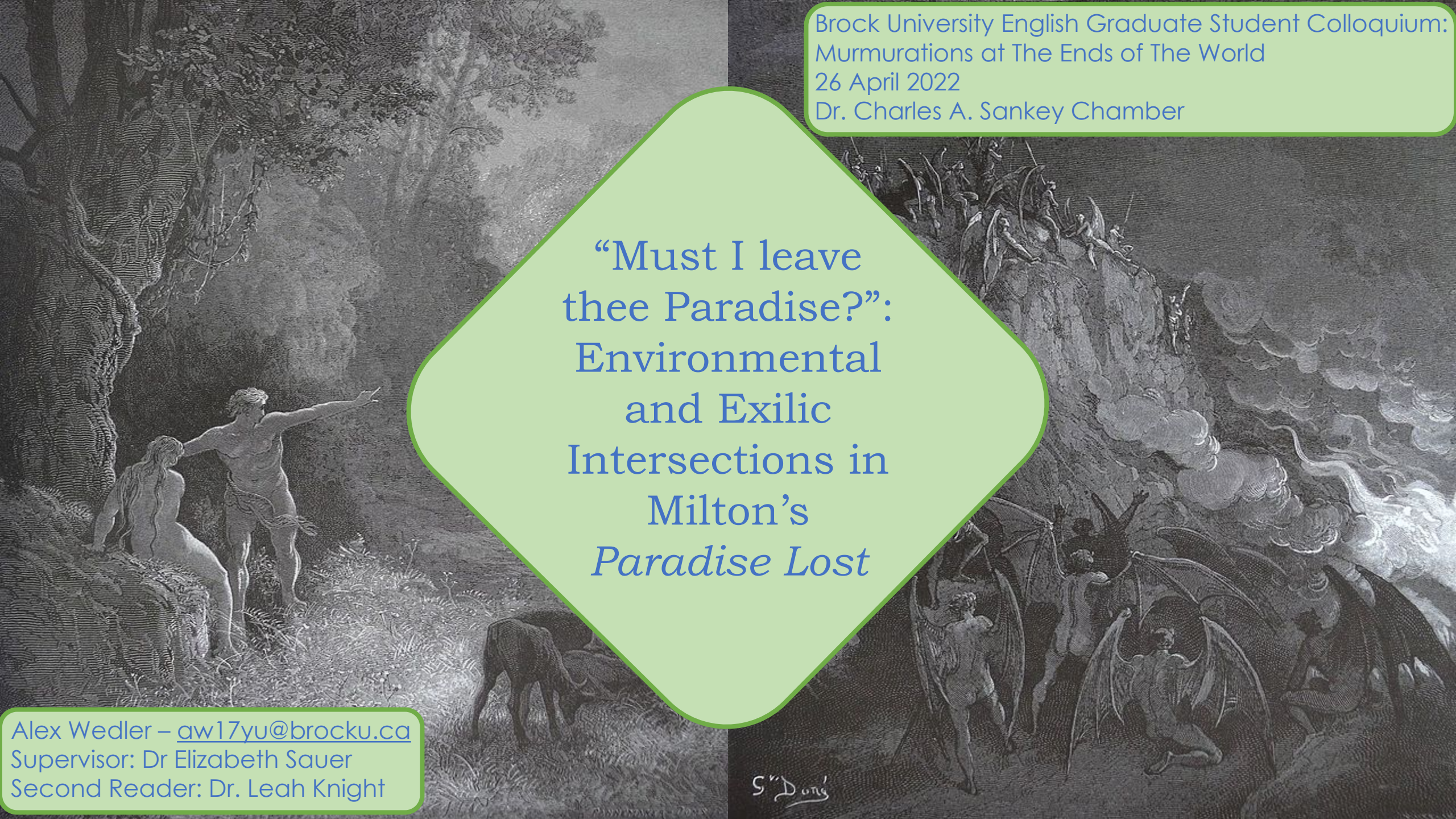


“Must I leave  
thee Paradise?”:  
Environmental  
and Exilic  
Intersections in  
Milton’s  
*Paradise Lost*





# Overview

John Milton's poetic retelling of Genesis in *Paradise Lost* follows Satan just after his exile from Heaven, as he makes his way to the garden of Eden and subsequently corrupts Adam and Eve. Although there is an abundance of scholarship on *Paradise Lost*, my project will focus on **analyses of environmentalism and exile** within Milton's epic, while intersecting these ideas. Ecocritical and exilic studies understand the concept of place as intrinsic to Milton's text, as the poem revolves around the involuntary abandonment of place and its consequences. My project will read the landscapes of **Hell and Eden with an ecocritical lens that personifies them**, while also focusing on **Satan, Adam and Eve's respective attitudes to their place and eventual exile** from them.





