

concluding framework, which provokes rich and fascinating questions about Milton's relationship to these parables of Jesus and his practices of exegesis more broadly. Urban's readings of Milton tend toward the traditional, but he, too, brings new things out of his treasury, and readers will be glad to have them.

Thomas Festa and Kevin J. Donovan, eds. *Scholarly Milton*. Clemson, South Carolina: Clemson University Press, 2019. viii+ 295. \$104.96. Review by JOHN MULRYAN, ST. BONAVENTURE UNIVERSITY.

Thomas Festa's and Kevin J. Donovan's "Introduction" offers an admirable summary of the essays that follow, and a rationale for the collection itself: "Taken together, the chapters in this collection enrich our understanding of Milton's self-conscious commitments to scholarship and his engagements with the learned traditions that influenced him the most—of 'scholarly Milton' as a formidably learned writer of poetry and prose" (15). Unfortunately, the use of an unnecessarily complex and difficult vocabulary in many of the essays clearly discourages the general reader from engaging with the arguments presented by the authors. Finally, the tripartite division of essays on "Milton and the Ethical Ends of Learning," "Milton and the Trivium," and "Milton and Scholarly Commentary," seems forced and arbitrary.

In "High Enterprise: Milton and the Genres of Scholarship in the Divorce Tracts," Sharon Achinstein praises Milton's deep learning, but lets Milton off the hook for ignoring plain facts with the argument for "inner scripture," an unverifiable, unarguable source for Milton's pseudo-arguments: "How did Milton cope with the philological work on the Bible that was discrediting the authority of biblical texts? Indeed, Milton came to a position where he could both use the tools of philology and disavow the textualism on which philology depended by his notion of 'inner scripture'" (22). In my opinion, if Milton is permitted to play the spiritual card whenever he runs into scholarly difficulties, then he is bending the facts to justify his preconceived point of view; this is not scholarship, but propaganda. As Achinstein herself notes, "Milton's deployment of commentary and philology was thus selective, chosen to serve his argument" (30). I understand the

reluctance of Milton scholars to discredit his scholarship. For his time, Milton's manipulation of scholarly materials was the rule rather than the exception, but it was not up to (current) contemporary theories of scholarly exactitude.

One of the challenges for readers of *Paradise Lost* is finding a way to grasp the structure of the poem, how to piece together the segments of this immensely complicated account of the rise and fall of humanity. In "Typology and Milton's Masterplot," Sam Hushagen suggests that typology is the structuring principle of the poem: "A pattern of incremental advances, recurrent scenes, and textual analogies organizes *Paradise Lost* and unites the books of the poem with its central argument: 'to assert eternal providence,' and in so doing, 'justify the ways of God to men' (1.25, 1.26) (57). "The ways of God take the form of the gradual articulation of the Logos, through the dialectic of types and antitypes" (57). One can argue with this interpretation of the poem, but at least it gives the reader a window through which to view the unity of the poem and define the relationship of its parts to the coherent whole that is *Paradise Lost*.

James Ross Macdonald's "The Devil as Teacher in *Paradise Lost*," attempts to establish a connection between *Paradise Lost* and Ecdicius Avitus's sixth-century Latin poem *De spiritualis historiae gestis*. Macdonald admits that the connection is "circumstantial but suggestive" (63). What I find troubling is that the alleged connection with Avitus leads Macdonald to blame Adam and Eve for using their intelligence to seek knowledge he claims they are not entitled to: "In choosing an autodidactic approach, Adam and Eve forfeit their privileged access to divine truth, and the attainment of the knowledge they desire becomes the just punishment for improperly seeking it" (79). "Adam's growing awareness of the fallibility of his own mind reminds him that empirical knowledge must be received within the epistemological context of divine intentionality and human obedience" (80). In my opinion, this is to accuse Milton of anti-intellectualism and discouragement of intellectual independence on the part of both Adam and Eve. Perhaps so, but one hopes not.

In an otherwise persuasive essay, "*Paradise Regained* and the beginning of thinking," J. Antonio Templanza, like almost all other Milton scholars, ignores the fact that Milton's polemic against pagan learning

has nothing to do with the historical Jesus, but is really about his own stance on the temptation to learning. For starters, the historical Jesus was probably not literate in any language, including his own. He probably had no Greek, Latin, or Hebrew, and no knowledge of their literatures. The thought that he knew enough about Greek poetry to make comparisons with Hebrew poetry, about which he was equally ignorant, is laughable in the extreme. The historical Jesus was not, as far as we know, learned in any language and probably illiterate in all languages. It's time to end this parlor game and acknowledge that Milton is using this mythical Jesus as a stand-in for his own views about classical and Hebrew learning.

Templanza's peculiar definition of thinking as a process antithetical to the acquisition and employment of knowledge is, in my opinion, a romantic fantasy more applicable to Wordsworth than to Milton: "In this universe orientation toward the Good, or toward the idea of ideas, or toward that which legitimates the ideas with which we are presented access to the world, is not something one can prove by citing date, but by thoughtfully participating in the dialogue (perhaps the *agon*) of living. This is what is called thinking" (104). Thus, thinking does not seem to be *about* anything, except the shared experience of humanity.

