REVIEWS

Reviews are published in alphabetical order according to the name of the author reviewed.

Eric C. Brown. ***Milton on Film.*** Pittsburgh: Duquesne UP, 2015. 419p.

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Eric Brown, Milton scholar and professor of English at the University of Maine at Farmington, served two years as script consultant for Legendary Studios, advising Hollywood producer Vincent Newman on his film adaptation of *Paradise Lost*, a long-gestated project which had first been announced in 2005. Brown's services came to a premature end on February 9, 2012, when the studio abruptly canceled the production two weeks before shooting was set to begin in Australia. Never had Milton's epic been so close to the big screen. Standing by in Sydney had been a state-of-the-art CGI special effects studio with no other purpose but 72 weeks of scheduled post-production. At the San Diego Comic-Con (the year before), Legendary had tantalized everyone with preliminary artwork reminiscent of the famous Milton illustrators Gustave Doré and John Martin. Legendary also played dialogue for Comic-Con based on Milton's own syntax and diction, prompting people to say approvingly of the lesser-known Milton character Sin (daughter and consort of Satan) that she sounded "like Yoda times a thousand" (332). In a TV interview with Charlie Rose, Bradley Cooper recounted the joy he had of auditioning for (and winning) the role of Satan in the movie by sitting on a stool and reading from the play in his own kitchen, then emailing the video to director Alex Proyas (known for cult favorite *The Crow*), who was equally caught up, replying to Cooper "Satan lives!" (396).

Brown's *Milton on Film* testifies that despite centuries of such fraught engagement between *Paradise Lost* and its adaptation for a mass audience, all of which he comprehensively presents—whether 17th century opera, camera obscura, magic lantern, diorama, panorama, pantomime, waxworks, Broadway show, or 20th and 21st century cinema—modern spectacle and modernity's speculum poem have been mutually informing. Brown includes a black-and-white print from Giovanni Coppola's opera, disarmingly entitled *Le nozze degli dei favola* ["The Wedding of the Fairy Tale"] (ca. 1637), whose spectacle may have caught the imagination of a young John Milton traveling abroad in Florence (328). The plate recalls winged warriors swooping low over an infernal city presided over from midair by an enthroned Pluto. For Milton, Satan's boast of a "mind not to be changed by place or time!" (*PL* 1.253) must have exemplified the modern ethos. Milton doubtless saw the modern city-state as infernal metropolis, every citizen shouting approval and countless arms wav-

ing adulation as Satan proclaims "Here at least / We shall be free" (258-59). Brown connects the gravity-challenged "Olympian games" (*PL* 2.530) of Milton's Pandemonium to contemporary omens of pending judgment chronicled by Henry More's 1653 (three volume) *Antidote to Atheism* which reports supernatural battalions clashing together "not much higher than the house tops," including the sighting in Amsterdam of an aerial "*Sea-fight* appearing in the *Aire* for an hour or two together, many thousands of men looking on" (246). Brown feels that "winged warrior" films like *Spawn, Legion, Constantine,* and *The Prophecy* franchise, along with slick horror movies like *The Devil's Advocate*, draw deeply on Miltonic motifs amid a backdrop of "millennial or apocalyptic end-of-days scenarios, often packaged as a cosmic Armageddon" (243).

Brown starts with a 1713 essay in *The Guardian* by Joseph Addison, wherein the author and his friends ponder a display of fireworks above the Thames, set off in celebration of the Treaty of Utrecht. One friend feels let down not by the scale of the spectacle (which was otherwise dazzling), but by its quaint moralizing. How could fireworks logically represent virtues like chastity? How much better, muses the unnamed friend, if the same expertise would conjure the raising of Pandemonium in Milton's epic. Addison was instantly enraptured by the idea and then, just as quickly, chastised by the guilt-ridden implication: how perfectly enticing and alluring that spectacle would be. Such is the point of departure for Brown's argument: that even a little Milton—"even a drop," or "echo" (28)—is sufficient to make the work-at-hand suitable for study of adaptation. The poster for the 1874 Broadway premiere of the Kiralfy Brothers' "Grand Spectacle of *Paradise Lost*," a show based on D'Ennery and Dugué's 1856 French spectacle, *Le Paradis perdu,* by itself constitutes "Milton gallimaufry" in which "popular images from John Martin, Gustave Doré, and others swirl about, as if caught in a permanent eddy, while the cast (and Kiralfys) clutter the rest of the frame" (68).

Accordingly, Brown devotes considerable space to counterintuitive choices, especially John Landis's *Animal House* (1978), which gives us a kind of Pandemonium but one that lacks common cause with Satan's bid to rise up against the tyranny of the Almighty. In the movie, Prof. Jennings (Donald Sutherland) is a self-appointed Lucifer who is unable to rouse his somnolent college students amassed sleepily in the tiered rows: "general disobedience" in this case "prevails at Milton's expense rather than with his backing. The war in heaven becomes a food fight in the cafeteria, or a doodle of fighter jets, one crashing into flames as the other opens fire, as one student scribbles during the *Paradise Lost* lecture" (196). Just as surprising is Brown's choice of Steven Brill's "mock horror" (319) *Little Nicky* (2000), in which Adam Sandler plays Nicky, Satan's youngest son by an unfallen female angel, but who, more than his older, demonically-pure siblings, is the son most loyal to his father (321).

