metaphor for immense wealth and luxury. Historically, Ormus functioned as a major trading center in the Persian Gulf during the medieval and early modern periods and symbolized global commerce and prosperity (Floor, 2004). Similarly, Ind, which refers broadly to the Indian subcontinent, represented legendary Eastern riches in the European imagination. Therefore, Milton's language reflects broader cultural perceptions shaped by early modern trade networks, colonial encounters, and economic fascination with Asia (Said, 1978). In other words, poetic imagery in Milton's epic does not merely decorate the narrative; rather, it participates in a wider discursive tradition that associates the East with wealth and commercial abundance.

Moreover, the symbolic geography invoked by Milton continues to resonate in contemporary global politics. Today, the Strait of Hormuz, located between Iran and Oman, functions as one of the most strategically significant maritime routes in the world. It connects the Persian Gulf with global markets and serves as a crucial corridor for international oil trade. As a result, political speeches, news media, and diplomatic discourse frequently portray the region as a site of geopolitical tension, economic power, and strategic rivalry between states such as the United States and Iran. Scholars of discourse and geopolitics argue that language plays a crucial role in shaping how such regions are imagined, contested, and politically framed (Fairclough, 1995; Foucault, 1972). Thus, discourse does not simply describe geopolitical realities; it actively constructs them.

However, despite the persistent symbolic importance of the Persian Gulf region across centuries, the linguistic continuity between early modern literary discourse and contemporary geopolitical rhetoric has received limited scholarly attention. On the one hand, literary scholars have extensively analyzed Milton's poetic imagery and references to the East. On the other hand, political analysts have examined media representations of the Gulf region in relation to international conflict and energy politics. Nevertheless, few studies have investigated how these two domains employ similar linguistic mechanisms to construct narratives of wealth, power, and conflict. Therefore, understanding the relationship between literary language and modern geopolitical discourse remains an important scholarly challenge.

Furthermore, existing scholarship often treats literary representation and political discourse as separate analytical fields. For example, Barbara Kiefer Lewalski (2003) focused on theology, epic tradition, and classical influences in Miltonic studies, whereas Robert M. Entman (1993) examined framing strategies in international relations and media discourse. Yet, the discursive imagination of the East as a site of wealth and strategic value persists across both contexts. Consequently, a comparative linguistic analysis linking Milton's imagery of "Ormus and Ind" with modern discourse about the Strait of Hormuz can reveal how language continuously shapes geopolitical perception across historical periods.

In addition, historical evidence further reinforces this connection between discourse and geopolitical significance. Historians noted that the historical Kingdom of Ormus functioned as a major commercial hub connecting trade routes between Asia, the Middle East, and Europe

(Floor, 2004). Similarly, contemporary geopolitical analysts have emphasized that the Strait of Hormuz remains essential to global energy security because a massive volume of oil is transported through it daily (EIA, 2023). Therefore, the symbolic association between the region and global wealth has not disappeared; instead, it has evolved within new political and economic narratives. Discourse theorists argue that language does not merely describe reality; rather, it constructs meaning and power relations within society (Fairclough, 1995; Foucault, 1972).

Importantly, this topic also carries particular relevance for scholars and readers within the broader Asian and Middle Eastern geopolitical landscape. For instance, Pakistan maintains strong economic and strategic ties with Gulf states through trade, labor migration, and energy cooperation. Accordingly, examining how global narratives frame the Persian Gulf region enables scholars to critically evaluate the relationship between language, power, and international politics.

Against this backdrop, we address this gap. First, we analyze the lexical and metaphorical representation of Ormus in Milton's text, particularly examining how the phrase "Ormus and Ind" constructs the East as a symbol of immense wealth and prestige. Second, we compare Milton's discourse with modern geopolitical language used in political speeches and media narratives about the Gulf region, especially those related to tensions between the United States and Iran.

