



(REVIEW ARTICLE)



## Paradise lost: A classical epic

Hani Oudah Neamah <sup>1,\*</sup>, Nooruldeen Sabah Hasan <sup>2</sup> and Ahmed samer Mohammed <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> English department, Faculty of Arts, Banaras Hindu University, Uttar Pradesh, India.

<sup>2</sup> English department, Faculty of Arts, University of Delhi, Delhi, India.

World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews, 2024, 21(01), 083–090

Publication history: Received on 22 November 2023; revised on 30 December 2023; accepted on 01 January 2024

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2024.21.1.2725>

### Abstract

John Milton's "Paradise Lost" stands as a monumental work in the canon of English literature, embodying the classical epic tradition with its grand scope, profound themes, and poetic mastery. This abstract delves into the quintessential characteristics that classify "Paradise Lost" as a classical epic. The narrative unfolds against the cosmic backdrop of Heaven, Hell, and Earth, exploring the consequences of Adam and Eve's disobedience and their subsequent expulsion from the idyllic Garden of Eden. Milton weaves a tapestry of theological inquiry, grappling with the complexities of free will, theodicy, and the nature of God. The poem introduces a heroic protagonist in Adam, whose choices shape the destiny of humanity. Divine intervention, epic battles, and supernatural elements contribute to the poem's grandeur, while Milton's elevated language and incorporation of classical and biblical allusions elevate it to the status of an enduring masterpiece. "Paradise Lost" serves not only as an epic retelling of the biblical Fall but also as a didactic exploration of moral and spiritual themes, making it a timeless work that continues to captivate readers and scholars alike.

**Keywords:** The Fall of Man; Adam and Eve; Heaven and Hell; Free Will; Theodicy; Divine Intervention; Heroic Protagonist; Supernatural Elements; The Nature of God; Redemption; Salvation; Light and Darkness; Heavenly Hierarchy.

### 1. Introduction

"Paradise Lost" by John Milton stands as a monumental work within the realm of literature, representing a timeless masterpiece and a quintessential example of a classical epic. Published in 1667, this epic poem has endured the test of centuries and remains a cornerstone of Western literary tradition. In its sweeping verses and profound themes, "Paradise Lost" not only narrates the biblical story of the fall of humanity but elevates it to the level of a classical epic, drawing upon ancient literary conventions to craft a work of extraordinary depth and complexity.

Milton, a blind and revolutionary poet of the 17th century, undertakes a formidable task in "Paradise Lost" by retelling the biblical narrative of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. However, what distinguishes this work is not merely its reiteration of a religious tale but its transformation of the biblical account into a grand epic, aligning itself with the likes of Homer's "Iliad" and Virgil's "Aeneid." In doing so, Milton infuses the story with an epic magnitude, exploring profound theological, philosophical, and moral questions.

At its core, "Paradise Lost" encompasses the epic tradition's essential elements, featuring a heroic protagonist, divine intervention, cosmic battles, and a journey into the underworld. The poem unfolds across twelve books, each meticulously crafted with Milton's sublime language, intricate poetic devices, and a mastery of classical forms. The poem's intricate structure and elevated style contribute to its status as a classical epic, providing a canvas for Milton to weave a narrative that transcends the bounds of time and culture.

\* Corresponding author: Hani Oudah Neamah.

As the reader embarks on the epic journey through the celestial realms, the earthly paradise, and the depths of hell, Milton's "Paradise Lost" emerges as a profound exploration of human nature, free will, and the consequences of disobedience. The poem reflects the cultural and intellectual currents of the Renaissance while engaging with timeless themes that resonate across generations.

In this introduction, we embark on an exploration of "Paradise Lost" as a classical epic, delving into its historical context, poetic brilliance, and thematic richness. Through Milton's magnum opus, we encounter a work that not only serves as a bridge between the classical and Christian traditions but also continues to inspire contemplation and admiration for its enduring literary legacy.

