

John Milton's Take on Religion in

Paradise Lost

(Book One)

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17th Century

The 17th century is considered to be the Early Modern period of Europe, and was characterized by several movements including the Baroque cultural movement and the scientific revolution. The religious climate of the time was characterized by conflict.



The Sea Triumph of Charles II by Antonio Verrio ,
1674

17th Century: Religion

Religion at this time was important to politics as it brought political stability, however, it also brought enforced conformity. With religious conformity also brought religious persecution.



An Allegory for the Church of England, circa 1689-

1702

John Milton

John Milton was an English poet with *Paradise Lost* being regarded as his masterpiece, or most acclaimed work.

Before becoming a poet, he had intentions of going into priesthood but his plans changed following his time at university.



Portrait of John Milton from Christ's College, Cambridge

John Milton

Politically, Milton was open with how against the monarchy he was. Furthermore, he was also supportive of the freedom of speech and had made many works advocating on the side of radical ideals. This included works on the freedom of the press, sanctioned regicide, populism, and many other political topics.

Paradise Lost

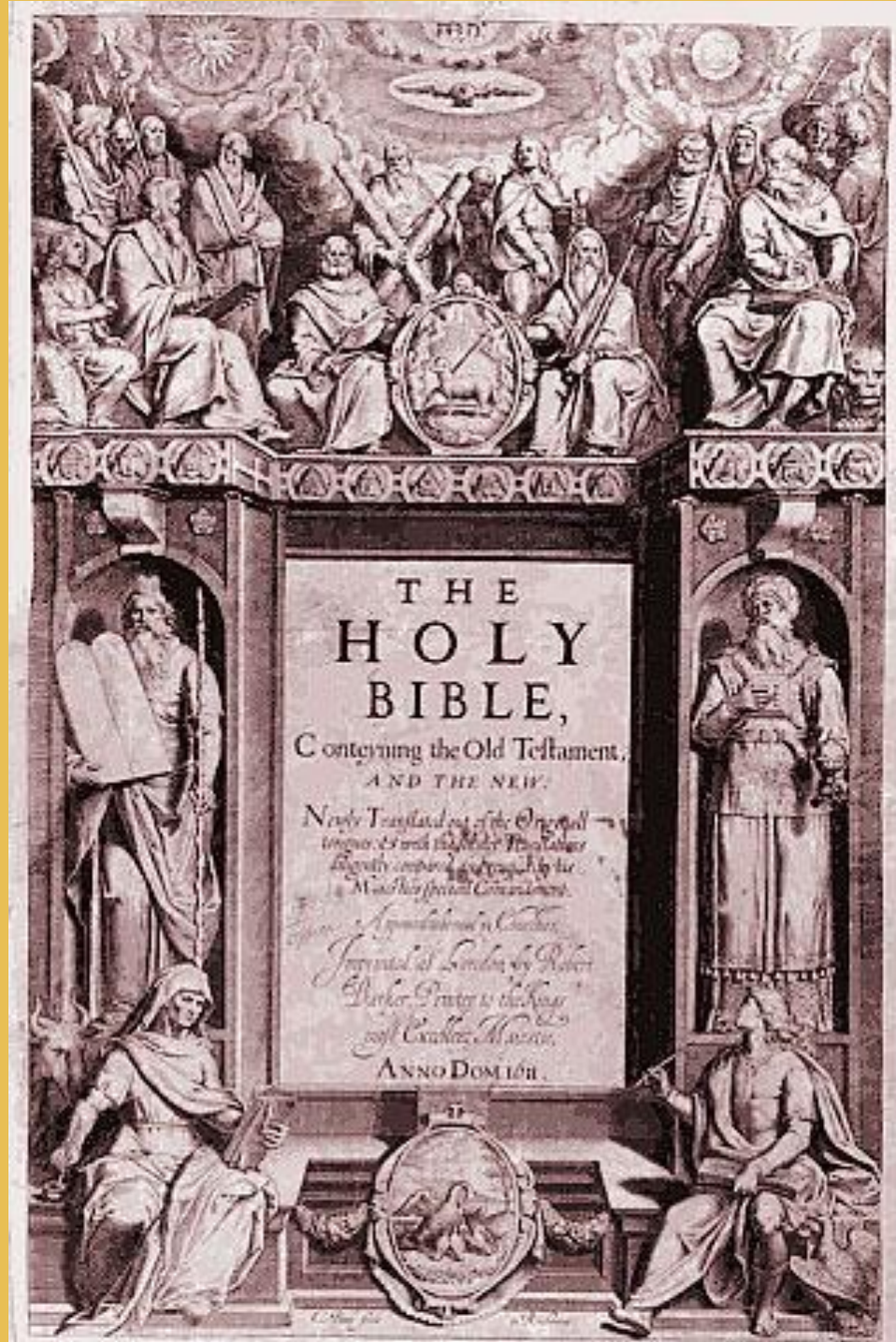
Paradise Lost at the surface is the biblical story of the fall of man, however, the way the text goes about it is much more different than what one might be used to when thinking about religious-based literature. This is especially true when taking a look into the character of Satan.



