

still regretfully employed in scholarship about the region. The book highlights the need for a broader reassessment of the nature of captivity, war, state formation, imperial politics and commerce in the early modern western Mediterranean and eastern Atlantic. Matar himself could have gone further along those lines, even in terms of visualizing the data. The images and maps are limited and not tightly related to the research so the graphic of the population of cities of Great Britain (43) could have been replaced by one indicating home towns of captives from a 1647 petition on the facing page (42) to give a sense of what “Britain” means here. Likewise maps of the various actors and trade routes in the Mediterranean and Western Atlantic would have been helpful. Matar has written numerous books and articles on the broader topic of Britain and the Islamic World, and some of his best stories like that of Ahmad al-Mansur and Queen Elizabeth I negotiating for the release of British, Dutch and French captives are told elsewhere. This book is probably not the place to start in order to get a broad sense of the important work he has done. However, there is something poignant about Matar’s “last foray into the area of captivity studies,” as he is a true master of the field.

Ryan Netzley. *Lyric Apocalypse: Milton, Marvell, and the Nature of Events*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2015. x + 269 pp. \$45.00. Review by JOHN MULRYAN, ST. BONAVENTURE UNIVERSITY.

This rather difficult book seems to claim that, for both Milton and Marvell, the apocalypse is not a past or future event, but, unbeknownst to the practitioners themselves, a dynamic creation of seventeenth-century Protestantism, happening in their own times, a dynamic agent of positive change. In his “presentist,” ahistorical approach to the text, Netzley swims against the stream of Renaissance apocalyptic thought. As stated by C. A. Patrides, “Yet the difficulties stalking all [Renaissance] explicators of the Book of Revelation did not prevent their unanimous conclusion that it appertains, after one fashion or another, to ‘history’ past and ‘history’ future . . . [It] had to be firmly connected to the historical process, not severed from it as a mere ‘prophecy’ of the obscure future” (“Something like Prophetic

strain': Apocalyptic Configurations in Milton" in *The Apocalypse in Modern Thought and Literature*, ed. C. A. Patrides and Joseph Wittreich [Ithaca, New York, 1984], 208).

Netzley's ahistorical theme is explored in four chapters and the conclusion of the book: "Marvell's reconceptualization of the target of praise" (21),

"the nature of imaginary potential in Milton's sonnets" (22), "Milton's depiction, in *Lycidas*, of a potentiality that does not tend toward actualization" (23), "Marvell's "Upon Appleton House" . . . Explor[ing] what it means for revolution itself to happen in the present" (23), and "the consequences of Milton's and Marvell's reconceptualization of events for our understanding of crisis, freedom, and learning" (24).

"Apocalypse" has become a popular critical term, but, while it is a frequent topic in Milton's prose, it is worth noting that the term appears in Milton's poetry in just one instance (*Paradise Lost* 4.2), when the narrator bewails the lack of a warning voice for Adam and Eve similar to the warning voice announcing the devil's presence in Revelation 12:12. Netzley exhibits ill-concealed contempt for religious interpretations of the "end times," indeed for Protestants themselves: "Milton's and Marvell's appropriation of Reformation apocalypticism does not represent the naïve hope of the optimistic or the resentful despair of the failed revolutionary. Their poetic uses of revelation are not merely a peculiar Protestant historical novelty consigned to a benighted past of lockstep scriptural allegories and superstitious countdowns to destruction. Their lyrics' emphasis on present occurrence requires concomitant revisions to our own understanding of repetition, finality, and the new" (20). Again, he seems to be equating a futuristic view of the apocalypse with "outmoded ideas" of an afterlife: "Milton's formal experiments with the sonnet and Marvell's generic alterations of the encomium each seek to unseat the futural orientation of poetic forms designed to curry favor, even in *cravenly mercenary* [emphasis mine] or in sincere fashion. Their revisions strip these traditions of their implication in a system of future rewards, not out of a principled moral objection so much as out of a commitment to a more basic question of the ontological nature of temporal change" (16).

