

old ground of hope,” then perhaps he can also influence the same readers towards a concern for ecology and an appreciation of place and its creatures (198).

Fenton’s analysis of hope in Milton’s works and his culture is rewarding, often surprising, and at times amusing. Her observation, for example, of Satan’s despair which detaches and displaces the individual from place and thus hope is intriguing. Similarly, Fenton’s discussion of the enclosure laws of early modern England and Satan’s “gesture to enclose the historical kingdoms” (190) is provocative. Fenton’s framing ideas about the role hope plays in our lives today are significant. Fenton’s book should reward any reader interested in an interdisciplinary history of thought, especially as it relates to politics and theology in Milton’s works.

Thomas H. Luxon. *Single Imperfection: Milton, Marriage and Friendship*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2005. xvi + 215 pp. \$58.00. Review by W. SCOTT HOWARD, UNIVERSITY OF DENVER.

Single Imperfection: Milton, Marriage and Friendship is a lively examination of Milton’s divorce tracts, a selection of the minor poems (especially *Epitaphium Damonis*), *Paradise Lost*, *Samson Agonistes* and *Paradise Regain’d* with regard to classical, Renaissance humanist and early modern Protestant notions about marriage and friendship. The volume also cogently engages with key texts by a variety of literary, philosophical and religious figures, including: Montaigne and Shakespeare; Plato, Philo, Leone Ebreo and Erasmus; Saint Paul, Luther and Calvin. The book consists of a preface, an introduction, five chapters, notes and an index, but does not include either a conclusion or a bibliography. Chapter one was first published as “Humanist Marriage and *The Comedy of Errors*” in *Renaissance and Reformation* 25.4 (2001); chapter four, as “Milton’s Wedded Love” in *Milton Studies* 40 (2002). Apart from those two sections, *Single Imperfection* offers new writing that has emerged from Luxon’s research, teaching and conference presentations since 1995.

Working within a context of recent Milton scholarship by Barbara Lewalski, David Loewenstein and David Norbrook (among others) that emphasizes a synthesis of biographical, political, theological and textual criticism, Luxon delivers particularly strong readings of Milton’s “doctrine of conversation,”

his friendship with Charles Diodati and his persistent efforts (as a political and religious reformer) to reconcile the competing frameworks of classical-humanist homoerotic friendship, Judeo-Christian heterosexual marriage, and republican “manly” citizenship and liberty. Luxon represents Milton as a chief mover-and-shaker (among his contemporaries) who “took on the huge project of reinterpreting heterosexual Christian marriage . . . as a classical friendship”—an Anglo-American endeavor that continues to inform current US debates about marriage law reform, heteronormativity and homonormativity (x).

This last assertion, though plausible, underscores one of the volume’s major weaknesses. Luxon’s research, methodology and line of argument addressing, for example, the reasons why “Enlightenment and modern state constitutions do not stipulate sexual difference as crucial to marriage” (xi), or why “modern notions of marriage [are indebted] to Athenian doctrines of pederasty,” and why neither “feminists nor evangelicals will be overjoyed to learn how much equalist feminism owes to puritan formulations of companionate marriage” (4) may appear to less sympathetic readers as mere conjecture. Luxon’s polemical leap from the early- to the post-modern is certainly meritorious, but lacks sufficient grounding. Sweeping generalizations in the preface and introduction about “so many startling examples of emergent modern notions [of friendship and marriage]” (4) receive scant elaboration in any of the following sections. The final two paragraphs of chapter five reveal the book’s abrupt and awkward framework for that trans-historical critique: “When [Milton] tried to define marriage as being no more about sex and childbearing than friendship is, he never intended to clear a path for same-sex marriage, but now that path appears to many as inevitable” (192). Luxon’s intellectual history may strike some readers as both singular and imperfect—that is, except for his volume’s primary concerns with Milton’s documents and their direct contributions to a larger context of seventeenth-century cultural and social issues.

The phrase, *Single Imperfection*, alludes of course to Adam’s discourse with Raphael, when he recounts for the Angel what he remembers of his conversation with God about his solitude, desire for fellowship and recognition of his own creaturely singleness: “But Man by number is to manifest / His single imperfection, and beget / Like of his like, his Image multipl’d, / In unities defective, which requires / Collateral love, and dearest amitie” (*Paradise Lost* 8:

422-26). Luxon grasps this pivotal passage in terms of a fundamental contradiction: “Milton shows us an Adam forced to choose between having a conversation that is virtually ‘in heaven’ and having continued conversation with his wife” (111). This onto-dialogical crossroads for Adam results directly from an aporia at the crux of Milton’s split allegiance to both homoerotic classical-humanist friendship and heterosexual Protestant marriage. Luxon reasons thus:

Milton argued, perhaps more strenuously than any other in his day, that marriage should be principally a friendship, and he did more than anyone else to rearticulate marriage according to the terms and theories of classical friendship doctrine, but in the end . . . Milton’s marriage theories finally fail to do the work he imagines for them because [he] withholds . . . the linchpin of classical and humanist friendship doctrine—equality. (2)

Reconfiguring recent interpretations from Janet Halley (1988), Louise Schleiner (1990) and Gregory Chaplin (2001), Luxon builds a two-fold thesis around that generative contradiction. On the one hand, Milton’s early humanist documents embrace Plato’s conception that the “offspring born of homoerotic higher love must be more nearly immortal than children born of heteroerotic marriage” (1). The divorce tracts, however, articulate a shift in Milton’s poetics of friendship: a redefinition of heteroerotic marriage “using the terms and principles of classical friendship” in order to “promote [such a] newly dignified version of marriage as the originary human relation and, therefore, the bedrock of social and political culture in Protestant Christendom” (1-2). Luxon’s introduction augments that rhetorical context by way of convincing (if brief) renderings of predominant models for classical friendship (e.g. Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* and Montaigne’s “On Friendship”), Christian marriage (e.g. Genesis 2 and Paul’s Epistles) and creation stories (via Plato, Xenophon, Aristophanes, Pausanias, Philo and Ebreo) with which Milton would have been familiar.