### 1.1. Characteristics of an Epic

Epic poetry has a rich tradition in literature, and certain characteristics distinguish epics from other forms of storytelling. Here are some key characteristics of an epic in literature:

- **Heroic Figure:** Epics typically feature a heroic protagonist whose actions and adventures form the central focus of the narrative. This hero often possesses extraordinary qualities, such as strength, intelligence, courage, and sometimes even divine lineage.
- **Divine Intervention:** The involvement of gods, goddesses, or supernatural forces is a common element in epics. Divine beings often influence the events of the story, either assisting or hindering the hero in their quest.
- **Epic Setting:** Epics often unfold in vast and exotic landscapes, encompassing multiple locations, realms, or even worlds. The setting is grand and majestic, befitting the heroic scale of the narrative.
- **Supernatural Elements:** Beyond divine beings, epics frequently include other supernatural elements such as mythical creatures, magic, and fantastical occurrences. These elements contribute to the sense of the extraordinary in the epic world.
- **Elevated Style:** Epics are characterized by a lofty and formal style of language. The use of epic similes, metaphors, and other poetic devices contributes to the elevated and majestic tone of the narrative.
- **Invocation of the Muse:** Many epics begin with an invocation to a muse or divine entity, seeking inspiration and guidance in telling the epic story. This serves as a traditional opening that connects the work to the epic tradition.
- **Epic Catalogs:** Epics often contain extensive lists or catalogs, detailing genealogies, armies, or other significant elements of the story. These catalogs serve to enrich the narrative and provide a sense of scope.
- **Journey or Quest:** The hero in an epic typically embarks on a long and arduous journey or quest. This journey may involve physical travel, spiritual development, or both, and it often leads to personal growth and enlightenment.
- **Epic Battles:** Epic poems frequently include large-scale battles or conflicts that have far-reaching consequences. These battles showcase the hero's prowess and courage, as well as the clash between opposing forces.
- **Cultural Significance:** Epics often reflect and embody the values, beliefs, and cultural identity of the society from which they originate. They may serve as a means of preserving cultural heritage and conveying moral or ethical lessons.
- **Didactic Purpose:** Epics often have a didactic or instructive purpose, imparting moral, social, or philosophical lessons to the audience. The hero's journey and experiences may offer insights into the human condition.

Examples of classic epics include Homer's "Iliad" and "Odyssey," Virgil's "Aeneid," and Milton's "Paradise Lost." While these characteristics are not exhaustive or universally applicable to every epic, they provide a framework for understanding the overarching features that define this distinctive literary genre.

### 1.2. Paradise Lost: A Classical Epic

"Paradise Lost" by John Milton is considered a classical epic due to its adherence to several key characteristics of the epic genre. Published in 1667, this monumental work draws inspiration from classical epics such as Homer's "Iliad" and "Odyssey," and Virgil's "Aeneid." Here's an explanation of how "Paradise Lost" embodies the characteristics of a classical epic:

- **Heroic Protagonist:** The central figure of "Paradise Lost" is Adam, the first man, who serves as the heroic protagonist. His actions and choices shape the narrative, and he undergoes a significant journey from innocence to experience. Adam embodies the heroic qualities of strength, intelligence, and moral struggle, making his story a focal point for the epic.

- **Divine Intervention:** The poem involves a significant level of divine intervention with characters such as God, Satan, and angels playing crucial roles in the unfolding of events. God's plan and Satan's rebellion against it are central to the narrative. Divine forces influence the fate of characters, reflecting the epic tradition's connection to the cosmic and divine.
- **Epic Setting:** "Paradise Lost" encompasses a grand and cosmic setting. The narrative spans heaven, hell, and Earth, providing a vast and majestic backdrop for the unfolding events. The expansive setting adds to the epic scale of the poem, emphasizing the cosmic significance of the themes explored.
- **Supernatural Elements:** The poem is rich in supernatural elements, including angels, demons, and fantastical landscapes. Milton introduces mythical creatures and magical occurrences that contribute to the fantastical nature of the epic. These elements enhance the sense of the extraordinary and contribute to the mythic quality of the narrative.
- **Elevated Style:** Milton employs a highly elevated and formal style of language throughout "Paradise Lost." The use of epic similes, metaphors, and intricate poetic devices contributes to the majestic and poetic tone. The elevated style aligns with the tradition of epic poetry, emphasizing the grandeur of the subject matter.
- **Invocation of the Muse:** The poem begins with an invocation to the Muse, seeking inspiration and guidance. This traditional opening connects "Paradise Lost" to the classical epic tradition. The invocation acknowledges the poem's literary lineage and sets the stage for an epic narrative.
- **Journey or Quest:** While "Paradise Lost" doesn't involve a physical journey, it depicts a profound spiritual and moral journey for its characters, especially Adam and Eve. The characters' quest for self-discovery and understanding aligns with the epic tradition's focus on personal growth and enlightenment.
- **Epic Battles:** The poem features epic battles, both in heaven during Satan's rebellion and on Earth during the Fall of Man. These conflicts have far-reaching consequences and showcase the characters' courage and prowess. Epic battles are a staple of the genre, representing the cosmic struggle between good and evil.
- **Cultural Significance:** "Paradise Lost" reflects the cultural and religious context of 17th-century England. It engages with theological and philosophical debates of the time, making it a product of its cultural milieu. The poem serves as a reflection of the cultural and intellectual currents of the Renaissance, providing insight into the values and concerns of its era.
- **Didactic Purpose:** Milton's epic has a didactic purpose, imparting moral and theological lessons. The narrative explores themes of free will, obedience, and the consequences of disobedience. The didactic elements align with the epic tradition's tendency to convey moral or ethical lessons through the hero's experiences.