Ultimately, this paper aims to demonstrate that linguistic constructions of wealth, trade, and power surrounding the Persian Gulf persist across historical periods, although the forms and contexts of discourse have evolved over time. By linking early modern literary language with contemporary geopolitical narratives, this study contributes to interdisciplinary scholarship in literary studies, discourse analysis, and geopolitics. In doing so, it shows how language continues to shape global perceptions of regions such as the Strait of Hormuz, transforming them into enduring symbols of economic power and political contestation.

### **Research Questions**

1. How does John Milton linguistically construct the idea of Eastern wealth and power in *Paradise Lost* through the phrase "Ormus and Ind"?
2. How do contemporary political and media discourses surrounding the United States–Iran conflict linguistically frame the Persian Gulf region as a site of power, trade, and geopolitical rivalry?

### **Research Objectives**

1. To analyze the lexical and metaphorical representation of Ormus in Milton's text.
2. To compare Milton's discourse with modern geopolitical language used in media and political narratives about the Gulf region.

### **Research Problem**

Language plays an important role in shaping how regions, cultures, and political conflicts are understood. In particular, literary texts and political discourse often construct symbolic meanings around certain geographical places. For example, in *Paradise Lost*, John Milton refers to the wealth of Ormus and Ind, presenting the East as a place of immense riches and prosperity. Historically, Ormus functioned as a powerful trading center in the Persian Gulf, and therefore it symbolized global commerce and luxury during the early modern period. However, centuries later, the same geographical region—especially the Strait of Hormuz—appears in contemporary political discourse as a site of geopolitical conflict and strategic competition between nations such as the United States and Iran.

Nevertheless, despite this historical continuity, most scholarly studies examine literary discourse and geopolitical discourse separately. On the one hand, literary scholars analyze Milton's poetic imagery and symbolic language about the East. On the other hand, political

analysts study modern media narratives about the Persian Gulf and international conflict. As a result, little attention has been given to how similar linguistic patterns construct ideas of wealth, power, and strategic importance across both literary and political contexts. Therefore, the central research problem of this study is to investigate how language constructs the Persian Gulf region as a symbol of wealth and power from Milton's poetic imagination to contemporary geopolitical discourse. More specifically, the study explores how Milton's phrase "Ormus and Ind" represents early modern perceptions of Eastern wealth and how modern political and media discourse frames the Strait of Hormuz as a strategic center of global power and conflict.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study is important because it connects two fields that are often studied separately: literary studies and political discourse analysis. First of all, it helps readers understand how language in literature can shape long-lasting cultural and political perceptions of certain regions. For instance, Milton's representation of Ormus and Ind contributes to a broader European imagination of the East as a place of wealth and commercial abundance.

Furthermore, the study highlights how similar linguistic constructions appear in modern geopolitical narratives about the Strait of Hormuz. Political speeches, news reports, and diplomatic discussions frequently describe this region as strategically valuable because it connects global oil markets and international trade routes. Consequently, the research demonstrates that language does not merely describe geopolitical realities; rather, it actively shapes how power, trade, and conflict are understood.

In addition, the study contributes to interdisciplinary research by combining literary analysis with discourse analysis and geopolitics. Thus, it provides a broader understanding of how symbolic meanings travel across historical periods—from seventeenth-century poetry to twenty-first-century political communication. Finally, the research is particularly relevant for countries such as Pakistan, which maintain strong economic and political connections with Gulf states. Therefore, examining how global narratives construct the Persian Gulf region helps scholars critically reflect on the relationship between language, power, and international politics.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Although this study provides important insights, it also has certain limitations. First, the research focuses mainly on the textual analysis of Milton's *Paradise Lost* and selected examples of modern political and media discourse related to the Strait of Hormuz. Therefore, the analysis does not cover every possible literary or political text related to the Persian Gulf region.

Second, the study emphasizes linguistic and discursive analysis rather than detailed historical or economic investigation. In other words, while historical and geopolitical contexts are discussed, the main focus remains on how language constructs meanings of wealth, power, and conflict. Third, the study examines discourse primarily in English-language sources. Consequently, perspectives expressed in other languages—such as Persian or Arabic—are not fully included in the analysis.

