

plined methodology of intellectual work using language (“physical symbols”) that requires a body and hence involves physical activity demanding association for its perfection, i.e. contributing to the general good by enlightening peoples’ understanding, encouraging people to act according to reason and removing obstacles to the search for truth. So the improvement of cognition flows into public activity that requires a social and political order supportive of or receptive to enlightenment. Looking back on the proponents of willful thinking, Losonsky concludes: “These, then, are the threads—reforming the human understanding, liberating it from external authority, making it more self-reliant, using the mind’s automatic processes, and guiding it through voluntary physical behavior—that Leibniz weaves together in his philosophy, and this is the cloth that Kant uses to fashion his Enlightenment essay in 1784” (187).

This is a rich feast, to be chewed over slowly since it is suggestive rather than conclusive and very demanding in its close reading of these thinkers. Those familiar with the territory will find its intent clear but will have to assess the adequacy of the linkage of the central notions repeatedly addressed, for such terms cannot in their nature be undistributed and, in particular cases such as “willful” drag with them connotations that are difficult to manage. The almost complete lack of any attempt to locate these ideas in any larger historical and cultural context than the writings of the individual discussed leaves a rich agenda to be pursued in clarifying the emerging conception of the Enlightenment in the seventeenth century.

Catherine Gimelli Martin, ed. *Milton and Gender*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. xiii + 277 pp. + 12 illus. \$75.00. Review by JULIA M. WALKER, STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT GENESEO.

As Catherine Gimelli Martin introduces her outstanding collection, she positions the essays in relation to the “wave” theory of twentieth-century feminism. In this she does *Milton and Gender* much less than justice. Although Martin herself suggests, in both her introduction and at length in her essay, that we should put less emphasis on so-called first-wave, second-wave, and other-wave feminisms in general and the views of Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in their 1977 *The Madwoman in the Attic* in particular, by using these

critical frames of reference so relentlessly, Martin comes close to presenting her own arguments and those of her contributors as ineluctably trapped in what she correctly sees as a reductive feminist dialectic. Furthermore, her warnings seem unnecessary, as all of the scholar/critics in Martin's collection frame their arguments in the larger context of seventeenth-century (and later) intellectual history rather than in some ideological fem-orama. What we find here is the lens of gender used to read not only the expected topics of masculinism, misogyny, patriarchy, sex, marriage, and divorce, but also issues of nationalism, theology, ontology, and modernity.

Martin divides the essays into three groups. In Part I: Masculinity, Divorce, and Misogyny in Milton's Prose, Gina Haushnecht reads the divorce tracts to explore "The gender of civic virtue"; James Grantham Turner writes of "The aesthetics of divorce; 'masculinism,' idolatry, and poetic authority in *Tetrachordon* and *Paradise Lost*," while Martin turns her attention to *Samson Agonistes* and "Milton's Christian liberty of divorce," declaring Dalila "the most powerfully intelligent and ethically self-determining female character of [Milton's] era" (70)—quite a statement in this or any other context.

The second section of the collection is devoted to The Gendered Subjects of Milton's Major Poems. Here *Samson* edges out *Paradise Lost* as the most-examined text. Two authors examine the closet drama in relation to physical motherhood—Amy Boesky in "Samson and surrogacy" and Rachel Trubowitz in "'I was his nursling once': nation, lactation, and the Hebraic in *Samson Agonistes*." Achsah Guibbory also links gender, religion, and nationalism in the collection's most outstanding essay: "'The Jewish Question' and 'The Woman Question' in *Samson Agonistes*: gender, religion, and nation." Guibbory argues that, by his use of the Hebrew Bible, Milton tips his hand on the post-Restoration issue of nationhood as he "transforms the narrative from Judges in ways that devalue both the Israelites and women" (184). Milton's Samson "distances himself from women, the feminine, and his Hebrew origins," writes Guibbory, just as Milton felt the need to distance himself from the "national ideal that had engaged [him] during the revolutionary period," since that "Israelite mythos" (184) had become the intellectual property of the royalists and celebrated in the Restoration. While the OED may list "Israelites," "Hebrews," and "Jews" as seventeenth-century synonyms, Guibbory notes that Milton's distinctions among these terms are crucial to an understanding of his closet drama. Ultimately, Milton defines "Christian

liberty ... against the supposed Jewish affinity for bondage" (187). And women, states Guibbory flatly, "seem to have had no positive role in Milton's imagining of England's liberty" (189). In the course of his text, Milton transforms "the Jewish idea of the Nazarite as 'separate to God' ... to mean separate from the Jews and from women" (194). In his death Samson is both liberated and re-masculinized as well as separated entirely from the feminine, now a worthy hero for "those few Englishmen who, retaining the seeds of Christian liberty, still might bring down the idolatrous temple" (200).

Marshall Grossman's tightly stitched argument, "The genders of God," parses three scenes of creation: Eve's, Sin's, and the Son's. "God creates Eve out of the substance of Adam's body—Adam's rib is, then, the material kernel or pre-existing matter that combines with Adam's idea of a mate to form Eve as an independent creation" (105). Sin, on the other hand, is "a generation from Satan's thought exemplifying the *creatio ex nihilo* Milton otherwise seems at such odd pains to reject," making Sin "the thought of negation joined to the absence of material ... the phenomenal appearance of nothing—the reified form of the negative" (109). Grossman then juxtaposes both Sin's "generation" and Eve's "creation" with "a third scene of pre- rather than pro-creative activity: The Father's off-stage 'begetting' of his only Son" (109). Thus, Grossman concludes, "The movement of self-alienation and recuperation ascribed to God's *creatio pro se* beyond the text [confers] on the text a (feminine) subjectivity distinct from Milton's in the same way that a creature's subjectivity is distinct from God's" (110).