Vincent Newman's project also approached its material as a brother story, in this case the rivalry of brother angels Michael and Lucifer: "It's a family saga," said Alex Proyas, "about a group of brothers, two in particular, who are on divergent paths, and Lucifer's feelings of betrayal by his father and family that forge his descent into evil" (327).

Luigi Maggi's *Satana, ovvero Il Dramma dell'Umanita* [*Satan, or The Drama of Humanity*] (1912) would seem to be a "logical landmark in the history of Milton on Film" (152), but the mostly lost film recalls earlier precedents of modern spectacles. In the 1670s, John Dryden's stage adaptation, *The State of Innocence and the Fall of Man,* was circulated in quarto but never produced except (embarrassingly) as a puppet show at Punch Theatre in Covent Garden. Dryden's "abortive opera" (344-45) starts in almost precisely the same way as Maggi's *Satana* does. Dryden's angels already spiral downwards, each impaled by a lightning bolt (45). The war in heaven is offered only in aftermath. In Maggi's film, we start with Satan (Mario Bonnard) already dazed and earthbound, driven to his knees on a mountaintop, as we see in the surviving frame that serves as Brown's front cover for *Milton on Film*. Dryden dedicates his opera to the teenage Mary Beatrice of Modena, betrothed to widower James of York (42). His desire to honor the very pious girl may explain why he puts so much emphasis on the "domestic melodrama between Adam, Eve, and Lucifer" (44), especially Eve's "cosmoramic" (51) dream in Milton, an apotheosis (of sorts) which Dryden chooses to depict as two angels literally swooping down and disappearing with her into the sky.

Twentieth century cinema seems to take its cue from 19th century panorama, especially R. G. Bachelder's rotating panorama, an immersive circle that changed scenes, culminating with Eve gazing in bewilderment at her watery reflection. Contemporary critics were scandalized by this "larger than life piece of nakedness" as though Bachelder's intention had been a "kind of colossal centerfold" (113). But bringing the story back to Eve is crucial in modern spectacle. Flash forward to John Collier's *Milton's Paradise Lost: Screenplay for Cinema of the Mind* (1973), the final script for Milton's other close brush with the big screen, which, like Dryden's "abortive opera," zeroes in on Eve to the point that she and Adam are reminiscent of "Torvald and Nora Helmer" (234) in Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. Like Dryden and Maggi, Collier downplays "battling angels" (234), taking pride in his own version of Eve's "cosmoramic" dream as she tells it to Adam: "[…] that particular scene," Collier writes to his agent, "is the best thing I've ever written in my life" (234). John Updike's *New Yorker* review excoriated Collier's Eve (and perhaps Milton's), calling her a "drugged porn queen […] jerked through a series of attitudes by the dead strings of Genesis 3" (234). Bertram Bracken's (now lost) *Conscience* (1917) features John Milton dictating *Paradise Lost* to his daughters. But instead of

the Son of God's victory, Bracken has Michael the archangel drive back the rebel angels. In *Conscience,* Satan's "queen of the Damned" is not Milton's Sin (who sprang from Satan's head and gave birth to his son, Death), but rather the movie's own character, Serama, who is contrite and signals to Michael her "capacity for reform, since she seems an unwilling accomplice, a victim of Satan's imperial designs" (166). D. W. Griffith seems to take his cue from *Conscience*, investing *The Sorrows of Satan* (1926) with not only brother angels but also his own faith in "saintly womanhood" (179). Like *Conscience,* Griffith has Michael stand in for the Son, and the film depends on the sanctity of the female protagonist, Mavis Clare, who saves her beloved from a Faustian bargain with Lucio, "the devil incarnate" (178). In the century that began with Vincent Newman's "abortive" *Paradise Lost*, we seem to be waiting for that adaptation whose salient ingredients can break the curse: not only rival brother angels, but also the restoration of the Son, and, most importantly, a redemptive arc of development for female protagonists, not only Sin, but, perhaps most importantly, Eve herself, the saintly (and naked) mother of humankind.

Martha E. Casazza. ***Dreaming Forward: Latino Voices Enhance the Mosaic.*** Bloomington: iUniverse, 2015. 242p.

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In light of President Trump's rescinding the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, Martha E. Casazza's *Dreaming Forward* is a timely collection of interviews and reflections underscoring the need to better understand how our nation succeeds, or fails to succeed, in serving our Latino community. While Casazza dedicates a number of chapters to immigrant students' struggles and concerns about their uncertain documentation status, the book as a whole is a mosaic of stories that demonstrates how the achievements and disappointments of these individuals' dreams impact the larger Latino population.

In order for impactful legislation to benefit Latinos living in the United States, Casazza applies the metaphor of the mosaic to illustrate how an understanding of history, family and community, safety, and access to education is essential. She explains: "Mosaic images have a long history in Mexico of telling stories and advocating for political causes. These images are rarely completed by one artist and are often under construction…as public art on the walls and rooftops in Mexican communities. We could say that each of the common elements in this collection of stories represents one piece of the larger mosaic" (ix).