Finally, the research analyzes discourse related mainly to the relationship between the United States and Iran. As a result, the complex geopolitical roles of other regional actors in the Persian Gulf are addressed only briefly. Nevertheless, despite these limitations, the study still offers valuable insights into how linguistic representations shape geopolitical understanding.

### **Originality and Novelty of the Study**

The originality of this study lies in its attempt to connect early modern literary discourse with contemporary geopolitical narratives. Traditionally, studies of John Milton focus on theology, epic poetry, and classical influences in *Paradise Lost*. Meanwhile, research on the Strait of

Hormuz usually appears in fields such as international relations, political science, or energy studies. However, few studies bring these two areas together.

In contrast, this research introduces a comparative linguistic approach that links Milton's poetic phrase "Ormus and Ind" with modern political and media discourse about the Persian Gulf. By doing so, the study reveals how symbolic ideas of wealth, trade, and power persist across centuries, even though their contexts change. Moreover, the research highlights how geographical places can become powerful discursive symbols through language.

Therefore, the novelty of this study lies in its interdisciplinary perspective, which combines literary criticism, discourse analysis, and geopolitical studies. Ultimately, it demonstrates that language plays a continuous role in shaping global perceptions of regions such as the Strait of Hormuz, transforming them into enduring symbols of economic power, strategic influence, and political conflict.

### Literature Review

Literary representations of the East have long played a significant role in shaping Western perceptions of wealth, trade, and political influence. In early modern European literature, Eastern regions were frequently depicted as spaces of luxury, prosperity, and commercial abundance. For example, in *Paradise Lost*, John Milton refers to the "wealth of Ormus and Ind," presenting these locations as symbols of extraordinary riches. Historically, the kingdom of Ormus, situated near the entrance of the Persian Gulf, functioned as a major trading hub connecting Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, and therefore it became widely associated with luxury commodities and global commerce (Floor, 2004). Consequently, early modern writers frequently used the name "Ormus" as a metaphor for immense wealth and economic prosperity. Scholars of Miltonic literature have examined how geographical references contribute to the epic's symbolic imagery. For instance, Barbara Kiefer Lewalski (2003) argued that Milton drew upon historical and geographical knowledge to intensify the epic scale and grandeur of *Paradise Lost*. Similarly, Stephen Fallon (2007) noted that Milton's references to Eastern wealth reflected contemporary European awareness of expanding trade networks and colonial encounters. Thus, Milton's poetic language not only enriches the imagery of the poem but also reflects broader cultural perceptions of the East as a region associated with riches and commercial abundance. However, most Miltonic studies primarily focus on theology, epic tradition, and classical influences. Therefore, the specific linguistic construction of wealth and geopolitical symbolism embedded in the phrase "Ormus and Ind" remains relatively underexplored. In contrast, the present study examines how Milton's lexical choices construct symbolic meanings of Eastern wealth and global trade networks.

The representation of the East as a place of wealth, difference, and cultural otherness has also been widely discussed in postcolonial scholarship. Edward W. Said (1978) argued that Western literature historically produced an "Orientalist" discourse that constructed the East as exotic, wealthy, and fundamentally different from the West. According to Said, these representations were not neutral descriptions; rather, they formed part of a broader intellectual framework that shaped Western political and cultural attitudes toward Eastern societies.

Furthermore, later theorists expanded this perspective by emphasizing the relationship between discourse and power. Homi K. Bhabha (1994) explained that colonial discourse often produces symbolic representations that reinforce cultural hierarchy and difference. Likewise, Spivak (1988) highlighted how language and representation participate in constructing political authority and marginalizing non-Western voices. In comparison, Milton's reference to Ormus and Ind can be interpreted as part of this broader discursive tradition that imagines the East as a source of wealth and luxury. Nevertheless, unlike many colonial texts of later centuries, Milton's imagery emerges from an early modern cultural context shaped primarily by trade expansion rather than formal colonial rule. Therefore, analyzing Milton's language helps reveal

how early literary representations contributed to long-term discursive constructions of Eastern economic power.