# Exile and Place



An ecocritical personification of Hell and Eden highlights the varying attachments to place experienced by Satan, Adam and Eve. While **Hell** from the perspective of **Satan** is a desolate world that he **both desires to rule, yet is discontent with**, the landscape of **Eden** has an **environmentally conscious, symbiotic relationship** with the **Prelapsarian couple**. Exile is experienced and reckoned with by both parties as well. While Satan's exile furthers his own distance between space and place, Adam and Eve reconcile their loss of Eden by transposing the space of paradise outside of Eden's place.

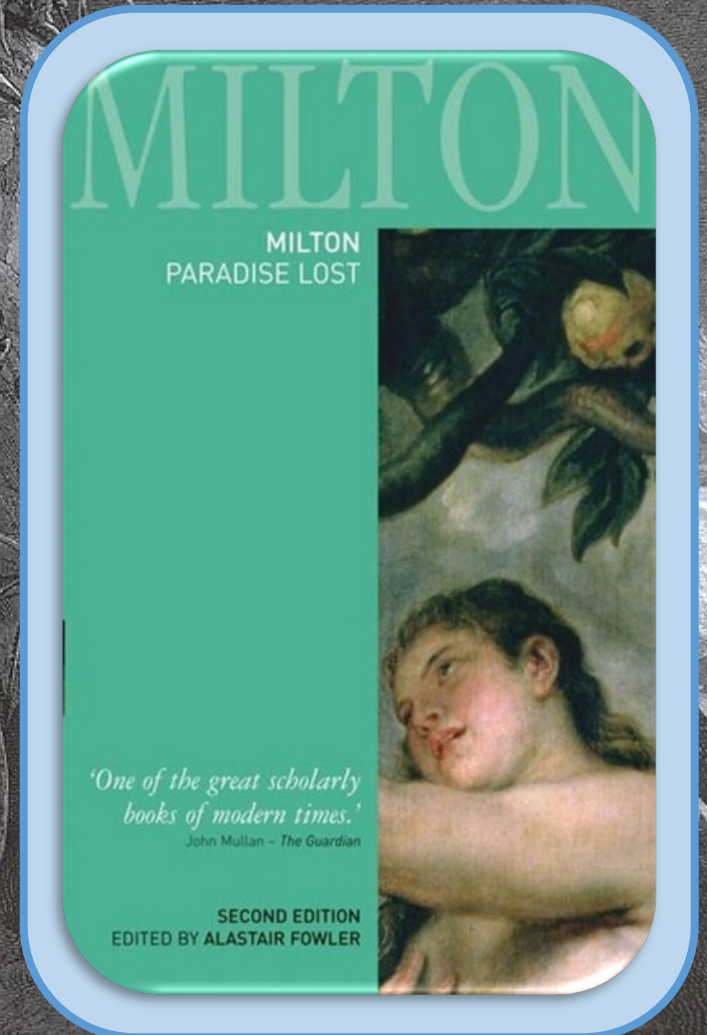
The structures within Milton's epic further represent environmental attachments to place. While the castle of Pandemonium in Hell reflects Satan's desire to dominate the land, Adam and Eve's bower is a natural structure symbolic of their respect for the Garden. By engaging with **scholarship on ecocriticism and exile**, my project will answer **what can be understood about Satan, Adam and Eve's relationship to place**, as well as their **subsequent exile and continued existence away from this place**.



# The Object

*Paradise Lost* finds root in the relationships between characters and their place. These relationships are not one-sided, as landscapes like **Hell and Eden are personified** in ways that highlight Satan, Adam and Eve's attitudes towards them. These relationships eventually become altered through the exile of these characters from their places.

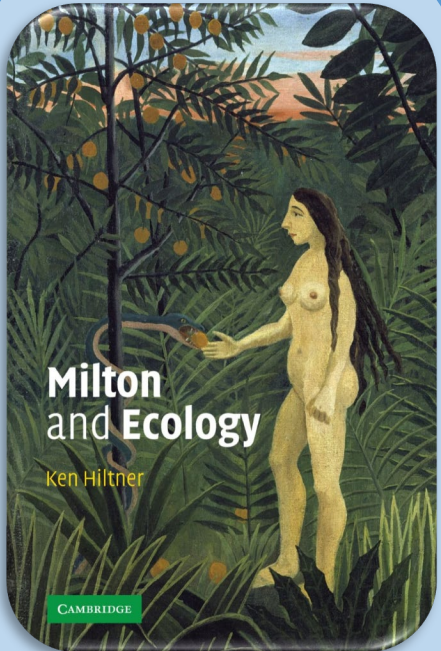
**Milton continuously represents the figure of exile through Satan**, as he both lacks a true place and seeks to sever his attachment to place. Contrastingly, **Adam and Eve remain tied to their place despite exile**, as they react to their loss of Eden as though it were a loss of the self. While Satan's relationship to place prioritizes the idea of space imprinting one's own will onto physical place, Adam and Eve strengthen their attachment to the space of Eden despite their exile by transposing paradisaical space into a psychological place.



