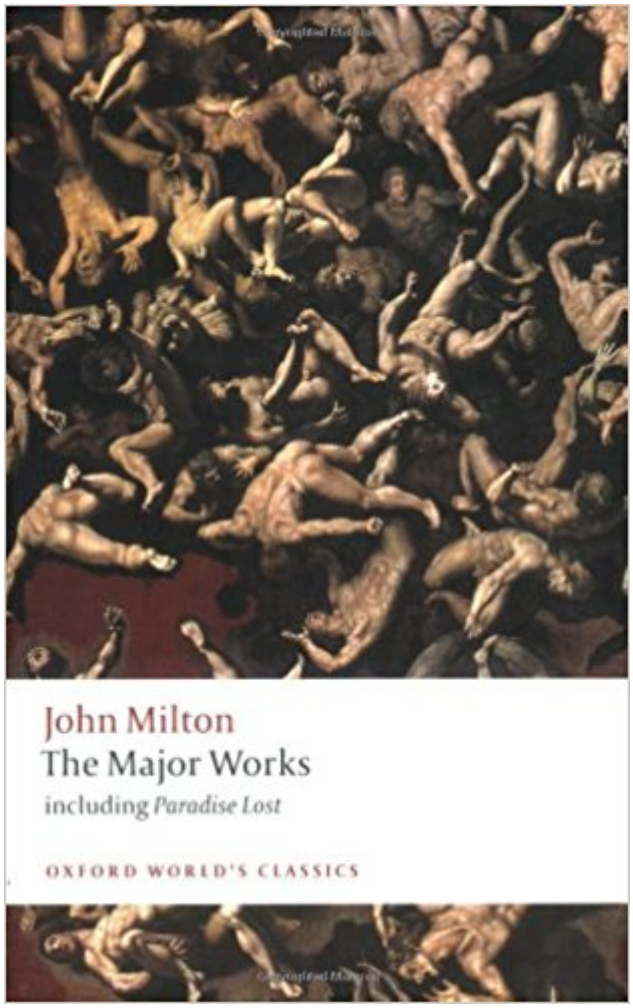
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The Major Works (Oxford World's Classics)



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Synopsis

Previously published in the Oxford Authors series, this unique one-volume selection of Milton's poetry and prose includes all the English and Italian verse and a generous selection of his major prose works. Modernized spelling, extensive notes, and a helpful introduction make the text immediately accessible to the modern reader.About the Series: For over 100 years Oxford World's Classics has made available the broadest spectrum of literature from around the globe. Each affordable volume reflects Oxford's commitment to scholarship, providing the most accurate text plus a wealth of other valuable features, including expert introductions by leading authorities, voluminous notes to clarify the text, up-to-date bibliographies for further study, and much more.

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Customer Reviews

A good edition with comprehensive notes and an introduction that is both informative and engaging. / Dr. Ema Vyroubalova, Trinity College Dublin

Stephen Orgel is a high-profile academic and author of many books on Shakespeare and the Renaissance, including The Authentic Shakespeare (Routledge, 2002). He is General Editor of the New Pelican Shakespeare, for which he has edited five volumes, and the editor of The Tempest and The Winter's Tale for the Oxford Shakespeare. Jonathan Goldberg has written books on early modern literature and culture, especially concerned with gender issues. He is the editor of Queering the Renaissance and Reclaiming Sodom.

Milton is such a bro. I just spent a semester with him at my college, and we got REAL close.In all seriousness, this is a great volume of his collected works that I ended up not selling back because I found it so engrossing. Milton had some very progressive thoughts for his time, which makes his works compelling for modern readers. His interpretation of Eve in Paradise Lost especially was phenomenal, and nor just for the way he used Ovid’s the Metamorphosis. I highly recommend this volume, and Milton in general!

Great translations and very comprehensive survey of works if not complete. Paradise Lost is even more interesting in comparison to Dante’s Inferno. Even more useful when used in tandem with the included notes; and in comparison with other editions and translations of individual pieces.