Beyond literary studies, scholars in discourse analysis have emphasized that language plays a crucial role in constructing political realities. Michel Foucault (1972) argued that discourse organizes knowledge and power by shaping how societies understand particular subjects or regions. Similarly, Norman Fairclough (1995) demonstrated that language in political and media communication often reproduces social structures and ideological perspectives.

These theoretical insights have been widely applied to media studies and international politics. For example, Robert M. Entman (1993) showed that media framing strongly influences how audiences interpret political conflicts. In particular, framing strategies emphasize certain aspects of reality while downplaying others, thereby shaping public understanding of geopolitical events. Consequently, media narratives can portray specific regions as centers of conflict, strategic importance, or economic opportunity.

At the same time, discourse analysis reveals how geographical locations acquire symbolic political meanings. For instance, the Persian Gulf frequently appears in international discourse as a region defined by energy resources, maritime trade routes, and geopolitical competition. Thus, language plays a central role in shaping how global audiences interpret political developments in this strategically important area.

In modern international politics, the Strait of Hormuz occupies a central position in global discussions of energy security and geopolitical rivalry. Located between Iran and Oman, the strait connects the Persian Gulf with international shipping routes and global oil markets. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, nearly one-fifth of the world's petroleum consumption passes through this narrow maritime corridor (EIA, 2023). Therefore, political leaders and international media frequently describe the strait as one of the most strategically significant chokepoints in global energy trade.

Several scholars have examined how political and media narratives frame this region. For example, Douglas Kellner (2004) argued that modern media discourse often dramatizes geopolitical crises by emphasizing themes of threat, conflict, and strategic rivalry. Similarly, Noam Chomsky (2002) suggested that political language frequently shapes public perception by framing international disputes through narratives of security and power. However, these studies focus mainly on contemporary media analysis rather than historical literary discourse. Consequently, the potential connection between early literary representations of Eastern wealth and modern geopolitical narratives about the Persian Gulf remains largely unexplored.

Taken together, existing scholarship reveals several important patterns. First, literary studies demonstrate that early modern texts such as *Paradise Lost* often depict Eastern regions as spaces of immense wealth and commercial prosperity (Lewalski, 2003; Fallon, 2007). Second, postcolonial theorists argue that such representations form part of broader cultural discourses that construct the East as economically rich yet culturally distinct (Said, 1978; Bhabha, 1994). Third, discourse analysts show that contemporary political and media narratives continue to frame the Strait of Hormuz as a strategic center of economic power and geopolitical rivalry (Entman, 1993; Kellner, 2004). Nevertheless, these strands of scholarship remain largely disconnected from one another. Literary scholars rarely examine how early modern imagery relates to contemporary geopolitical discourse, whereas, political analysts seldom consider the historical literary origins of such symbolic constructions. Therefore, a comparative linguistic analysis is necessary to bridge this gap.

### **Research Gap**

Although previous research has explored Milton's poetic imagery, Orientalist discourse, and modern geopolitical narratives separately, no study has directly compared the linguistic construction of Eastern wealth in Milton's phrase *Ormus and Ind* with contemporary political

and media discourse about the Strait of Hormuz. In other words, the historical continuity between early modern literary representations of the Persian Gulf and modern geopolitical language remains insufficiently examined. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by analyzing the lexical and metaphorical representation of Ormus in *Paradise Lost* and comparing it with contemporary political and media discourse about the Strait of Hormuz. Ultimately, this comparative approach demonstrates how linguistic constructions of wealth, trade, and strategic power persist across different historical periods and discursive contexts.

