

“never in greater danger of going wrong than when consensus within the discipline convinces them that they are right” (819).

Above all, this is a study of how readers have shaped *Paradise Lost* through their interactions with the poem and each other. Leonard himself exemplifies this point. He filters each section through his own perspective in such a way that his voice distinguishes itself, often with considerable wit. This practice allows him to place his chronological presentation of criticism and scholarship in conversation with later work. In so doing, he keeps each idea in the context of the larger history of Milton studies. Given the length and scope of the project, it is inevitable that some topics were left out, notably political and historical readings and those based in the history of logic and rhetoric. Inclusion of these topics, however, would have detracted from the overall cohesion of the narrative.

The only true problem lies with the physical dimension of the book. It is divided into two volumes, and the publisher has placed the bibliography and index in the second volume only. As a result, readers must be in possession of both volumes when reading the first. This can be clumsy.

Faithful Labourers is a significant contribution to Milton studies. It will reintroduce many to the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century editors and critics, and remind current scholars of the debt they owe to previous generations. It will also be invaluable to students, both for the information it presents and as an object lesson in the need for bibliographical research. Leonard plans a sequel to bring the study into the twenty-first century.

Richard J. DuRocher & Margaret Olofson Thickett, eds. *Milton's Rival Hermeneutics: "Reason Is But Choosing."* Duquesne University Press, 2012. xxv + 278 pp. \$58.00. Review by REUBEN SANCHEZ, SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY.

In their Introduction to *Milton's Rival Hermeneutics*, Richard J. DuRocher and Margaret Olofson Thickett offer a reason for this collection of essays: To counter the “critics of incertitude,” specifically Michael Bryson’s *The Tyranny of Heaven: The Rejection of God as King*

(2004), Peter Herman's *Destabilizing Milton: "Paradise Lost" and the Poetics of Incertitude* (2005), and Christopher D'Addario's *Exile and Journey in Seventeenth-Century Literature* (2007). Bryson's deconstructive approach warrants consideration and response, though not in this context as he is not a critic of incertitude. In an approach which seems a hybrid of new historicism and reader response, D'Addario does not focus on Milton (nor Hobbes, nor Dryden, the other ostensible subjects of his book) but on what he considers the incertitude of Milton's readers, then and now. The foremost proponent of incertitude, therefore, Herman considers Milton studies conservative because Miltonists view their subject as a "poet of certainty" (*Destabilizing*, 19). Further, Miltonists themselves make it impossible for other voices to participate in the Milton dialogue: "Master Miltonists who have endured a long and arduous apprenticeship acquiring this knowledge [a specialization in Milton] are unlikely to admit anyone who has not undertaken the same rigorous training to their community and graduate students shy away from such an imposing prospect, especially since the demand for Miltonists on the job market has been steadily declining. The end result is a self-selective group that has, at least in the past, tended toward theoretical conservatism" (19-20). Herman's description of Miltonists as insular and conservative does nothing to advance an argument for incertitude in Milton. Fortunately, the contributors to *Milton's Rival Hermeneutics* do not directly respond to the critic(s) of incertitude, for after the one perfunctory reference in the Introduction, incertitude as a subject simply vanishes, which is strategic and justified. The quality of this collection nonetheless serves to dispute the odd claim that Milton was profoundly unsure of himself and his work, to dispute as well the disparaging implications of the epithet "Master Miltonists." *Milton's Rival Hermeneutics* thus represents two major achievements: First, it exemplifies the significance and potential of the terms *hermeneutics* and *choosing* in Milton studies; second, it exemplifies the variegated nature of the responses Miltonists have to their subject.