In summary, "Paradise Lost" embodies the characteristics of a classical epic through its heroic protagonist, divine intervention, epic setting, supernatural elements, elevated style, invocation of the Muse, spiritual journey, epic battles, cultural significance, and didactic purpose. Milton's work stands as a monumental contribution to the epic tradition, seamlessly blending classical influences with a uniquely Christian perspective.

### 1.3. Milton's methodology in "Paradise Lost"

- **Use of Blank Verse:** Milton employs blank verse, a form of unrhymed iambic pentameter, as the primary poetic structure throughout "Paradise Lost." The use of blank verse gives the poem a majestic and grandiloquent quality, aligning it with the classical epic tradition. It allows for flexibility in expression and emphasizes the seriousness of the subject matter.
- **Epic Structure:** The poem is structured as an epic, divided into twelve books, each with its own themes and narrative focus. The epic structure provides a framework for presenting the grand narrative of the Fall of Man, drawing on classical models like Virgil's "Aeneid" and Homer's epics.
- **Incorporation of Classical and Biblical Allusions:** Milton extensively uses references to classical mythology, literature, and biblical stories throughout the poem. These allusions enrich the layers of meaning in the poem, connecting it to a broader cultural and intellectual tradition. Milton's familiarity with classical and biblical sources contributes to the depth of his work.
- **Theological Exploration:** "Paradise Lost" delves into profound theological themes, including theodicy (the justification of God's goodness in the face of evil) and the nature of God. Milton's methodology involves a rigorous examination of theological questions, offering readers a poetic space to contemplate complex issues related to faith, free will, and divine justice.
- **Characterization:** The characters in "Paradise Lost," including Satan, Adam, and Eve, are meticulously developed, each representing different aspects of the human condition and the cosmic struggle. Milton's methodology involves creating characters that are morally and psychologically complex, adding depth and nuance to the narrative. This contributes to the readers' engagement with the poem's themes.

- **Didactic Purpose:** "Paradise Lost" serves a didactic purpose, imparting moral and spiritual lessons to its readers. The poem is not merely an artistic creation but also a work intended to instruct and guide. Milton uses the narrative as a vehicle for exploring ethical and philosophical ideas.
- **Rhetorical Techniques:** Milton employs various rhetorical devices, including powerful speeches by Satan and other characters, to convey his message effectively. The use of rhetorical techniques enhances the persuasive and emotive qualities of the poem, making it both intellectually stimulating and emotionally resonant.

Milton's methodology in "Paradise Lost" involves a synthesis of classical traditions, theological exploration, and a meticulous crafting of language and character. The resulting epic poem is a masterpiece that continues to be studied and appreciated for its depth, complexity, and enduring relevance.

#### **1.4. A Poem in Twelve Books**

"A Poem in Twelve Books" refers to the organizational structure of "Paradise Lost" by John Milton. The epic poem is divided into twelve individual books, each functioning as a separate section or canto. This division is a deliberate choice by Milton, drawing inspiration from classical epics such as Virgil's "Aeneid" and Homer's "Iliad" and "Odyssey," which also have a similar format.