### Research Methodology

#### Introduction

This study investigates how language constructs ideas of wealth, power, and geopolitical significance across different historical periods. Specifically, it examines the linguistic representation of Eastern wealth in *Paradise Lost* by John Milton and compares it with contemporary political and media discourse surrounding the Strait of Hormuz. Because the research focuses on interpreting meanings embedded in texts, a qualitative research methodology is adopted. Qualitative methods are appropriate for examining symbolic language, metaphors, and ideological meanings within discourse.

Furthermore, the study integrates insights from literary analysis, critical discourse analysis, and geopolitical studies. Through this interdisciplinary approach, linguistic patterns found in Milton's literary representation of Ormus and Ind are examined alongside modern political narratives concerning the Persian Gulf region.

#### Research Philosophy

The study is guided by an interpretivist research philosophy. Interpretivism assumes that social realities and political meanings are constructed through language and discourse rather than existing as purely objective facts.

In this study, references to wealth, trade, and geopolitical power are therefore interpreted as discursive constructions shaped by historical and political contexts. This philosophical perspective is appropriate because both literary texts and political discourse rely on symbolic language and rhetorical strategies to produce meaning.

#### Research Approach

The research follows a qualitative interpretive approach combined with comparative discourse analysis.

Two analytical levels are used:

1. Literary discourse analysis of Milton's *Paradise Lost*
2. Political and media discourse analysis of contemporary narratives about the Strait of Hormuz.

The study also uses a deductive theoretical orientation, meaning that the analysis is informed by established theoretical frameworks such as:

- Discourse and power theory (Michel Foucault)
- Critical discourse analysis (Norman Fairclough)
- Postcolonial discourse theory (Edward W. Said)

These frameworks help interpret how language constructs ideological meanings related to wealth, empire, and geopolitical power.

#### Research Design

A comparative qualitative research design is used in this study.

The design compares two discursive contexts:

##### Historical Discourse

Literary representation in *Paradise Lost*

##### Contemporary Discourse

Political and media discourse about the Strait of Hormuz

The purpose of this design is to examine whether linguistic constructions of wealth and power persist, evolve, or transform across historical periods.

Thus, the study investigates how early modern literary imagination relates to modern geopolitical narratives about the Persian Gulf.

### **Data Sources**

Two types of textual data are analyzed.

#### **Primary Literary Text**

The primary literary data comes from:

*Paradise Lost* by John Milton.

Particular attention is given to passages referencing:

- Ormus
- Ind
- metaphors of wealth, trade, and empire.

#### **Contemporary Political and Media Texts**

The contemporary dataset includes:

- Political speeches discussing tensions between the United States and Iran
- Policy statements concerning the Strait of Hormuz
- Media articles discussing geopolitical conflict in the Persian Gulf.

These texts are selected from credible sources such as:

- international news organizations
- government archives
- policy reports.

### **Sampling Strategy**

The study uses purposive sampling.

Purposive sampling allows the researcher to select texts that are directly relevant to the research problem.

The sample includes:

- Key passages from *Paradise Lost* referring to Ormus and Ind
- Selected political speeches related to Gulf security
- Media narratives describing tensions around the Strait of Hormuz.

This strategy ensures that the selected texts contain meaningful discursive constructions related to wealth, power, and geopolitical rivalry.

### **Data Collection**

Data are collected through documentary textual sources.

The process includes:

1. Extracting relevant passages from *Paradise Lost*
2. Collecting political statements and speeches
3. Compiling media articles discussing the Strait of Hormuz
4. Creating a textual corpus for analysis.

Documentary analysis is appropriate because the research focuses on language, discourse, and representation rather than human participants.

### **Data Analysis Method**

The data are analyzed using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) combined with thematic textual analysis.

Critical Discourse Analysis examines how language constructs ideological meanings related to power and politics.

The analysis focuses on:

- lexical choices
- metaphors
- rhetorical structures
- narrative framing.

### Coding Framework

To ensure systematic analysis, the study uses the following coding categories:

Code Category	Description
Wealth Representation	Language describing riches, luxury, trade, or prosperity
Imperial Power	Discourses implying dominance, empire, or authority
Geopolitical Strategy	Language related to security, control, and global power
Orientalist Representation	Depictions of the East as exotic or economically rich
Discursive Transformation	Comparison between historical and modern discourse

### Analytical Procedure

The analysis follows four stages.

