

ture and their complicity with the orientalist and racist ideologies that supported England's emerging global empire" (80). If the feminist orientalist dichotomy between Turkish women's "natural" slavery and the English woman's struggles with patriarchy despite her "free born" status emerged frequently in women's writings of the period, Andrea unveils an interesting interrogation of orientalism in the writings of Delarivier Manley, especially in her autobiographical fictions, *The New Atalantis* and *The Adventures of Rivella*. In the concluding Coda, Andrea continues her explorations of challenges to feminist orientalism. Here the author does something novel in moving away from the persistent focus on the famous hammam scene from Montagu's writings, with its recuperations of a patriarchal gaze; instead, argues for re-reading *Montagu's Turkish Embassy Letters* "in dialogue with her precursors and with contemporary Muslim Arab women," for instance in Assia Djebar's *Women of Algiers* (121).

To sumUniversity Press, *Women in Islam* productively contributes to the conversations about the Anglo-Muslim encounters in the early modern period, adding an important perspective of women travelers and writers. However, the feminist methodology informing her text is somewhat under theorized, lacking in nuance at times. For instance, throughout the study, "patriarchy" and "patriarchal culture" are often invoked as givens, stable categories in a gynocriticism that seems somewhat dated in an era when gender studies have moved beyond binaries. At times, she gestures to the theoretical perspectives of Luce Irigaray and Eve Sedgwick (13), but does not follow that path of inquiry about the constructions of gender in language and ideology. Finally, however, despite this lacuna, Andrea's book does provide a rich historical perspective on the lives and writings of early modern women in terms of their insights into and interactions with Anglo-Muslim encounters.

Philip J. Donnelly. *Milton's Scriptural Reasoning: Narrative and Protestant Toleration*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2009. 278 pp. \$90.00. Review by JOHN MULRYAN, ST. BONAVENTURE UNIVERSITY.

This immensely complicated, jargon-filled book argues that "Milton views reason as the poetic gift of peaceful difference and that he

does not share in the modern assumption that reason is intrinsically coercive” (vii), or that one must choose between determinacy and indeterminacy. Moreover, in contrast to so-called modern views of reason, “the biblicist unfolding of reason in *Paradise Lost* is an attempt to reveal that the origin, or *arché*, of created being is a peaceful gift for the good of others—what I call ‘ontic charity’” (viii). The thesis is ultimately applied to Milton’s resistance to coercion among Protestant sects. Since none of these terms appears together in Milton’s poetic corpus, and the term “charity” appears only twice, textual evidence for the thesis would appear to be sparse. Moreover, the attempt to set up a false dichotomy between “modern” reason (which is used indiscriminately to refer to *early* modern views of reason as well) and Milton’s view of reason dooms the argument from the start. Donnelly’s only proof texts for this view of “modern” reason are Machiavelli, Descartes, Hobbes, and Foucault. Since Hobbes was an empiricist who attacked rationalist philosophy it hardly seems appropriate to cite him as a defender of modern views of reason. And certainly Foucault was anti-rationalist to a fault. There is no mention of Kant, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Spinoza, or any of the other great thinkers who shaped the modern view of reason.

In this book no evidence is also construed as evidence, as in the following statement: “If we consider some of the key points in *Paradise Regained* at which Milton dilates the biblical narrative, we can understand why the poem does not explicitly invoke ‘charity,’ but instead implies that the Son embodies the unity between ontic charity (love that he shares with the Father) and ethical charity” (193).

Donnelly traces his theme through selections from Milton’s prose, *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes*. According to Donnelly, “Milton offers *Paradise Regained* as a correcting interpretive guide to those who had mistaken *Paradise Lost* as a valorization of epic violence” (24). But what of the violence in *Samson Agonistes*? Simplistically, Donnelly simply asserts that “the play abjures any simplistic suggestion that readers should literally imitate Samson’s actions” (24). Milton also seems to approve of the Son’s violence in *Paradise Lost* as he takes the reins of the Chariot of Paternal Deity and grinds the heads of the rebel angels into the ground (6.824–41). Donnelly defends the Son’s violence by arguing that “Milton’s insistence upon

the ontic priority of peaceful difference does not entail pacifism” (132). To my mind, it does not “entail” anything, since Donnelly has not offered convincing proof of his thesis anywhere in the text. Donnelly also argues that “battle is a fitting response to the demand that omnipotence prove itself by force” (136). In other words, God’s actions are determined by the collective will of the rebel angels.