Each book in "Paradise Lost" serves as a unit of the larger narrative, contributing to the overall story of the Fall of Man and the consequences of Adam and Eve's disobedience. The division into twelve books allows Milton to explore various themes, characters, and events in a structured manner, making the epic more accessible for readers and providing a clear sense of progression in the narrative.

The organization into books is a common feature in classical epics, and it provides a framework for the poet to weave together a complex and multifaceted tale while maintaining a sense of cohesion and order.

#### **1.5. About the author**

John Milton (1608–1674) was a renowned English poet, polemicist, and intellectual, best known for his epic poem "Paradise Lost." Here is an overview of John Milton's life and contributions:

John Milton was born on December 9, 1608, in London, England, into a prosperous and cultured family. His father, also named John Milton, was a scrivener (a legal secretary), and his mother, Sarah Jeffrey, came from a wealthy merchant family.

Milton received an excellent education. He attended St. Paul's School in London and then matriculated to Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1625. He excelled in his studies, displaying proficiency in languages, literature, and classical studies.

Milton began his literary career with poems and prose works. Notable early works include "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso," which reflect his love for poetry, music, and contemplation.

Milton's writings covered a range of subjects, including education, theology, and politics. "Areopagitica," his famous prose work, argued against censorship and defended freedom of the press.

Milton entered political life during the English Civil War (1642–1651). He served as a civil servant for the Commonwealth of England under Oliver Cromwell's government.

A committed republican, Milton wrote several political tracts supporting the idea of a republic without a monarchy.

Milton held the position of Latin Secretary for Foreign Tongues, responsible for composing diplomatic correspondence in Latin.

In the early 1650s, Milton gradually lost his eyesight, likely due to glaucoma. Despite his blindness, he continued his literary pursuits with the help of amanuenses.

Milton's most significant work, "Paradise Lost," was published in 1667. This epic poem explored themes of the Fall of Man, free will, and theodicy.

Following "Paradise Lost," Milton wrote "Paradise Regained" and the dramatic poem "Samson Agonistes," both exploring biblical themes.

Milton's works, particularly "Paradise Lost," have had a profound impact on English literature and culture. His use of blank verse and the exploration of complex themes have inspired generations of writers.

Milton's contributions to political philosophy, advocating for republican ideals and freedom of expression, continue to be studied and discussed.

While initially facing some criticism, Milton's reputation grew in the centuries that followed. He is now widely regarded as one of the greatest poets in the English language. John Milton passed away on November 8, 1674, leaving behind a legacy that extends beyond his literary achievements to encompass his contributions to political thought and his enduring influence on the broader intellectual landscape.

### **1.6. Plot summary of Paradise Lost**

The speaker in Milton's "Paradise Lost" announces that the central theme of the narrative will revolve around the transgression and fall of Adam and Eve from grace. Seeking divine inspiration, the speaker invokes a muse for assistance in recounting this grand narrative and revealing God's predetermined destiny for humanity. The story commences with Satan and his rebel angels confined to a lake of fire in Hell. Swiftly liberating themselves, they construct Pandemonium as their gathering place. Inside Pandemonium, now transformed into demons, they debate whether to wage another war against God, aiming to harm God's cherished creation, humans, according to Beelzebub. Satan agrees, and as he prepares to depart Hell, his offspring, Sin and Death, meet him at the gates, constructing a bridge between Hell and Earth.

Meanwhile, God calls a meeting of angels in Heaven, informing them of Satan's plans. The Son offers himself as a sacrifice for humanity. As Satan journeys through Night and Chaos to reach Earth, he disguises himself as a cherub to evade the Archangel Uriel guarding the sun. On Earth, Satan takes a moment to appreciate the beauty of Paradise, though it brings him pain. Reaffirming his allegiance to evil, he transforms into a cormorant and perches atop the Tree of Life. Uriel notices Satan's unsettling demeanor and warns other angels of an impostor.