Great read

Everything I expected

[John Milton, son of a scrivener and musician...] This review is of the Oxford World’s Classics edition of-John Milton: The Major Works- (ISBN: 019280409X),edited and with an Introduction by Stephen Orgel andJonathan Goldberg. "That kings for such a tomb would wish to die" (JohnMilton--"On Shakespeare") -- "one of the greatest,most noble, and most sublime poems which either thisage or nation has produced" (John Dryden -- on -ParadiseLost-). The picture drawn of Milton, his life, and hiscareer (or careers) by Orgel and Goldberg is of aman of intelligence and means who had been educatedfor the life of a gentleman and a scholar in hisearly life, yet finding that the surge of eventsand ideologies has a way of changing one’s timing,course of expression, and even personal fate. ThusMilton makes conflicting statements about his intents,his "ripeness" (maturity of intellect and wisdom, morethan age), and which venue is his real chosen arenaof expression. His first published poem, is anonymous, and is"On Shakespeare" included in "the dedicatory versesto the second Shakespeare folio[1632]." (Chronology.) Yetin his first signed publication, -The Reason for ChurchGovernment- (1642), a prose tract, "Milton presents himself ...as a poet who uses only his ’left hand’in writing prose. In the account he gives, his entirelife appears to have been spent in training as a poet." (Introduction.) As the eldest son, however, he "had been from childhood’destined’...to a Church career." (Introduction.) Butevents intrude, as well as yearnings, and the 2 Jan. 1646publication of -Poems of Mr. John MIlton, Both Englishand Latin-, dated 1645.

The Church career never materializes,but in a strange way, a more interesting "preaching" or"exhorting" or "inspirational" one does, through hispoetry, rather than his political tracts. And Milton,perhaps even oblivious to his own constantly self-revisionist attitudes and stances, creates a moreenduring legacy which has influenced literature,scholarship, views about justifying "the ways ofGod to man" (from -Paradise Lost-), and the commoncultural views about Satan, and Hell, and the Fall,even more so than those of Dante. This is an excellent edition which contains theshorter English poems, the Latin poems (with bothLatin text on left pages -- and the Enlish translationson the right pages), Selections from -A Book ofSylvae-, Greek poem added 1673, Carmina Elegiaca,the Prose Works: from -The Reason of Church Government-,from -An Apology for Smectymnuus-, -The Doctrine andDiscipline of Divorce (Complete), -Of Education-(Complete), -Areopagitica- (Complete), -The Tenureof Kings and Magistrates- (Complete), from -TheSecond Defence of the English People, -The Ready andEasy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth- (Complete). Of course, there is also -Paradise Lost- (Complete);-Paradise Regained- (Complete); and -Samson Agonistes-(Complete). Highly enlightening are 3 Familiar Lettersof 1674: "To Charles Diodati, 1637

Of English writers, John Milton is justly considered to be a close second to Shakespeare. This volume provides good illustration. He is not the easiest writer to read but the editor’s notes help (as well as an understanding of mythology, English history, and the Bible). Milton excels in poetry, yet his prose remains powerful (Aeropagitica and Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Commonwealth in particular). Some of his works are rather tough to get through especially if you disagree with his point of view (I found this to be so with Doctine and Discipline of Divorce) or if you are unfamiliar with the time period he was writing in (Tenure of Kings and Magistrates). In his writing you will see his brilliance shine through in his ideas, arguements, and phrasing. Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained are written with such conviction that you could think that that is how those events had to have happened.

I took a course on Milton as part of a single author course requirement for graduation. I had to chose between Chaucer, Shakespeare and Milton. I felt I suffered enough with Shakespeare in high school, and didn’t feel like learning a new language with Chaucer, having studied a bit of "The Canterbury Tales" in a different class, I chose Milton. The only thing I knew about him was that he wrote "Paradise Lost." Coming out of the class, I found it difficult to read his material at first, but once I learned more about the time period and Milton’s life, its easier to comprehend his style and

his material. I found it astonishing that he wrote "Paradise Lost" while blind. If this text isn't required as a textbook, I think I would still attempt to read it leisurely.

The Oxford version of Milton's works is fairly comprehensive, and for that, it is appreciated. For those with an understanding of Latin, Oxford's choice to have the Latin opposite the English translation for several of Milton's poems is surely appreciated. However, notes on individual items within a work have endnotes, and while it is nice just to have notes on the works at all, having those notes on the page itself would be much more useful than having to hold a page open in the back of the book while reading a sonnet in the front of it. The Works include Paradise Lost/Regained, as well as Samson Agonistes, besides various poetry and even portions of Milton's pamphlets regarding his sociopolitical thoughts. Overall, not a bad set of works, but the design/layout could have been improved.

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