Complicating the argument still further is Donnelly’s fondness for stipulative definitions of complex philosophical terms. What, for example, is “scriptural reasoning?” If the Bible is a source for one’s thinking, it is outside the realm of reason. And what is “poetic biblicism?” (3). If a biblicist is someone who knows the Bible well or one who strictly interprets its contents, then poetic biblicism can only muddy the waters of hermeneutics. Donnelly also engages in equivocation when he uses “coercion” in two senses, one mental and one physical: “By ‘coercive’ I do not mean that modernity views reason as destructive, but that its presumed function is predictive calculation for the purpose of controlling objects in the world” (3). Later on, in referring to coercion in religious matters, he uses it in the physical sense: “the only alternative to violent randomness appeared to be coercive control” (18). As the OED makes clear, coercion always involves restraining or constraining someone or some thing by *force*.

Donnelly also extends his “peaceful” metaphor to include rhetoric: “Milton views not only reason but also rhetoric as inherently peaceful, despite the ways in which rhetoric in a fallen world can become a means of deception or coercion” (47). Milton’s own bellicose, acerbic rhetoric certainly belies this assertion, especially his use of murderous rhetoric (*Eikonoklastes*) to justify the killing of King Charles I. Donnelly also claims that “the typological use of Scripture [interpreting texts in the Hebrew Bible as foreshadowing texts in the New Testament] enables Milton to preserve the interpretive openness of the biblical narrative...” (81). However, as Frank Kermode pointed out some time ago, Typology is a falsification, indeed a desecration of the Hebrew scriptures, not an example of “interpretive openness.” With typology, as Kermode observes, “the entire Jewish Bible was to be sacrificed to the validation of the historicity of the gospels; yet its whole authority was needed to establish that historicity” (*The Genesis of Secrecy*, 107).

It is often difficult to follow the thread of Donnelly's argument. Consider the following amazing sentence: "Readers who fail to distinguish between Milton's ontic and epistemic claims will consistently miss his point: every indication of epistemic limitation will be interpreted as an ontic claim regarding the divine need for evil in reality, rather than as a function of either the finitude or the fallen will of the human knower" (75).

Donnelly asserts that Milton assumes that *Paradise Lost* will require a second reading to be understood: "Only in the second reading does genuine understanding begin, once there is some concrete knowledge of all the parts. The poem's structure, in effect, presumes a second reading which keeps in mind the previous reading and thus implies the central importance of memory in the readers' response to its central preoccupations" (185). Moreover, Scripture itself is reduced to a gloss on Milton's poetry: "Milton's mode of engagement with Scripture in his major poems also seems to parallel one of the hermeneutic ambitions of the Miltonic *De Doctrina Christiana*: that his own words would be glossed by the biblical text, rather than vice versa" (1). Such extravagant claims can only discourage readers from taking on the now-monumental task of making sense of *Paradise Lost*.

In sum, only the most dedicated of Milton scholars will attempt to read *Milton's Scriptural Reasoning* and to master its contents. As Milton scholarship becomes more and more particularized, it becomes less and less accessible to the educated reader, even to the specialist in early modern literature. This book is a case in point.

Abraham Stoll. *Milton and Monotheism*. Pittsburg, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2009. xi + 377 pp. \$60.00. Review by LARRY R. ISITT, COLLEGE OF THE OZARKS.

Abraham Stoll's *Milton and Monotheism* is both history and literary criticism of the kind so well exemplified by the likes of Maurice Kelley's *This Great Argument* and Barbara Lewalski's *Milton's Brief Epic*, in that it elegantly and forcefully commands its subject with lucid clarity while avoiding the tenuous and oftentimes opaque postmodern critical lexicon so popular now. Its plentiful and helpful notes add many more