Paradise Lost

Satan is characterized in a way that makes him feel very human in the text. The way Satan was written in the text makes him be perceived as a sort of epic hero. This is worlds different from how modern day media and modern religion portray the character of Satan to be.

Paradise Lost



With this text having been written around the time of the scientific revolution, it poses the idea that while moving away from a society centered around tradition to a society built around question the shift that happened gave way to a much broader religious transformation than formally considered.

Paradise Lost

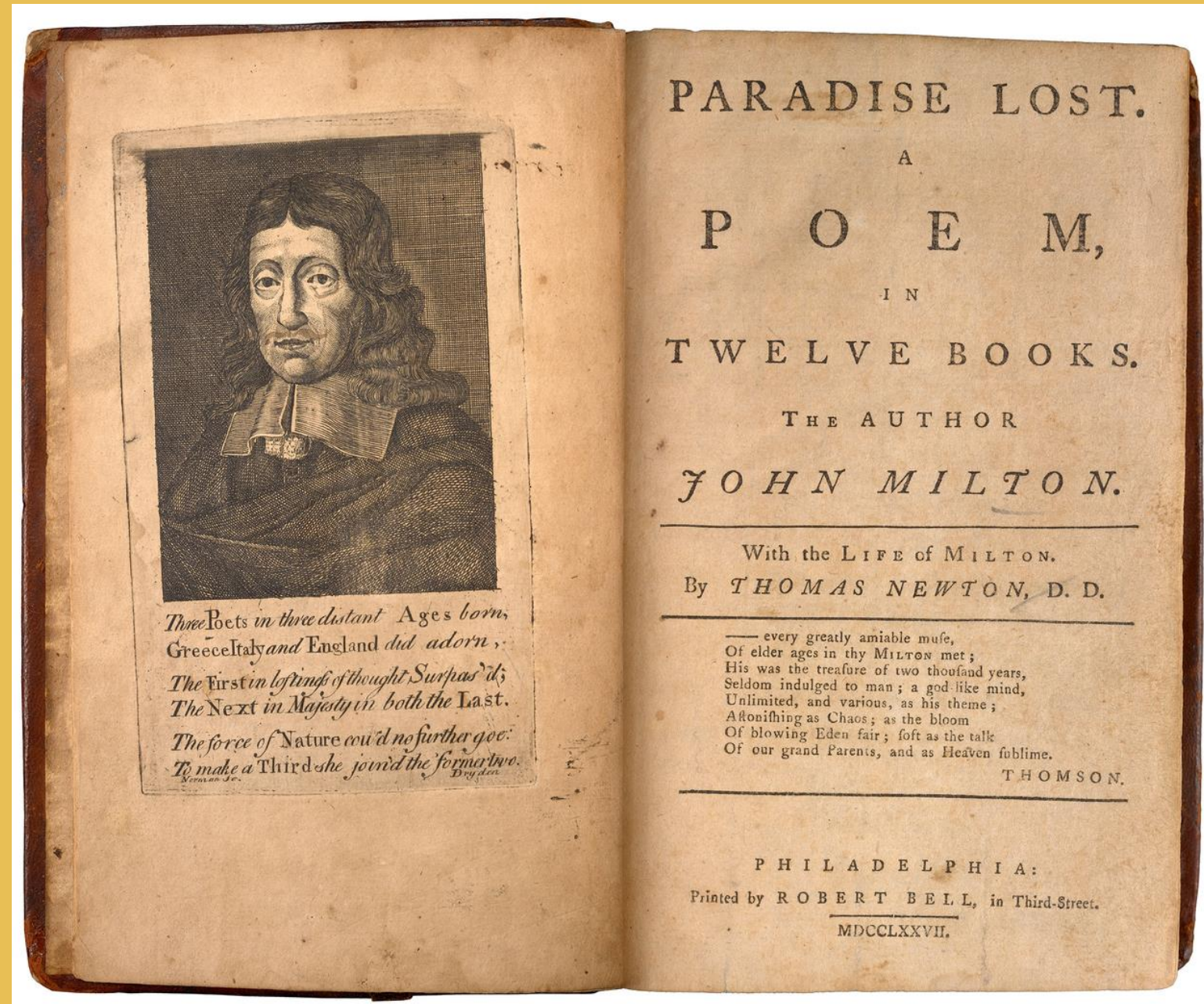
The emotions that Satan convey are much more ranged and akin to how humans would express themselves.

Most notably is the inclusion of the expression of envy which is considerably one of the most human emotions there is while also being one of the least pleasant.

Paradise Lost

By humanizing a character like Satan, you're able to help more people take away the message behind *Paradise Lost* and internalize it. The message being centered around free will but also the consequences that can come with acting in favor of temptation.

The Banning of *Paradise Lost*



Within the Catholic church, *Paradise Lost* would go on to be banned for reasons including the portrayal of Satan as a sympathetic figure. In addition to the portrayal of Satan, the portrayal of God was seen as a flawed as well further contributing to the text being banned.

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