In the same section, John Rogers, in "The fruit of marriage in *Paradise Lost*," stresses the problematic relationship between the fall and marriage, beginning by positing that in *De Doctrina* Milton struggles "not only to make the best theological sense he can of that ultimately inexplicable event, the fall, but to implot that scriptural event within a plausible literary narrative" (116) that must somehow include both forbidden fruit and the fruit of a union. In "The experience of defeat: Milton and some female contemporaries," Elizabeth M. Sauer breaks new ground as she ties the integrally Protestant "practice of recording the experiences of defeat and persecution" (135) to the "experience of defeat" separately articulated by Milton and by "female visionaries who in the 1650s and '60s contributed to a literature of suffering" (133). Not an influence study, Sauer's excellent essay sets forth the work of Mary Cary, Anna Trapnel, Margaret Fell, and Anne Wentworth as generating a "literature

of suffering” (134) through shared experiences and a “common identification with the Hebraic tradition” (148). The more their writing can be seen to parallel the concerns of Milton’s poetry, the more an acknowledgment of these women “unsettles conventional responses to Milton as a prophet-poet and demands a reconception of epic prophecy” (148).

The first essay in part two is a surprisingly canonical reading by William Shullenberger: “The profession of virginity in *A Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle*.” After rehearsing the views of critics from Angus Fletcher to Camille Paglia, Schullenberger offers a brief discussion of desire and virginity in both the *Maske* and Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, suggesting that “Milton constructs the dramatic experiment of his *Maske* out of the question of what might have happened to Miranda if her father were not around to protect and supervise her passage from childhood to womanhood” (81). Leaving the problems this raises unresolved, Schullenberger moves into an extended comparison of the Medusa narrative in the *Maske* and George Sandys’ *Ovid’s Metamorphoses English’d, Mythologiz’d, and Represented in Figures*. What’s missing here is any suggestion as to why Milton would have privileged Sandys’, rather than Ovid’s own text, as a baseline for reading the Elder Brother’s references to Medusa.

Martin expands the focus of her collection from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth and twentieth in Part III: Gendered Subjectivity in Milton’s Literary History. In “George Eliot as a ‘Miltonist’: marriage and Milton in *Middlemarch*,” Dayton Haskin explores Eliot’s “interest in Milton as an authority on love and marriage,” making the case that from “early on in her writing career . . . Mary Ann Evans had become a ‘Miltonist’ in the precise sense of the term that dates to the Commonwealth”—one who follows Milton’s views on divorce (209). Using as a foundation the two reviews written by Mary Ann Evans on Thomas Keightley’s *An Account of the Life, Opinions, and Writings of John Milton*, Haskin moves into a nuanced reading of the characters in *Middlemarch*. Making the case that it is “not the ineffective Casaubon whom George Eliot has made truly reminiscent of Milton,” (215) Haskin allows that “Eliot gives Lydgate something of Milton’s reforming zeal, but she represents him as far more timid than Milton in applying it in . . . the lowly domestic sphere” (216-17). Rather, Haskin argues, it is “Dorothea [who] is represented in terms reminiscent of Milton as George Eliot found him in the prose tracts

he wrote in the cause of ecclesiastical, domestic, and civil liberty,” Dorothea who “emerges as the heroine of Eliot’s ‘home epic’” (217).

The final two essays in the collection are “Saying it with flowers: Jane Giraud’s ecofeminist *Paradise Lost* (1846)” (Giraud was the first woman to illustrate Milton’s works) by Wendy Furman-Adams and Virginia James Tufte and—very appropriately—Lisa Low’s examination of “Woolf’s Allusion to *Comus* in *The Voyage Out*.”

The collection as a whole is both solid and diverse, with many essays contributing new information and insights on Milton’s works and four stand-out essays that may become classics—those by Guibbory, Grossman, Sauer, and Haskin. Gender is the touchstone here, not the organizing principle, and the collection is all the stronger for this. *Milton and Gender* is a book no library should be without.

Michael Lieb. *Theological Milton: Deity, Discourse, and Heresy in the Miltonic Canon*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2006. xi + 348 pp. \$60.00. Review by LARRY ISITT, COLLEGE OF THE OZARKS.

*Theological Milton* is an intricately argued defense against the charge of heterodoxy in John Milton’s theological treatise, *De Doctrina Christiana*, and in his poetry, especially *Paradise Lost*. Professor Lieb’s guiding thesis in this three part essay is that God is hidden (“*deus absconditus*”) and past knowing in any ultimate sense (his “ontology”). The parameters of *Theological Milton* begin and end in uncertainties about a God who “is beyond our knowing in any form, discursive or otherwise” (114). Lieb’s manner of argument is ever cautious, ever in the uncertain mode he says is Milton’s way: “This very uncertainty and contention governs my own ‘take’ on the God of Milton’s oeuvre” (16).

Part One, “The Discourse of Theology,” introduces the theme of the hiddenness of God in the *De Doctrina*. “Milton’s God is buried in the proof-texts” just as Milton himself “is buried in the text of his treatise” (69). The treatise, Lieb insists, is “*sui generis*” despite its obvious affinities with theological treatises by William Ames and John Wölleb, and with the logically rigorous methodological format of Peter Ramus. The thousands of proof texts Milton draws from Scripture are only accommodative, and insufficient to