
David Loewenstein, ed. *Milton Studies* 42 (2002). Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003. 174p.

TODD BUTLER
WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

In his autobiography, the seventeenth-century Quaker Thomas Ellwood recounts a series of conversations he held with John Milton during the Restoration. Having enjoyed *Paradise Lost* in manuscript, Ellwood asked Milton, "Thou has said much here of *Paradise Lost*; what hast thou to say of Paradise found?" The question may have initially surprised Milton, but in a later visit the poet presented Ellwood with a copy of *Paradise Regained*, explaining, "This is owing to you: for you put it into my Head, by the question you put to me at Chalfont, which before I had not thought of" (26).

This famous though unconfirmed anecdote appears several times within the essays that comprise *Milton Studies*' special issue on *Paradise Regained*, and with good reason. In comparison to its epic predecessor, as well as the bulk of Milton's poetic output, *Paradise Regained* is indeed "not thought of." The essays in this issue, however, make a convincing case for re-examining Milton's rendition of Christ's temptation in the wilderness, as in the hands of the senior Milton scholars whose work appears here *Paradise Regained* is revealed to be a poem whose literary achievement and religious and political resonances make it a worthwhile object of study or teaching in its own right.

Milton Studies 42 succeeds where some collections tend to falter, for it provides a coherent series of essays that together have a coherent trajectory that reads more like a book than a series of independent critiques. The initial pieces in the volume—Louis Martz on the poem's Georgics, and Regina Schwartz's essay on redemption—center on establishing what the poem is (at least in its classical heritage) and what precisely it is talking about. John Rumrich's work on the poem's theology of Incarnation not only brings together the modes of analysis pursued by the previous essays but also points the reader toward the more political and cultural criticism to follow.

Laura Lunger Knopper's essay on Satan and the Papacy examines what happens when, if Rumrich is correct, Christ becomes embodied in the world, and in particular becomes a means by which Milton and others can pursue their own political goals within Restoration England. It is in this section of essays that the collection truly demonstrates its importance, as *Paradise Regained* is shown to be a key source text for literary representations of post-1660 politics, a site upon which a variety of Puritan and republican discourses converge. The particulars of

these discourses of course differ; N.H. Keeble reads the wilderness setting of Milton's poem as a site informed by the quietist outlook of those disappointed by the monarchy's return, while Thomas Corns centers upon how the poem's Christ reflects Milton's own post-Protectorate dilemmas. Together Keeble and Corns demonstrate the fruitful synergy that often exists between pieces in this volume. At the end of his essay, for example, Corns cites Milton's personal struggle to declare the truth to the unregenerate masses, a struggle that in *The Readie and Easie Way* is couched in the same Biblical language of wilderness and isolation that informs Keeble's broader reading. The result is a set of essays that achieve a sort of argumentative synergy, each pursuing a different line of inquiry but together providing a sense of the richness *Paradise Regained* has to offer its readers.

The collection of essays concludes with pieces by David Norbrook and John Coffey that together take a broader view of the politics of *Paradise Regained*, examining the poem alongside not only Republican discourse but also the other major poems of the period (*Paradise Lost* and especially *Samson Agonistes*). As such, this issue of *Milton Studies* fits well into recent critical attempts to examine these later poems from new perspectives, work seen most recently in the extensive interest displayed this year to the topic of Milton and terrorism at both the International Milton Congress and the 2004 meeting of the Renaissance Society of America. Such a radically contemporary approach is not pursued by this collection, since here the authors are developing interests extensively demonstrated elsewhere, for example Norbrook on the politics of Republican speech acts or Martz on poetic form. Rather than being repetitious in their criticism, however, these essays together show *Paradise Regained* to be a similarly fruitful text that repays additional reading. Dedicated to Louis Martz, who died during the final production of this volume, *Milton Studies* 42—like the poem it examines—certainly deserves to be well thought of. ✽