To end on a positive note, Templanza writes beautifully and enthusiastically about ideas I cannot share. In "Learning, Love, and the Freedom of the Double Bind," Gardner Campbell explores the rarely discussed subject of Milton's sense of humor, particularly in the line "Our voluntary service he [God] requires" (*Paradise Lost* 5.529), a seemingly playful contradiction that has serious consequences for the person receiving the command and attempting to resolve the "double bind." A "double bind," as [Gregory] Bateson explains it, arises when mutually incompatible injunctions are given by an authority figure within a relationship that matters intensely to the person who is subject to that authority" (109). It is an open question whether this is an example of divine black humor or a directive that is impossible to fulfill. Perhaps it is up to the reader to decide.

In "Revisiting Milton's (Logical) God: Empson 2018," Emma Annette Wilson joins Empson in indicting the Christian god for creating an evil world, and praising Milton for creating such a powerful poem from such unpromising materials: "*Paradise Lost* is an epic founded

on identifying and exploring personal logical accountability in a divine system which is harsh and intolerant, as Empson lucidly drew out in 1961 and again in 1965, and it is indeed Milton's unflinching willingness to explore and lay bare that system which makes the poem terrifying and tragic" (143).

In "God's Grammar: Milton's Parsing of the Divine," Russell Hugh McConnell wrestles with the problem of describing the nature of the divine through the lens of traditional grammar. For example, "God's perception of the world is not partial or temporal, but simultaneous, taking in all things in all times and all places 'at once.' Yet this point clashes almost immediately with the requirements of linear narrative ..." (152). As Rosalie Colie notes, "God is beyond time and outside it, as well as in it" (160). A clash occurs between Milton's discussion of grammar in his *Accidence Commenc't Grammar* and his actual treatment of grammatical structures in *Paradise Lost*: "The contrast between his grammar text and his endlessly subtle epic poem indicate the importance to Milton of manipulating normal grammatical structures in order to convey adequately the nature of the divine" (162). That Milton would refuse to be bound by the constraints of traditional grammar, even though he was himself the author of a grammar text, should surprise no one, although we are in McConnell's debt for his comprehensive treatment of Milton as grammarian. In "Balancing Rhetorical Passion in Virgil and Paul," Joshua R. Held attempts to combine the pagan and Christian traditions of rhetoric through the peroration, the concluding portion of a speech. "Thus Raphael's *peroration* becomes a master index of *exempla*, designed to transfer to Adam the central motivations of epic heroes and Christians of all eras, and thus heightening its logical and emotional force" (166).

Emily E. Stelzer's "Euphrasy, Rue, Polysemy, and Repairing the Ruins" focuses on the concepts of vision, sight, and perception in *Paradise Lost*: when they succeed and when they fail: "Considered together, as eye-quickening herbs, euphrasy and rue represent the need for and the possibility of an improvement in human vision, and in doing so they draw the reader's attention to Milton's imagery, to his successes and perhaps even to his failures; in turn, in drawing attention to the importance of imagery and vision, euphrasy and rue further validate the first half of Adam's experience on the Mount of

Speculation, what Adam sees but does not always interpret to Michael's satisfaction" (205). Lurking always in the background, of course, is Milton's own lack of physical sight and how it affects his own "vision" of the universe.

In "Paradise Finding Aids," Nicholas Allred theorizes about how finding aids, like the subject index, the table, and the verbal index both contribute to and detract from our understanding of the poem. This may be true, but I think Allred puts too little faith in the reader's good judgment, and is unduly concerned about the "informational overload" such finding aids can cause (227). It is true that a "finding aid" can affect our interpretation of *Paradise Lost*, but it can also keep us "on track" in forging out way through the intricacies of the poem.

It is a pleasure to conclude this review with an account of David Jones's magisterial "Political diplomacy, Personal Conviction, and the Fraught Nature of Milton's Letters of State." The key question about authorship is introduced in Jones's opening sentence: "Can the authorship of documents created and approved by government committees be attributed to the individual assigned to translate them into the official language of diplomacy?" (229). The answer seems to be "no." "Instead it appears more prudent to understand Milton's state papers as the products of a shared or composite notion of authorship. He had a part, but not the only part in creating them" (237). "Since scholars still lack any kind of evidence that Milton ever created the official English text of a state paper for which he then produced a Latin translation, the assumption must stand that someone else created the base text from which Milton worked" (238). Jones concludes his account by noting that much work remains to be done on these texts: "There are over two hundred of them that have remained, because of fraught circumstances, in a state of neglect" (239). As always, Jones reminds his fellow scholars to focus on the scholarship that underpins all speculation about what Milton wrote and how it should be interpreted.

In sum, this disparate collection of essays explores many different approaches to "Scholarly Milton," with varying degrees of success.