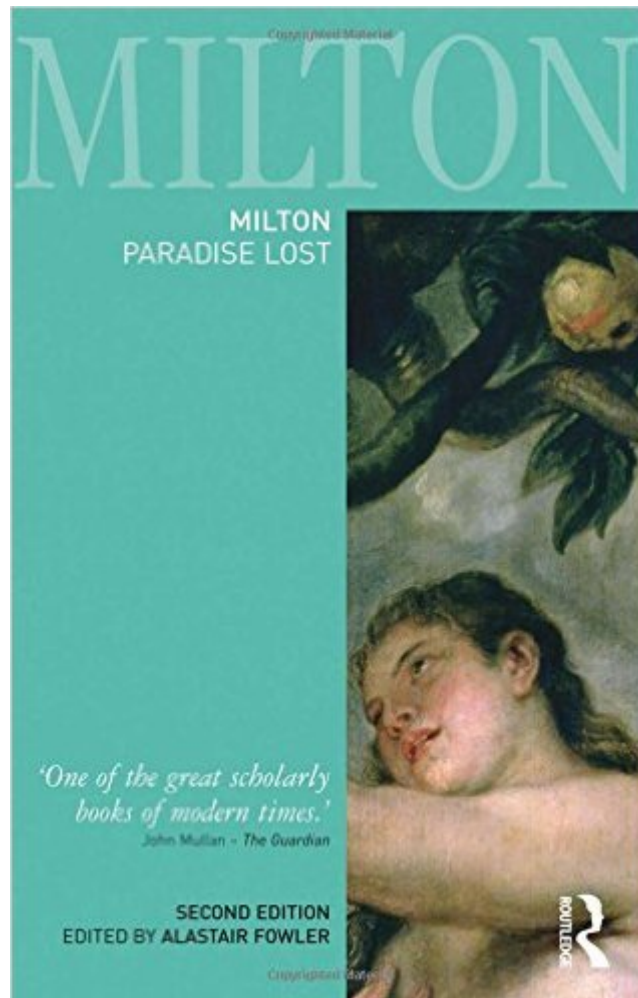


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Milton: Paradise Lost



Synopsis

Milton's *Paradise Lost* is one of the great works of literature, of any time and in any language. Marked by Milton's characteristic erudition it is a work epic both in scale and, notoriously, in ambition. For nearly 350 years it has held generation upon generation of scholars, students and readers in rapt attention and its profound influence can be seen in almost every corner of Western culture. First published in 1968, with John Carey's *Complete Shorter Poems*, Alastair Fowler's *Paradise Lost* is widely acknowledged to be the most authoritative edition of this compelling work. An unprecedented amount of detailed annotation accompanies the full text of the first (1667) edition, providing a wealth of contextual information to enrich and enhance the reader's experience. Notes on composition and context are combined with a clear explication of the multitude allusions Milton called to the poem's aid. The notes also summarise and illuminate the vast body of critical attention the poem has attracted, synthesizing the ancient and the modern to provide a comprehensive account both of the poem's development and its reception. Meanwhile, Alastair Fowler's invigorating introduction surveys the whole poem and looks in detail at such matters as Milton's theology, metrical structure and, most valuably, his complex and imaginary astronomy. The result is an enduring landmark in the field of Milton scholarship and an invaluable guide for readers of all levels.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Paradise Lost will of course continue to be reproduced, but the content will essentially remain the same. The question is which of the countless number of editions to purchase. Fowler's editing and

copious yet useful annotations are first rate for any single edition of PL. Though most publishers treat epic poetry as though it were pulp-fiction, Longman dignifies this volume in binding better than most hardcovers, for they have sewn its acid-free leaves in signatures. It is simply beautiful, and it is simply the best edition if one wants to study Milton's epic carefully.

I am writing this because the five other reviews are about Paradise Lost, not about Alistair Fowler's edition of Paradise Lost. If you just want to read Paradise Lost, you do not need to pay \$45.00 to do so. Most modern editions will have enough notes to get you through, and you can easily find inexpensive copies of such editions. This one is quite a bit more thorough than that, and it is worth the money if you are someone who spends a lot of time in the notes. It's also very well bound, by the way -- the book is designed to take a lot of abuse. It's a big, fat, heavy tome, and the notes often take up more space on the page than the poem does. An excellent resource for Milton fans -- probably a must-have for Milton fans -- but not the sort of thing most readers really need.

To be honest, I have never a big fan of poetry, but John Milton's epic changed that. I only decided to read this book after religion (and anti-religion) discussions started to heat up in my school. When I read Paradise Lost, I quickly stopped thinking of it as a poem, but as an epic of astronomical proportions that identifies many truths about humanity. The reading can be rather difficult at times, but with Alastair Fowler's wonderful annotations, it is possible for readers of any level to comprehend and enjoy Paradise Lost. Milton's sympathetic view of Lucifer in his rebellion against heaven is very insightful and compelling. I loved this poem, but I would only recommend it to readers of a slightly older age, as you have to be able to understand his blank verse writing to fully enjoy this epic.

Buyers should be aware that this is the same book as the one published in 1998 by Fowler. The only difference that I can see is a new cover and a much increased price.

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