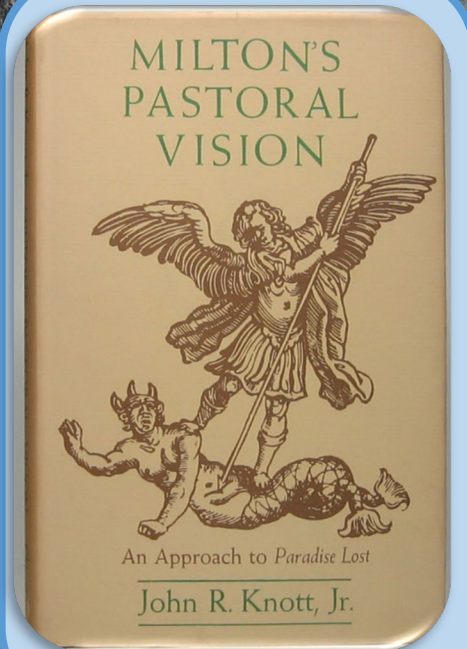


# Literature Review: Environmental Scholarship

**Ken Hiltner's *Milton and Ecology*** emphasizes the relationship between Eden and the Edenic couple, while contrasting this with Satan's efforts to remove his attachment to place. Hiltner also notions towards a green Christian reformation in Milton's epic, which underlines an ecological awareness in person-place relationships. Additionally, **Peter C. Remien's** article on Milton's wondrous illustrations of Eden argues that the epic preserves natural, prelapsarian landscapes through these descriptions.



**John Knott Jr.'s *Milton's Pastoral Vision*** examines connections between the pastoral attachment to nature exhibited in *Paradise Lost*, which works in conjunction with Hiltner's focus on person-place attachments. The notion of Hell as a city contrasting against the rural Eden further frames the depictions of both landscapes. Scholarly articles by **John Gillies, Sarah Smith, and Nick Pici** all work to further support the environmental focus on landscapes in Milton's epic by emphasizing Hell and Eden as connected to their residents.

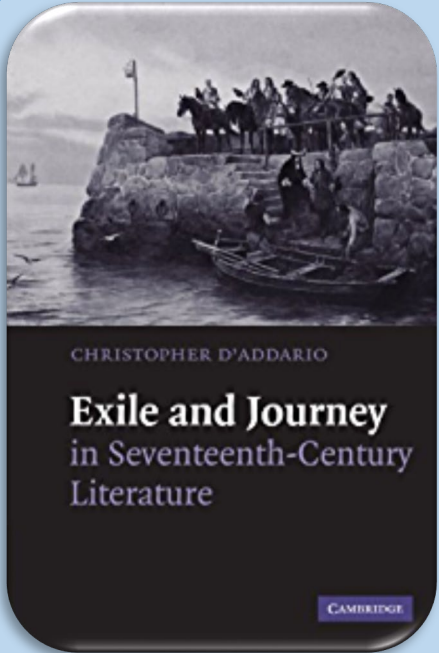




# Literature Review: Exilic Scholarship

My chosen scholarship on Early Modern exilic literature deals directly and indirectly with Milton's epic.

**Christopher D'Addario's *Exile and Journey in Seventeenth-Century Literature*** provides an overview of exilic literature in the Early Modern period, with a chapter on the internal exile directly relating to Milton and *Paradise Lost*. D'Addario argues that Milton's own experience as an internalized exile is explored through the physical exiles within his epic.



**J. Seth Lee's** text on the Early Modern exile works in tandem with D'Addario's overview of the genre, with his analysis on how the exile positions themselves in accordance with the place they were exiled from relating directly to Milton's depiction of Satan. **Eric B. Song's *Dominion Undeserved*** further compliments this body of exilic scholarship, as his focus on Milton's text as inherently divided through the internalized exile is compounded with similar notions from D'Addario and Lee.

## DOMINION UNDESERVED

*Milton & the Perils of Creation*



ERIC B. SONG



# Methodology



I will analyse *Paradise Lost* as a text that focuses on an environmental attachment to place, as well as the effects of exile away from that place. Using **Michel de Certeau's** definitions of "place" as a set location and "space" as a setting imbued with meaning from an external force, I will focus on the epic's central locations, Hell, and Eden. I will read the personified landscapes of Hell and the Garden in terms of their geographical descriptions and the reflections of their inhabitants' attitudes towards them. Additionally, I will investigate Satan's, Adam's and Eve's relationships with place, as well as how they reckon with their exiles from place.

I position **Satan** as detached from place through his **desire to transform it into his own space**, which is exacerbated by his distance from place in exile. In contrast, I argue that **Adam and Eve** are intrinsically connected to their place yet are still able to accept exile by **shifting their perception of place and space** from the physical realm to the psychological. My project will seek to answer how Milton understands the environmental attachment to place and the intersections of this with the pain of exile within *Paradise Lost*.



# Slideshow Image Citations

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