

liography. Leimberg's previous publications inform her commentary on *The Temple* only tacitly, most notably with respect to the linking of logical and musical connotations. By the same token, nothing is said about how a poem like "The Sinner" reflects the extent to which *The Temple* is, in fact, a vast Memory Palace along the lines discussed by Frances Yates (*Archiv für neueren Sprachen* 206 [1970]: 241-50).

By virtue of Leimberg's judicious sense of what to say and what to leave unsaid, coupled with her artfully invisible hand as a translator, we are able at last to behold in German the time-honored dichotomies of Herbert's verse, the fluctuations between despair and bliss, between agitation and serenity, and the discipline of suffering that leads to peace of spirit. And so she, who taught Herbert to say "*Mein Gott, Mein Herr*" in "Jordan (1)," is not punished "with losse of ryme"—and we are all the richer for it.

Barbara K. Lewalski. *The Life of John Milton: A Critical Biography*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000. 777 pp. + 18 illus. \$43.95. Review by ANNA K. NARDO, LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY.

The Blackwell Critical Biographies series, according to General Editor Claude Rawson, intends "to re-establish the notion that books are written by people who lived in particular times and places"; each volume "will include substantial critical discussion" of the author's works. Barbara K. Lewalski's *The Life of John Milton: A Critical Biography* fulfills both of these promises with learning and grace. Lewalski brings her interpretive skills as a literary critic to the task of locating Milton in England in the midst of revolutionary change. What she so masterfully demonstrates is that literary interpretation is essential to making meaning of the life of a poet.

Dividing Milton's life into fourteen stages, each identified by a quotation from this most self-reflexive of authors, Lewalski synthesizes an immense amount of scholarship into economical, but comprehensive chapters. For example, the chapter dealing with

1654-58, Milton's early years of total blindness, takes its title "I . . . Still Bear Up and Steer Right Onward" from a sonnet to Cyriack Skinner, and the chapter on the dark days of the Restoration takes its title "In Darknes, and with Dangers Compast Round" from the invocation to Book 7 of *Paradise Lost*. Every chapter begins with a brief overview of a stage in Milton's life, then expands into a detailed analysis of biographical and historical events, and ends with a critical discussion of major works written during these years. Cross-referencing throughout the text and notes, in addition to an extensive index and bibliography, makes this complex biography accessible to all levels of readers—from advanced undergraduates to graduate students, from the general educated reader to other Milton scholars.

Throughout the book, Lewalski generously acknowledges her debts to the monuments of scholarship that preceded her: David Masson's seven volume biography (1881-94), J. Milton French's five volumes of life records, Harris Francis Fletcher's two volume intellectual life (1956-61), William Riley Parker's two volumes which have become the standard biography (1965), and the recent work by Gordon Campbell (1995) and Cedric Brown (1995). Nevertheless, Lewalski asserts her own interpretation of this much debated life. For example, although she recognizes the contributions of Christopher Hill (1977) in foregrounding Milton's radicalism and William Kerrigan (1983) and John Shawcross (1993) in probing Milton's psychology, she rejects their versions of Milton (as sympathetic to the radical fringe, as a young man troubled by repressed homoerotic feelings or oedipal pressures)—interpretations which "rest," she argues, "on scant evidence and unsubstantiated assumptions" (74). Writing at the turn of the twenty-first century, Lewalski profits from recent scholarship that has illuminated two previously neglected aspects of Milton's career: the duties he performed as Latin Secretary during the Commonwealth and Protectorate governments (e.g., Robert T. Fallon, 1993; David Norbrook, 1999) and his continued, if muted, political engagement during the Restoration (e.g., Laura Knoppers, 1994; Sharon Achinstein, 1996, 1997). Lewalski has synthesized this new work, and thereby

clarified our understanding of Milton's role in the conduct of foreign policy during the Interregnum, and dispelled the stereotype of Milton's retreat to quietism after the Restoration.

Having devoted her long and productive career to both scholarship and criticism, Lewalski brings historical information and aesthetic sensitivity to the task of interpreting the life of a public man who was, above all else, a poet. She repeatedly demonstrates that Milton's place in history can best be understood through nuanced interpretation of his poetry and prose. For example, the ease with which the staunchly anti-clerical Milton mingled with the Catholic literati of Italy requires interpretation, and such poems of effusive compliment as *Ad Salzillium* have seemed to some readers singularly unMiltonic. Lewalski can unpack the significance of this episode in Milton's life because she can read Milton's neo-Latin poems of compliment in context. Once she has explicated the learned allusions and etymological word-play enjoyed in Italian academies, analyzed the witty joke in Milton's choice of meter, and demonstrated how *Ad Salzillium* revisits themes announced in a minor key in *Lycidas*, the reader can see both newness and continuity in Milton's Italian experiences.