The idea if not the term “apocalypse” is clearly important for both Milton and Marvell, but it is used by many contemporary critics as a very fluid term of indeterminate meaning, often divorced from its original context, the Book of Revelation, the final book of the Bible. Netzley appears to employ the word *ad libitum* as a synonym for other critical terms, e.g. “events or apocalypses” (162), “pastoral escape or apocalyptic transformation” (144), “a poem, apocalyptic or otherwise” (180). He is also fond of telling us what the apocalypse is *not*: “The apocalypse is not a conclusion, conceived either as a bare terminus or a resolving interpretation. Revelation does not arrive either as a bare terminus or a resolving interpretation. Revelation does not arrive from elsewhere in order to tie off dynamic development in a now static continuity. Yet neither is it the hermeneutic unveiling of a more primordial narrative gurgling beneath the surface of phenomenal events. For Milton, it means neither history, nor allegory, nor dialectical unfolding” (115). As that last sentence suggests, Netzley, like many contemporary critics, has a unique insight into the mind of the poet.

It sometimes seems that Netzley is attempting to turn Milton into a postmodern critic, embracing not only Agamben, Adorno, Deleuze, Guattari, Levinas, and Derrida, but even Hegel. I find his claim (based on his reading of Milton’s sonnet 7, “How soon hath time”) that “Milton’s sonnets highlight resolution as the chief culprit in buttressing a distinction between action and thought” both problematic and troubling. Although I don’t follow his reasoning, he claims that the lines “All is ... As ever” indicate that “we are waiting for the end of the notion that hope must always be deferred into the future” (85). In my view, this is another restatement of his thesis, rather than an explication of the lines cited by Netzley.

Again, in commenting on *Lycidas*, Netzley asserts that “the evocation of the two-handed engine demonstrates that the apocalypse itself, if we imagine it as a coming finality, does not and will not happen.

The desire for finality ultimately turns the apocalypse into a metaphor” (118). Ironically, that is exactly what the apocalypse is in this study: a metaphor rather than an event, a metaphor, not engaged with directly by either Marvell or Milton (at least in their poetry), and used by the critic as a straw man to reject the idea of closure and to embrace Derridean concepts of indeterminacy and undecidability,

concepts (perhaps) foreign to both Marvell and Milton.

Netzley provides many insightful readings of Milton and Marvell, but his anti-historical and polemical tone is rather hard (for this reviewer) to swallow. I, for one, do not apologize for “our modern bourgeois notion of significant historical happenings” (3). If attaching significance to “historical happenings” is a bourgeois mistake, I suppose it would be more acceptable to focus on *insignificant* historical happenings. That way madness lies!

James D. Mardock and Kathryn R. McPherson, eds. *Stages of Engagement: Drama and Religion in Post-Reformation England*. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne UP, 2014. vii + 351 pp. \$58.00. Review by DANIEL L. KEEGAN, UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING.

This edited collection seeks to contribute to what editor James D. Mardock describes as the “second wave” in the religious turn in early modern literary studies. In contrast to the “first wave” of the turn to religion, exemplified by claims of Shakespeare’s crypto-Catholicism by critics including Gary Taylor and Richard Wilson, this “second wave” aims to be more sensitive to “post-Reformation England’s often chaotic confessional sea” and to “the blurry spectrum of individual religious experience” (9). The complex, intermingled religiosity of post-Reformation England resists the grand narratives proposed by “first wave” studies of early modern religion and drama. This landscape of theology and belief, one that Mardock writes “had as many confessions as congregants in its parish churches and in its playhouses” (9), calls for detailed attention to the “confessional ambiguity” (6) that characterized the early modern scene. The essays in this collection make persuasive, detailed contributions to our understanding of early modern religion and drama. Several provide profound, even startling, insights and shed new light on neglected texts and topics.

Robert Hornback’s essay on “The *Jacob and Esau* Paradigm: Nicholas Udall’s Predestinarian Problem Comedy” provides a powerful case in point. The majority of the piece is dedicated to examining the authorship and dating of the Tudor drama *Jacob and Esau* and to arguing for Udall’s authorship in the early 1550’s. Hornback’s argument