

we were to consider the multiple perspectives? The subject and object are simultaneously exaggerated and diminished, as we are encouraged to look through very different poetic forms, which even includes the “optic glass” of a Galileo, the “Tuscan artist,” standing either (or simultaneously on both) the mountain top of Fesole *or* the valley of Valdarno, the high and low that, from the perspective of these heavenly lands, are both neither? Of course, this more confusing, subjunctive poetics is not the subject of *Fiction of the Cosmos*, nor should it be, if the purpose is to focus on the genesis of the categories that are more obviously dominant today. This book will be much discussed in years to come, and we can thank the author for demonstrating once again that the literary, if not expansively understood poetics, is present on those different bookstore shelves if we just have the right tools to see it.

Daniel Shore. *Milton and the Art of Rhetoric*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. xii + 203 pp. \$95.00. Review by ANTHONY WELCH, UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE.

Milton, writes Daniel Shore, “dons his singing robes to take care of business” (10). In this elegantly argued new study of Milton and rhetoric, Shore portrays the poet as a determined pragmatist, ready to use every tool at his disposal to persuade others to his point of view—even, and perhaps especially, at those moments when Milton claims to renounce the arts of rhetoric. Where some Miltonists have stressed the poet’s antirhetorical tendencies—his iconoclasm and otherworldliness—Shore’s Milton shows surprising ideological flexibility. He is acutely conscious of his changing audiences, and he is quick to adapt his self-presentation to their needs. Shore hopes to persuade Miltonists to read his writings less as evidence of his most cherished beliefs than as shifting tactical arguments addressed to specific audiences and occasions. To do so, Shore ranges across nearly the whole corpus of Milton’s poetry and prose, uncovering the rhetorical strategies behind Milton’s most seemingly antirhetorical gestures. As Shore explains, “I am not leveling the accusation of insincerity or, worse, of lying outright. My accusation (the wrong word) is rather that he is a polemicist and poet, a maker of persuasive fictions, and that his

otherworldliness stands among the many spectacular and indeed persuasive fictions of his own making” (11).

The self-correcting parenthesis in that last sentence might remind readers of Stanley Fish, for whom it is a favorite trope—as in his *How Milton Works* (2001): “one’s identity (precisely the wrong word) is relational” (253); “the observer (exactly the wrong word) resonates to a value and a vision that already constitute him” (565). In other ways, too, Fish often sets the terms for Shore’s argument. Shore begins by dividing Miltonists into two camps: those who believe that Milton rejected the worldly business of rhetorical persuasion (this group is “nearly . . . a sect of one,” namely Fish) and “the prevailing school” of readers who view Milton as a polemical activist, bent on engaging his enemies and changing minds (2). Shore brings the two camps together by acknowledging the antirhetorical postures observed by Fish, but viewing them as weapons in the arsenal of the activist Milton, who uses them as so many tools of persuasion. Fish’s scholarship provides the inspiration (or provocation) for several of Shore’s chapters. Like Fish, Shore grounds his arguments on a close, rigorous analytical parsing of Milton’s syntax—as against the more contextual and archival approach of other scholars interested in Milton’s polemical rhetoric, such as Sharon Achinstein and David Loewenstein—although Shore draws at key moments on the writings of both classical rhetoricians and Milton’s contemporaries.

Chapter 1 explores Milton’s habit of dividing his readers into two groups: the enlightened few who already agree with his views and the depraved fools who will never be convinced by them. In Shore’s view, this trope, far from being a gesture of resignation or despair, an acknowledgment that persuasion must fail, is itself a rhetorical strategy. Milton invites his readers to join the ranks of a praiseworthy elect, to seek the author’s applause and avoid his abuse, and, in the process, to become “a certain kind of reader—the kind that will receive his arguments favorably” (24). This trope is at work in especially complex ways in Milton’s *Eikonoklastes*, Shore suggests, which attacks Charles I’s *Eikon Basilike* for using much the same strategy of disclaiming rhetoric as part of a covert agenda of persuasion.