Individual chapters carry that argument forward. “Classical Friendship and Humanist Marriage” examines a variety of documents (e.g. *Comedy of Errors*, *Twelfth Night*, *Paradise Lost*, Calvin’s *Commentaries*, Luther’s *Lectures on Genesis*, Edmund Tilney’s *The Flower of Friendship*) to argue that although many Renaissance and Reformation humanists re-imagined and rewrote marriage to suit an increasingly secular culture and society, “almost no one would allow classical notions of equality between friends to trump the Pauline

teaching about women's subjection and inferiority" (35). (On this particular point, it is worth noting that *Single Imperfection* does not acknowledge many works written by English women during the seventeenth century. The poetry of Katherine Philips, for example, would pose a formidable challenge to Luxon's thesis).

Chapter two, "The Sage and Serious Doctrine of Conversation," studies selected passages from Milton's divorce tracts (except for *The Judgement of Martin Bucer*), the anonymous pamphlet "An Answer" (which occasioned Milton's *Colasterion*), *Paradise Lost* and *Epitaphium Damonis* to formulate a complex, six-point analysis. Luxon asserts that *Colasterion* castigates the Serving-man because, according to Milton's neo-Platonic, Christian-republican principle of conversation, he is unfit to "converse in the world as a citizen of heaven" (76). For his part, however, the author of "An Answer" has scored a direct hit by rightly questioning Milton's first divorce tract's dubious distinction between "conversation that satisfies one's rational desires and conversation that satisfies one's irrational desires" (76). Milton's ideas about conversation and citizenship were not only deeply informed by his commitments to classical, Christian and humanist traditions, but also significantly shaped by his intimate yet disjunctive friendship with Charles Diodati—his dearest friend from St. Pauls, where they probably met in 1620 when Milton was twelve. *Epitaphium Damonis* expresses Milton's struggle to realize his doubled loss of Diodati (who died in 1638) and also of Italy (following his return to England in 1639) where Milton had enjoyed the "refined practices of homosocial friendship" (83). After those turning points, according to Luxon, Milton "convinced himself . . . that marriage could be elevated to such refined practices, that a man could find such friendship in a wife" (84). The divorce pamphlets, *Paradise Lost*, *Samson Agonistes* and *Paradise Regain'd* therefore illustrate developmental stages in that larger project of attempting to accommodate classical-humanist and republican friendship doctrines to Protestant marriage reform.

As noted above, however, Milton's efforts were conditioned by an enabling constraint—the single imperfection of onto-dialogical inequality between the sexes—that charges a cluster of contradictions in each text. Chapter three, "'Single Imperfection' and Adam's Manly Self," thereby frames *Paradise Lost* as a tragic song about Adam's loss of heavenly citizenship in exchange for fallen conversation (101)—an interpretive perspective that also motivates the

following chapter, “Milton’s Wedded Love.” Against the “generally accepted” views of John Halket (1970), James Grantham Turner (1987) and Stephen Fallon (1990) that Milton eventually became “prepared not only to speak of sensual matters with a civil tongue, but even to praise and celebrate sexuality as an essential element, even a defining aspect, of ‘wedded Love’” (126), Luxon claims that in *Paradise Lost* Milton praises most highly neither sex nor friendship in heterosexual marriage, but manly eros “that tends away from the body and toward heavenly love” (126). Chapter five, “Heroic Divorce and Heroic Solitude,” accordingly reads *Samson Agonistes* and *Paradise Regain’d* as progressive steps toward a recovery of manly eros (159) and homoerotic, onto-dialogical, higher citizenship (192). Samson achieves what Adam could not do—“divorce his unfit wife” (159)—and the Son of God attains what was far beyond either Adam’s or Samson’s capacity: mankind’s redemption from “effeminate slackness” (192). If real manliness (like heavenly liberty) is hence neither singular nor imperfect, nor fully human, then Luxon’s republicanism ultimately emasculates Milton’s apt and cheerful conversations.

Regina Buccola and Lisa Hopkins, ed. *Marian Moments in Early Modern British Drama*. Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2007. ix +173 pp. \$99.95. Review by NANCY M. BUNKER, MACON STATE COLLEGE.

In this meticulously argued, nine-essay collection, *Marian Moments in Early Modern British Drama*, editors Regina Buccola and Lisa Hopkins bring together investigations of the dynamic and complex relationship between the era’s “religio-political culture” and its theatre (1). Each essay speaks to the importance of on-stage Marian references amidst newly Protestant England and the role of such subversive messages. Arthur F. Marotti’s Forward addresses Catholic resonances such as Queen Elizabeth’s “appropriation of idealized womanhood from the cult of Mary” (xiv) and church members’ yearning for pre-Reformation ritual expressions, which existed alongside overt antagonism to Marian devotion. He also notes the collection’s evidence that early modern women may well have felt empowered by theatrical references to the figure of Mary and devotion to her.

Buccola and Hopkins’s Introduction gives special attention to the Virgin Mary’s changing status from Catholic “touchstone for religious piety to litmus