The editors aptly place Susanne Woods' essay on rival hermeneutics at the beginning of this collection, for she makes clear what the term hermeneutics means as regards Milton studies. Woods's theme, liberty, concerns the reading process she describes; one must have the liberty to read and interpret, which results in a new "multivocality": "Milton

therefore necessarily offered his own poetry up for hermeneutic interpretation, inviting us to read his work as he in turn read the Bible, with simultaneous attention to what theme, genre, and style all reveal, and with appreciation of its multivocality, an important feature of his biblical reading” (3-4). Next, Diane McColley’s essay on the Nativity Ode demonstrates how hermeneutics applies to the poet himself as he must make choices when translating biblical texts such as Psalm 137, and whether or not he must retain the violence characterizing the Psalms. So too with the Nativity Ode, contends McColley, Milton must choose between the birth narratives of Matthew and Luke while adding elements to his poem not found in either gospel. Woods and McColley set the tone, as each argues that Milton chooses particular meanings to convey, chooses texts, even chooses sides, thereby reflecting the “reason is but choosing” organizing principle of this collection.

Gordon Teskey’s analysis of *Lycidas* begins with the commonplace assertion: *Lycidas* is one of the finest short poems in the English language. How many times did we hear this from our teachers in graduate school, or come across it in scholarship written during the mid-to-late twentieth century? Yet beginning with this sentiment allows Teskey to focus on how and why the poem has fallen on hard times: The character and quality of Milton’s pastoral elegy makes it too difficult a read for some modern readers. There is simply “too much” there: “The cubist juxtaposition of asynchronous time frames accounts for the difficulty of *Lycidas*: we seem to see too many surfaces at once. There is too much information for any single point of view to prevail and to arrange the others in due proportion with one another” (32-33). Hence the great and wonderful problem, I would add, of a work like *Richard II* and all the talk about perspectives and shattered glass and still-breeding thoughts tending to this, that, and the other. By overwhelming us, great writers like Shakespeare and Milton force us to address the big question: What is the value of art to we mortals who will, after all, die someday? Teskey traces the rise and fall of *Lycidas* in the public eye, from crucial, all-important short poem to poem derided for its Christianity and its classicism. Despite the modern negative assessments—mainly by non-Miltonists and by poets who frankly don’t seem up to the poem (my perception, not Teskey’s)—the poem remains crucial to us, and Teskey argues eloquently and persuasively

why. In doing so, he evokes the mood of the recent *Why Milton Matters* discussion. A rhetorical statement, *Why Milton Matters* infers Milton *does* matter: *Why* was argued powerfully, three different ways, by Fish, Wittreich, and Lewalski. Yes, *Lycidas* is indeed one of the finest short poems in the English language after all, Teskey reminds us, but every now and then we need to talk about *why*.

Herman contends the “paradigm shift” to a view of Milton as “a poet of deep incertitude” actually “results in large part from the failure of the English Revolution” (*Destabilizing*, 21). In a well-argued essay, Hugh Jenkins, without referring to him, proves Herman wrong. For Jenkins, Milton’s response to the failed revolution evinces certainty as regards his own ethos and poetics; Jenkins locates this certainty during the period when Milton wrote his Defenses, between 1651 and 1654 and, especially, when he refurbished the *First Defense* in 1658. I would date Milton’s confrontation with the threat of failure, however, to the beginning of his public prose. Being “church-outed” by the bishops early balances with Englishmen allowing “a captain back for *Egypt*” late and, twelve years later, with the implications of the second Declaration of Indulgence. One can appreciate, as well, how Milton’s choice to indulge in left-handed writing meant he had to delay writing the national epic. Focusing partly on Milton’s prose, Barbara K. Lewalski’s discussion of hermeneutics in *PL* shows how Milton sharpens his ability to interpret Scripture—and therefore how he becomes a better poet—through his work writing polemical tracts and, particularly, *De Doctrina* over many years: “In doing so he worked out principles for interpreting Scripture texts that allowed for his then radical positions and that later liberated his poetic imagination when he understood an epic based on biblical materials” (78). For Joseph Wittreich, the “interpretive choices” forced upon the reader of *PL* and *PR* ironically force the reader into “ever deepening quagmires of uncertainty, but which, even more ironically, pushes the reader toward poetic certainty and poetic truth” (102). By “uncertainty” Wittreich means “competing interpretation” (103), or elsewhere, “irresolution” versus “resolution” (104). Of course we find certainty/meaning in his writing—Milton put it there—though not one meaning for all, with the reading process thereby becoming “adventurous” and “redemptive.”