Adam and Eve, tending to the Garden, strive to obey God's command not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge. Satan, disguised as a toad, whispers to Eve. Gabriel, assigned to watch over Paradise, discovers Satan and instructs him to leave. Satan prepares to fight Gabriel, but God intervenes with a sign, and Satan flees. Eve awakens, recounting a dream where an angel persuades her to eat from the forbidden tree. Concerned, God sends Raphael to Earth to warn Adam and Eve.

Raphael joins Adam and Eve for a meal, narrating Satan's jealousy and the angelic rebellion against God. The angels, led by Michael and Gabriel, engage in a celestial battle against Satan's forces. Michael, co-commanding with Gabriel, finally defeats Satan, consigning him and his followers to Hell. Raphael cautions Adam about Satan's malicious intentions, advising caution. Adam requests the creation story from Raphael, who describes God sending the Son into Chaos to create the cosmos.

Adam, curious about the movements of stars and planets, engages Raphael in conversation. Raphael, cautioning Adam's thirst for knowledge, assures him he will learn what he needs. Adam shares his earliest memories, and Raphael imparts guidance on spiritual love. Raphael returns to Heaven.

Eight days after his expulsion, Satan returns to Paradise. Observing the creatures, he transforms into a serpent. When Eve suggests working separately for increased efficiency, Satan, in serpent form, approaches her, praising her beauty. He claims God wants them to eat from the Tree of Knowledge as a test of bravery. Eve, initially hesitant, eventually eats the forbidden fruit. Finding Adam, who has been creating a wreath, Eve reveals her transgression. Adam, choosing unity over purity, also eats the fruit. God, aware of their disobedience, informs the angels of impending punishment. The Son penalizes the serpent and announces humanity's suffering and mortality. Adam and Eve blame each other and face the consequences—Adam working the land and Eve enduring pain in childbirth. Satan returns to Hell, hailed as triumphant. Sin and Death traverse their bridge, and demons, deceived by imagined trees, suffer disappointment. God instructs angels to change Earth's climate, introducing seasons. Adam and Eve, fearing death, quarrel and blame each other. They pray for forgiveness and confess their sins.

God hears their prayers, and Michael descends to Earth. Michael leads Adam and Eve out of Paradise, hand in hand, into a new world.

### 1.7. The main characters of Paradise Lost

In John Milton's "Paradise Lost," Satan is a complex and central character who plays a pivotal role in the epic poem. Here are some key aspects of Satan's character:

- **Satan:** The central figure of the poem, Satan was once an archangel in Heaven but rebelled against God. He becomes the leader of the fallen angels and the adversary to God and humanity. His character embodies pride, defiance, and the consequences of rebellion.
- **God:** The omnipotent and omniscient creator of the universe, God is a central figure in the poem. While not directly involved in much of the action, God's will and plan shape the events, and His wisdom and justice are subjects of contemplation.
- **Adam:** The first man created by God, Adam is a central human figure in the narrative. His actions and choices, particularly the Fall, have profound consequences for humanity.
- **Eve:** The first woman and Adam's partner, Eve is a key character in the story. Like Adam, her choices contribute to the Fall, and she symbolizes the vulnerable nature of humanity.
- **The Son (Jesus Christ):** The Son of God volunteers to redeem humanity by offering himself as a sacrifice. He becomes a central figure in the later books, embodying divine love, mercy, and the promise of salvation.
- **Raphael:** An archangel sent by God to warn Adam and Eve about Satan's plans. Raphael also narrates the story of Satan's rebellion and fall.
- **Beelzebub:** One of Satan's chief lieutenants, Beelzebub is a prominent fallen angel. He often advises and counsels Satan and plays a key role in the events following the rebellion.
- **Uriel:** An archangel who guards the sun in Heaven. Satan, when trying to sneak past Uriel to reach Earth, disguises himself as a cherub.
- **Gabriel:** An archangel assigned to keep watch over Paradise. Gabriel discovers Satan in the Garden and plays a role in various celestial battles.
- **Michael:** An archangel who leads Heaven's army against Satan and the rebel angels. Michael also serves as a guide for Adam, offering visions of the future.
- **Sin and Death:** Offspring of Satan, Sin is a female figure whose embrace with Satan results in the birth of Death. They play symbolic roles in the poem, representing the consequences of sin.