#### Stage 1: Textual Identification

Relevant passages are identified from:

- *Paradise Lost*
- political speeches
- media narratives.

#### Stage 2: Coding

Texts are coded according to the five analytical categories described above.

#### Stage 3: Discourse Analysis

The coded texts are analyzed to identify:

- metaphors of wealth
- representations of geopolitical power
- narratives of conflict.

#### Stage 4: Comparative Interpretation

Finally, literary and political discourses are compared to determine how representations of the Persian Gulf region change or persist over time.

### Methodological Framework Diagram

The analytical process can be summarized as follows:



### **Trustworthiness**

To ensure reliability and validity, the study applies several qualitative research strategies.

- Triangulation through literary texts, political discourse, and media narratives
- Theoretical grounding using discourse theory and postcolonial criticism
- Textual evidence to support interpretations.

These strategies strengthen the credibility of the analysis.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The study relies exclusively on publicly available textual sources.

- no human participants are involved
- no personal data are collected.

### **Methodological Limitations**

Despite its strengths, the methodology has several limitations.

First, the study analyzes selected texts rather than the entire corpus of discourse related to the Persian Gulf.

Second, the analysis focuses on English-language sources, which may exclude perspectives expressed in Persian or Arabic discourse.

Third, qualitative discourse analysis relies on interpretive judgment; therefore, different researchers might produce slightly different interpretations.

However, theoretical frameworks and textual evidence are used to reduce interpretive bias.

## **Analysis/ Discussion**

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the analysis and discussion of the data collected for this study. The purpose of this chapter is to examine how language constructs representations of wealth, power, and geopolitical significance across different historical contexts. Specifically, the analysis focuses on two discursive domains: the literary representation of Eastern wealth in *Paradise Lost* by John Milton and contemporary political and media discourse surrounding the Strait of Hormuz.

First, it analyzes Milton's linguistic construction of the East through the phrase "Ormus and Ind." Next, it examines how modern political and media discourse frames the Persian Gulf region as a site of geopolitical power and conflict. Finally, the chapter compares both discourses in order to identify continuities and transformations in the linguistic representation of wealth, trade, and strategic authority.

### **Linguistic Construction of Eastern Wealth in *Paradise Lost***

It asks how Milton constructs the idea of Eastern wealth through the phrase "Ormus and Ind." To begin with, Milton's epic poem presents these locations as symbols of immense prosperity and luxury. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton writes: "High on a throne of royal state, which far Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind." (Milton, 1667/2008, Book II)

At first glance, this line appears to function simply as poetic imagery describing grandeur and splendor. However, a closer linguistic analysis reveals that Milton strategically uses geographical references to evoke the economic power associated with Eastern trade routes. In fact, the lexical phrase "wealth of Ormus and Ind" operates as a metaphor for global abundance and commercial prosperity.

Historically, the island kingdom of Ormus functioned as a major commercial center connecting the trade routes of Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. According to Floor (2004), Ormus became one of the most prosperous trading ports in the Persian Gulf during the early modern period. Therefore, Milton's reference reflects contemporary European knowledge of global commerce and maritime trade networks.

Furthermore, Milton's imagery aligns with broader early modern perceptions of the East as a source of luxury commodities such as spices, silk, and precious metals. As Edward W. Said (1978) explains, Western literature often constructed the East as an "imaginative geography" associated with exotic wealth and cultural difference. Consequently, Milton's poetic language participates in a larger cultural discourse that links Eastern spaces with economic abundance. Moreover, Milton's metaphor functions rhetorically by amplifying the grandeur of Satan's throne. By comparing the throne's splendor to the wealth of Ormus and Ind, Milton emphasizes the magnitude of Satan's power within the epic narrative. In other words, the East becomes a symbolic benchmark for measuring wealth and imperial authority.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that Milton's representation does not necessarily describe the East realistically. Rather, it reflects European perceptions shaped by trade expansion and colonial encounters. As Lewalski (2003) argues, Milton frequently incorporated geographical references in order to enrich the epic scale of his narrative and situate it within a global imaginative landscape.