We can see him relishing his acceptance by the cosmopolitan republic of letters, but we can also see him following a pattern of thought that Lewalski identifies as central to his Protestant vision—the pattern of representing alternative versions of life and art not only in companion poems like “L'Allegro” and “Il Penseroso,” but also in poems composed several years apart. Of course, this pattern of considering and judging between alternatives, Lewalski insists, will become the cornerstone of Milton's argument for unlicensed printing in *Areopagitica*, the central actions in his epics and tragedy, and the foundation of his theology and politics. Lewalski's reading of such a minor poem as *Ad Salzillium* not only establishes the significance of the grand tour in Milton's poetic development, but also connects his experiences in Italy to the political and theological commitments that would later guide the choices he made as activist and poet.

Through this kind of interweaving between literary criticism and historical analysis, Lewalski makes Milton's life—lived in the midst of political, social, and religious revolution—comprehensible. She brings into focus a welter of detail—all the while never denying the contradictions and ambiguities of lived experience in such chaotic times—by tracing key themes that Milton enunciates throughout his career as a pamphleteer, government servant, and poet. Three examples will illustrate her strategy. First, Lewalski identifies what she sees as the unifying goal of Milton's life. From his days of keeping school, through his years of political activism, even on the eve of the Restoration, then into the period of political exile and poetic maturity, Milton pursued, according to Lewalski, the "strenuous project of educating readers in the virtues, values, and attitudes that made a people worthy of liberty" (442). Holding to this goal, Milton could still call in 1660 for the establishment of a Grand Council for life, lest free elections by a people not yet worthy of liberty bring back the monarchy.

Second, Lewalski explains Milton's refusal to extend religious toleration to Catholicism, his disgust at kingship, and even Raphael's warning to Adam not to overvalue Eve's beauty through Milton's antipathy to idolatry. This linkage of inner slavery and national slavery, idolatry and servility, makes Milton's fierce chastity as a young man and his insistence on the superiority of intelligence (gendered as masculine) to beauty (gendered as feminine) comprehensible in the light of his life-long advocacy of religious and political liberty. Nevertheless, Lewalski exposes the contradictions Milton confronts when he makes Eve not a Petrarchan idol, but a thinking being with the same liberty of choice as Adam.

Third, and perhaps most central to Milton's historical and literary significance, Lewalski demonstrates that "No writer before Milton fashioned himself quite so self-consciously as an author" (x). "Throughout his polemic," she argues, Milton forged for himself an individualistic model of authorship, "involving originality of thought, denial of substantive influence from others, transformation of borrowings and conventions so as to make them his own, and emulation of models with the intention of surpassing

them" (325). Yet, in Milton's vituperative exchanges with Alexander More, who he insisted erroneously was the author of *Regia Sanguinis Clamor ad Coelum Adversus Parricidas Anglicanos*, Milton seems to credit "an older mode of collaborative authorship, allowing that More, Vlacq, Crantz, Salmasius, and various other unknowns may be involved with it and thereby responsible for it" (325). Lewalski acknowledges that, in the heat of self-defense, Milton's tortured logic leads him to "define authorial responsibility very broadly indeed" (326). This special pleading also leads him into a contradiction that denies the significance of his own career in "the emergence of the modern idea of authorship" (x).

Identifying such unifying themes, Lewalski never glosses over the discontinuities in Milton's life and thought. Rather, by isolating these patterns she can more clearly expose the points of rupture and contradiction in Milton's lived experience.

Lewalski ends her story of a poet's life with proof that, as Milton believed, a good book possesses "a life beyond life" (*Areopagitica*). Her epilogue takes the reader on a whirlwind tour through centuries of Milton's influence on Anglophone literature and thought. After finishing the final page of this comprehensive, but terse epilogue, I remembered Dr. Johnson's dictum on *Paradise Lost*—only in reverse. I wished both epilogue and book had been longer.

Jeffrey S. Shoulson. *Milton and the Rabbis: Hebraism, Hellenism, & Christianity*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001. xiii + 340 pp. \$52.50 cloth; \$19.50 paper. Review by ELIZABETH SAUER, BROCK UNIVERSITY.

Milton studies is marked by what John Rumrich described in *Milton Unbound* as a "neo-Christian" bias, a phrase he borrows from William Empson. Despite Empson's criticism some 30 years ago, the Miltonic *oeuvre*, as Rumrich observes, has with few exceptions remained firmly entrenched in traditional Christian thinking, while also being characterized until recently by an insistence on Milton's