These characters, both divine and human, contribute to the exploration of themes such as free will, obedience, temptation, and the nature of good and evil in "Paradise Lost." Each character's choices and actions play a crucial part in the unfolding epic narrative.

### 1.8. Themes of Paradise Lost

"Paradise Lost" by John Milton explores a wide range of themes, delving into complex theological, philosophical, and moral questions. Here are some of the central themes in the epic poem:

- **The Fall and Original Sin:** The primary theme of "Paradise Lost" revolves around the Fall of Man. Adam and Eve's disobedience in eating the forbidden fruit leads to their expulsion from Eden and introduces the concept of original sin into the world.
- **Free Will and Predestination:** Milton grapples with the tension between human free will and divine predestination. The characters, especially Satan, exercise free will in their choices, yet God's foreknowledge implies a predetermined plan.
- **The Nature of God:** The poem explores the nature of God, emphasizing His omnipotence, omniscience, and divine justice. It delves into theological questions about God's role in human suffering and the existence of evil.
- **Theodicy:** Related to the nature of God, theodicy in "Paradise Lost" involves addressing the problem of evil in a world created by an all-powerful and benevolent deity. Milton attempts to reconcile the existence of evil with a just and merciful God.
- **Moral and Spiritual Education:** The poem serves as a didactic work, imparting moral and spiritual lessons. It explores the consequences of disobedience, the importance of virtue, and the dangers of yielding to temptation.
- **Redemption and Salvation:** Despite the fall, the poem introduces themes of redemption and salvation. The Son of God offers himself as a sacrifice to save humanity, providing hope for spiritual renewal and reconciliation with God.

- Milton's Political Vision: "Paradise Lost" reflects Milton's political views, shaped by the political turmoil of his time. The poem subtly addresses issues of tyranny, authoritarianism, and the struggle for liberty and justice.
- Heroism and Tragedy: The character of Satan, while a figure of rebellion and evil, is portrayed with a tragic heroism. His defiance and determination, despite the consequences, evoke both admiration and pity.
- Knowledge and Wisdom: The pursuit of knowledge is a recurring theme. Adam and Eve's desire for knowledge leads to their downfall, raising questions about the limits of human understanding and the consequences of seeking forbidden knowledge.
- Allegiance and Loyalty: Characters in the poem grapple with issues of allegiance and loyalty. Satan's rebellion against God highlights themes of betrayal and the consequences of turning away from divine authority.
- Nature and the Cosmos: The poem incorporates vivid descriptions of the natural world and the cosmos. The setting includes heavenly realms, hellish landscapes, and the pristine beauty of Eden, reflecting the grandeur and diversity of creation.

"Paradise Lost" remains a rich and nuanced work that continues to captivate readers with its exploration of these themes and its poetic mastery. The complex interplay of theological, philosophical, and moral ideas makes it a timeless and thought-provoking piece of literature.

### 1.9. Symbols of Paradise Lost

"Paradise Lost" by John Milton is rich with symbolic elements that deepen the thematic and allegorical dimensions of the epic poem. Here are some key symbols in "Paradise Lost":

- Eden: Eden represents the perfect, paradisiacal state of innocence and harmony. The loss of Eden following Adam and Eve's disobedience serves as a symbol of the Fall and the introduction of sin into the world.
- The Forbidden Fruit: The forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge represents disobedience and the consequences of seeking knowledge beyond the limits set by God. Eating the fruit leads to the Fall of Man and introduces sin and mortality.
- Serpent: The serpent, initially Satan in disguise, is a symbol of cunning, temptation, and deceit. It is instrumental in leading Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, marking the pivotal moment of disobedience.
- Tree of Life: The Tree of Life represents eternal life and divine sustenance. After the Fall, access to the Tree of Life is denied to prevent humanity from achieving immortality in a fallen state.
- Pandemonium: Pandemonium, the capital of Hell built by the fallen angels, is a symbol of chaos, rebellion, and the seat of Satan's power. It serves as a contrast to the ordered and harmonious realms of Heaven and Eden.
- The Son (Jesus Christ): The Son of God symbolizes divine love, sacrifice, and redemption. His willingness to offer himself as a sacrifice becomes a symbol of hope and salvation for humanity.
- Light and Darkness: Light is associated with divine truth, knowledge, and righteousness, while darkness represents ignorance, sin, and evil. The contrast between light and darkness underscores the moral and spiritual themes in the poem.
- Chaos: Chaos, a primordial abyss, symbolizes disorder and formlessness. It serves as a backdrop to Satan's journey to Earth and reflects the state of confusion and turmoil resulting from the rebellion.
- Heavenly Hierarchy: The hierarchical structure of Heaven symbolizes order, obedience, and divine authority. The rebellion of Satan and his followers disrupts this order, leading to the fall from grace.
- The Lake of Fire: The Lake of Fire in Hell represents eternal punishment and torment. It is a place of suffering for the fallen angels, emphasizing the consequences of rebellion against God.
- Milton's Use of Classical and Biblical Allusions: Milton's incorporation of classical and biblical allusions throughout the poem adds layers of symbolism. For example, references to classical epics like the works of Homer and Virgil contribute to the epic grandeur of "Paradise Lost."
- Symbols of Gender Roles: The gender roles assigned to Adam and Eve symbolize traditional views of masculinity and femininity. Eve's role in the temptation and Adam's subsequent actions reflect cultural and religious perspectives on gender.