Thus, the lexical construction of "Ormus and Ind" demonstrates how literary discourse can transform real geographical locations into symbolic representations of economic power and global wealth.

### **Orientalist Representation and Discursive Imagination of the East**

In addition, Milton's reference to Eastern wealth can also be interpreted within the framework of Orientalist discourse. Orientalism refers to the way Western literature and scholarship historically constructed the East as exotic, wealthy, and culturally different (Said, 1978).

For example, literary texts often described Eastern lands as spaces of luxury, mystery, and abundance. Similarly, Milton's imagery reinforces this symbolic geography by presenting Ormus and Ind as the ultimate markers of wealth. Indeed, the comparison suggests that even the greatest earthly riches are associated with Eastern territories.

However, this representation also reveals a discursive power dynamic. According to Homi K. Bhabha (1994), colonial discourse frequently produces symbolic representations that define the East through difference and economic fascination. Therefore, Milton's language does not merely describe wealth; it also participates in a broader cultural narrative about the economic value of Eastern regions.

At the same time, it is important to recognize that Milton wrote during a period characterized by expanding global trade rather than full colonial domination. Consequently, his imagery reflects early modern economic imagination rather than later imperial ideology.

Nevertheless, the linguistic association between the East and commercial abundance established in early modern literature continues to influence cultural and political narratives about the region.

### **Contemporary Political and Media Discourse about the Strait of Hormuz**

The second research question examines how contemporary political and media discourse frames the Persian Gulf region as a site of power, trade, and geopolitical rivalry.

Today, the Strait of Hormuz occupies a central position in global political discourse because of its strategic importance in international energy markets. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, approximately one-fifth of the world's petroleum consumption passes through this narrow waterway each day (EIA, 2023).

Consequently, political speeches and media narratives frequently describe the strait as a critical chokepoint in global trade. For instance, discussions of tensions between the United States and Iran often emphasize the strategic significance of controlling maritime routes in the Persian Gulf.

From a discourse perspective, such narratives construct the region as a geopolitical arena where economic power and security interests intersect. As Norman Fairclough (1995) argues,



language plays a crucial role in shaping political understanding by framing certain issues as urgent or strategically important.

Similarly, Michel Foucault (1972) explains that discourse structures knowledge by defining how subjects and spaces are understood within systems of power. Thus, when political discourse repeatedly describes the Strait of Hormuz as a strategic chokepoint, it reinforces the perception of the Persian Gulf as a site of geopolitical competition.

Moreover, contemporary media narratives frequently frame the region through metaphors of threat and security. For example, news reports often describe the strait as a “flashpoint” or “pressure point” in global politics. Such language, therefore, emphasizes conflict and strategic rivalry rather than cultural or economic exchange.

### **Comparative Analysis: From Literary Wealth to Geopolitical Power**

Having examined both discursive contexts, it is now possible to compare Milton’s literary imagery with contemporary geopolitical narratives. On the one hand, Milton’s reference to Ormus and Ind constructs the East as a space of immense wealth and commercial prosperity. On the other hand, modern political discourse frames the same region as a strategic site of geopolitical conflict and energy security.

Nevertheless, both discourses share a common linguistic pattern: they associate the Persian Gulf region with global economic significance. In Milton’s text, wealth is represented through metaphors of luxury and trade. In contrast, modern political discourse emphasizes strategic control over energy resources and maritime routes.

Despite these differences, the underlying symbolic association remains remarkably consistent. The region continues to be represented as a crucial node within global economic networks. Therefore, the linguistic construction of wealth in early modern literature has evolved into a discourse of strategic power in contemporary geopolitics.