Chapter 2 takes up Milton’s frequent pose of writing under external coercion or constraint. Shore argues that Milton uses such claims to

“ward off the charge that he acts from self-interest” (49) and to model himself on St. Paul, the divine servant who put his oratory in the service of God. Shore concludes with a shrewd account of *Paradise Lost* as a sustained critique of such arguments from necessity: “the pleasant savory smell / So quickened appetite,” says Eve to Adam, “that I, methought, could not but taste” (*PL* 5.84-86). In Chapter 3, Shore takes on Fish’s influential claim that Milton’s prose writings try to portray his interpretation of Scripture as no interpretation at all, but simply an effort to tear away the superfluous layers of interpretation that *other* writers have imposed on its self-evident meaning. For Fish, Milton’s self-effacement reflects his fear of distorting biblical truth; for Shore, it is a practical rhetorical strategy, a tool used to conceal his own acts of interpretation from his wary readers.

Shore’s fourth chapter argues that Milton is widely misunderstood as an iconoclast. In Shore’s view, Milton does not wish to tear down false gods but instead to expose, hollow out, and disenchant them: “idols cannot simply be put away; they must be kept on public display as a record of their past infamy” (95). Even as Shore subtly traces the many ways in which Milton lets his ideological opponents collapse under their own falsehood, one might question the lack of distinctions here between the pagan gods of antiquity and the more urgent threat of Catholic or Laudian idol-worship. Shore acknowledges that Milton’s lifelong intolerance of Roman Catholicism found common cause with those idol-breakers who sought “to remove sin by removing the matter of sin” (99).

Moving deeper into *Paradise Lost*, Chapter 5 analyzes a complex epic simile describing the Satanic serpent in Book 9, who, likened to a classical orator, “Fluctuates disturbed” (9.668) as his temptation of Eve reaches its great peroration. Shore skillfully traces the scene back to ancient accounts of the trembling bodies of Cicero and other great Greco-Roman orators before they began speaking. Unlike theirs, Satan’s stage fright is a strategic fiction meant to seduce his credulous audience. Chapter 6 addresses a different kind of imitation in *Paradise Regained*, which sets out to “construct a new rhetoric of exemplary action” based on “mimesis rather than instrumental reason” (125). Paradoxically, Jesus’s actions in the poem are both unique and iterable, acting as a model for future human choices and reimagining the

idea of *imitatio Christi* in an era that saw the “erosion of imitative and exemplary traditions” (142).

In a coda, Shore daringly reads *Samson Agonistes* as Milton’s last great rhetorical effort to win over his ideological opponents. Arguing that Milton addresses the work not only to his fellow dissenters but also to the “Royalist and Anglican elites” who persecuted them, Shore proposes that Milton wrote the poem as a veiled threat: an attempt to bring those elites to the negotiating table by painting a picture of what will happen if the new regime fails to bring about “the social and discursive conditions that would make violence unnecessary” (148; 162).

One wonders whether England’s ruling authorities would be prepared to identify in this way with the Philistines—and whether, in reading about the horrors wrought by “a single misguided enthusiast, one who is merely ‘persuaded inwardly’ that his motions are from God,” they would hold out much hope for a negotiated peace with the radicals they feared (160). Shore’s portrayal of Milton as a pragmatic bridge-builder, seeking comity between the Restoration regime and its dissenting minority, will be hard for some readers to accept. But throughout the book, Shore makes a bold case for approaching Milton’s writings not so much as documents of hard belief but as practical tools of persuasion, “less as expressions of commitments rooted in his soul than as ways of coping with and influencing the contingencies of Interregnum and Restoration England” (10). Shore’s own rhetorical style, furthermore, is a model of clarity and aphoristic elegance. His sharp-eyed close readings will prompt Milton scholars to rethink the poet’s strategies of self-presentation and the rhetorical occasions that prompted them.

Danielle A. St. Hilaire. *Satan’s Poetry: Fallenness and the Poetic Tradition in Paradise Lost*. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2012. x + 246 pp. \$58.00. REVIEW BY ADAM SWANN, UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW.

It is becoming increasingly challenging to find things unattempted yet in *Paradise Lost* criticism, and nowhere is this truer than in studies of Satan and the fallen state. St. Hilaire is under no illusions about