These symbols collectively contribute to the rich tapestry of meaning in "Paradise Lost," inviting readers to explore the deeper layers of theological, philosophical, and moral concepts embedded in Milton's masterpiece.

---

## 2. Conclusion

In conclusion, John Milton's "Paradise Lost" stands as a monumental achievement in English literature, offering readers a profound exploration of theological, philosophical, and moral themes. The twelve books of the epic, written in majestic

blank verse, guide us through the cosmic drama of Satan's rebellion, the Fall of Man, and the subsequent consequences that shape the destiny of humanity. Through the characters of Satan, Adam, and Eve, Milton delves into the complexities of free will, theodicy, and the eternal struggle between good and evil.

Satan, a character both charismatic and tragic, embodies the rebellious spirit that challenges divine authority. His speeches, filled with rhetorical power, showcase Milton's mastery of language and his ability to humanize even the embodiment of evil. Meanwhile, Adam and Eve, the first humans, symbolize innocence and the potential for both virtue and vulnerability. Their choices in the idyllic Garden of Eden reverberate throughout the narrative, marking a pivotal moment in the epic.

The allegorical layers of "Paradise Lost" invite readers to explore deeper meanings, with symbols like the Garden, the forbidden fruit, and the serpent carrying rich metaphorical significance. The poem grapples with fundamental questions about the nature of God, the problem of evil, and the possibilities of redemption through divine sacrifice, embodied by the Son.

Milton's enduring legacy is not only found in the brilliance of his poetic craftsmanship but also in the lasting impact "Paradise Lost" has had on subsequent literature, philosophy, and theology. The Miltonic heroism displayed by the characters, the exploration of free will, and the poignant portrayal of the human condition continue to resonate with readers, scholars, and artists.

As we reflect on "Paradise Lost," we recognize it as a timeless masterpiece that challenges us to contemplate the complexities of existence, morality, and our relationship with the divine. Milton's epic remains a testament to the enduring power of literature to provoke thought, inspire introspection, and illuminate the human experience across the ages.

---

## Compliance with ethical standards

### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

---

## References

- [1] Forsythe, Neil (2002). *The Satanic Epic*. Princeton University.
- [2] "Paradise Lost: Introduction". Dartmouth College. Retrieved 26 March 2010.
- [3] Steadman, John M. "Heroic Virtue and the Divine Image in Paradise Lost." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 22.1/2 (1959): pp. 89
- [4] Steadman, John M. "Heroic Virtue and the Divine Image in Paradise Lost." *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 22.1/2 (1959): pp. 90
- [5] Carey, J; Fowler, A (1971), *The Poems of John Milton*, London.
- [6] Abrahm, M.H., Stephen Greenblatt, Eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. New York: Norton, 2000.
- [7] Spodek, Howard; Richard Mason (2006). *The World's History*. New Jersey: Pearson Education. p. 224. ISBN 0-13-177318-6.
- [8] Quinn, Daniel, "Styles in Production: Re-Visioning Opera" (1980). *Performing Arts Journal*, 5 (1): pp. 87-95.