Furthermore, this continuity demonstrates how discursive representations can persist across historical periods. As Fairclough (1995) notes, discourse often reproduces cultural assumptions over time, even as the specific contexts change.

Consequently, the Persian Gulf region has been transformed from a symbol of commercial abundance in seventeenth-century literature into a focal point of geopolitical rivalry in twenty-first-century political discourse.

### **Discussion in Relation to the Research Problem**

The findings of this study directly address the central research problem: how language constructs symbolic meanings of wealth and power across literary and political discourse.

First, the analysis shows that Milton’s reference to Ormus and Ind reflects early modern perceptions of the East as a source of immense economic wealth. Second, contemporary political discourse continues to emphasize the strategic importance of the Persian Gulf region, particularly the Strait of Hormuz.

Therefore, although the discursive context has changed from poetry to geopolitics, the symbolic association between the region and global economic power remains evident.

In other words, the linguistic construction of the Persian Gulf as a space of wealth and strategic importance persists across historical periods. This finding, therefore, fills the research gap identified earlier by demonstrating a discursive continuity between early modern literary representation and modern geopolitical language.

### **Conclusion of the Analysis**

In conclusion, the analysis demonstrates that language plays a crucial role in shaping how regions are understood within cultural and political discourse. Specifically, Milton’s reference to “Ormus and Ind” constructs the East as a symbol of immense wealth and commercial power. Meanwhile, contemporary political and media narratives frame the Strait of Hormuz as a strategically vital location within global energy networks.

Thus, although the form of discourse has changed—from epic poetry to political communication—the symbolic significance of the Persian Gulf region has remained remarkably consistent. Ultimately, this study shows that linguistic constructions of wealth, trade, and power can persist across centuries, shaping both literary imagination and geopolitical perception.

### Key Findings / Results

- Milton’s phrase “Ormus and Ind” shows the East as a place of great wealth and luxury.
- The East in *Paradise Lost* is used as a symbol of global trade and prosperity.
- Milton’s language reflects European perceptions of Eastern riches during the early modern period.
- Modern political and media discourse presents the Strait of Hormuz as a strategically important region for global energy and security.
- Both historical and modern texts associate the Persian Gulf with economic and strategic power, even though the context changes.
- Milton’s literary imagery focuses on luxury and empire, while modern discourse focuses on geopolitical rivalry and security.
- The symbolic importance of the Persian Gulf region persists across centuries in both literary and political language.
- Language in both contexts shapes how people understand wealth, power, and conflict.
- There is a continuity in how the Persian Gulf is represented: from a site of wealth in literature to a site of strategic power today.
- 

### References

- Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The location of culture*. Routledge.
- Chomsky, N. (2002). *Media control: The spectacular achievements of propaganda*. Seven Stories Press.
- Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), 51–58. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1993.tb01304.x>
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Media discourse*. Edward Arnold.
- Fallon, S. M. (2007). *Milton among the philosophers: Poetry and materialism in seventeenth-century England*. Cornell University Press.
- Floor, W. (2004). *The Persian Gulf: A political and economic history of five port cities 1500–1730*. Mage Publishers.
- Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge*. Routledge.
- Kellner, D. (2004). *Media spectacle and the crisis of democracy*. Paradigm Publishers.
- Lewalski, B. K. (2003). *The life of John Milton: A critical biography*. Blackwell Publishing.
- Milton, J. (2008). *Paradise lost* (Rev. ed.; original work published 1667). Oxford University Press.
- Said, E. W. (1978). *Orientalism*. Pantheon Books.
- Spivak, G. C. (1988). Can the subaltern speak? In C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (Eds.), *Marxism and the interpretation of culture* (pp. 271–313). University of Illinois Press.
- U.S. Energy Information Administration. (2023). *World oil transit chokepoints*. U.S. Energy Information Administration. [https://www.eia.gov/international/analysis/special-topics/World\\_Oil\\_Transit\\_Chokepoints](https://www.eia.gov/international/analysis/special-topics/World_Oil_Transit_Chokepoints)