William Flesch focuses on the “narrative anxiety” the reader feels when he sympathizes with a character and wants/hopes the character “vindicated” as regards narrative truth, or “justice.” The first four pages of his essay comprise what he calls a “taxonomy” of *Hamlet*—and thereby reflects the methodology of the new historicism—intended “to show that very complex structures of character and plot can derive from the idea of vindication . . .” (137-38). But the focus on *Hamlet* serves as a preparation for the bard’s intention in *PL* “to justify the ways of God to men.” Milton’s narrative technique—which teaches the reader about “narrative judgment” (150), and which characterizes *PL* and *SA*—enables justification/vindication. In her feminist approach to *PL*, Teresa Feroli points out that although Milton intended the phrase “shee for God in him” to mean Man represents the *imago Dei*, one could actually read the phrase as implying “the latent potential for female authority” (160). Feroli shows how the Quakers Martha Simmonds and Margaret Fell, Milton’s contemporaries, argue against the hierarchical, gender-based distinctions implicit in the *imago Dei*; their writings, instead, call for a spiritual and political equality implicit in the *imago Dei*. One can take issue with Milton’s certitude, suggests Feroli, for while Milton infers spiritual and political equality—in his treatment of Eve, say—his position seems tenuous: “If only in theory . . . Milton would have to agree with Margaret Fell that ‘those that speak against the Woman and her Seeds Speaking, speak out of the enmity of the old Serpents Seed’” (181).

Olofson Thickstun’s close reading of *SA* posits the importance of community in affirming one’s spirituality, a position preached in both *PL* and *SA*. Specifically, through “conversation” the individual comes to terms with the significance of “fame” and “shame.” Albeit Satan is not the hero of *PR*, argues Stella P. Revard, he is nonetheless “an antagonist figure to the Son, engaging the reader’s attention to a parallel and almost equal degree” (206). The temptation/dialogue concerns Satan’s attempt to reveal or discover the true nature of Jesus and of Satan himself. DuRocher’s essay likewise addresses the issue of debate/dialogue in *PR*, characterizing the poem as conflicting hermeneutics. DuRocher focuses specifically on Satan’s offer to Christ of worldly knowledge in Book 4, particularly as the offer evokes the ideals—and the potential dangers for a typological reader—of the classical tradition.

Each of these eleven essays represents a competing, or rival, hermeneutics, one which contributes to the Milton dialogue. This is Milton scholarship at its best. In such a celebration of discourse, therefore, we may recognize the *main* raison d'être for this collection: A tribute to Mary Ann Radzinowicz, cited often in these essays for her influence as a teacher, scholar, and colleague. Some of the contributors to this collection were students of Radzinowicz: DuRocher, Olofson Thicks-tun, Flesch, and, I believe, Jenkins and Feroli—all Cornell graduates, where Radzinowicz taught until her retirement. These scholars nicely complement the other contributors, themselves colleagues and friends of Radzinowicz: Woods, Teskey, Lewalski, Wittreich, Revard, McColley—senior scholars whose accomplishments speak for themselves. *Milton's Rival Hermeneutics* shows what it means to have been trained as a Miltonist, to teach Milton, and to write about Milton; the book thereby pays homage to the teaching and scholarship of Radzinowicz and, by extension, to the teaching and scholarship of her student, DuRocher, who died in 2010. A fine tribute to DuRocher by Mary C. Fenton prefaces the collection.

I went to graduate school with Rich DuRocher, Marggie Olofson, and Billy Flesch, and, as she did for them, Mary Ann Radzinowicz directed my dissertation. Gordon Teskey was also one of our teachers at Cornell. In its mix of teachers and scholars at various stages of their careers, in its presentation of different and differing analyses, in its recognition and articulation of why Milton matters, *Milton's Rival Hermeneutics* helps us appreciate the meaning and value of the terms *rival*, *hermeneutics*, and *choosing* to Milton studies. More than that, this book honors the interest in and commitment to Milton exemplified by the contributors themselves, but most particularly by Mary Ann Radzinowicz and Richard J. DuRocher.