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### Review Of "Milton, Materialism, And Embodiment: One First Matter All" Edited By K. J. Donovan And T. Festa

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And how does she reconcile her reading of a body-in-performance with the Mask in its published form, or with the specific implications of Milton using Alice Edgerton's body to make his point?

The brevity of the book's close readings can also leave me wanting more. The first chapter looks at the Lady's speech about her "rapt spirits" (46) without directly engaging with the Lady's threat that these spirits will provoke an earthquake, which looks to me like a direct connection being made between something coded as immaterial and something grossly material. The fourth chapter makes a strong case for reading Samson's inward meditations immediately before he destroys the Temple as expressions of an embodied, external, material phenomenon (see especially 119–22), but offers no analysis of that "great matter" (116) that the messenger speculates Samson may be thinking about. Here, the drama makes a direct linguistic connection between Samson's process of thought and the material world, which seems important, if not vital, to the chapter's larger focus. But the analysis concentrates entirely upon the way in which Milton's Samson omits the reference to God which is central in the Judges account, then moves on to Carey's article about Samson as a terrorist.

Despite spending so much space on complaints, I do recommend this book. Even, or especially, in its flaws, it will be richly generative of future scholarship, calling as it does upon Milton scholars to treat Christian faith as a material practice. I look forward to seeing how Tsentourou builds upon her work in the future.

Kevin J. Donovan and Thomas Festa, eds. *Milton, Materialism, and Embodiment: One First Matter All*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press. vii + 249 pp. \$70.00. Review by ERIC B. SONG, SWARTHMORE COLLEGE.

In the introduction to this collection, the editors signal the need for a "rapprochement" between historicist scholarship focusing on early modern monism and "the ecocritical concern for the nonhuman in contemporary vitalist materialism" (2). The editors leave unspecified exactly what kind of rapprochement they seek to foster. If this encounter involves Milton scholarship being informed by recent

theoretical trends, then certain essays in this volume live up to that calling. Yet I take it that a full rapprochement would involve a mutual, two-way conversation. It seems like a much more difficult task to show that current theoretical discussions responding to pressing social and political realities need to be informed by considerations of John Milton's religious and poetic thinking about the matter. I want to emphasize at the outset that each of the essays in this volume offer insightful, well-researched, and stimulating discussions. Even as I go on to describe the merits of each essay, my concern will be to evaluate the case that this entire volume offers for the cross-pollination between present-day materialisms and historically-minded literary scholarship.

The editors' introduction manifests the difficulty of sustaining this kind of two-way conversation. After calling for a rapprochement, the editors offer a narrow survey of the way Milton scholarship has attended to the topics of monism and vitalist materialism. Because the editors do not return to the question of how renewed considerations of Milton's writings might speak to broader theoretical concerns, the work of forging such conversations is left to the individual essays. The editors have divided this collection into four sections, each containing a pair of essays. Whether by design or by accident, the first three sections exhibit a pattern. While the paired essays consider related topics, only one attempts to link readings of Milton to theoretical conversations; the other, by contrast, pursues traditional questions of literary scholarship while engaging primarily with Milton scholarship. Precisely because both approaches yield real insights, the overarching question (or, at least, my question) intensifies: why and how should historicism, literary analysis, and "contemporary vitalist materialism" inform one another?

The first pair of essays concerns "Materiality and the Senses." In a sophisticated and persuasive reading, Lauren Shohet examines how *Paradise Lost* appeals to olfaction to achieve a complex poetic effect. Relying on terms used by Leibniz in the early modern period and then adapted by Gilles Deleuze, Shohet describes how fragrance "does not transcend or mitigate or contract space, perhaps, so much as 'fold' or 'pleat' it" (23). By performing this work of folding and pleating, smell enacts a multilayered experience of present sensation and past memory. By appealing to such sensations, Milton's poetry

blurs any simple distinctions between prelapsarian and post-lapsarian timeframes as well as among heavenly, earthly, and hellish locations. Shohet connects Milton's "polychronous semiotics" of aromas to recent studies that show that smell does, in fact, have a particular purchase on memory—a scientific fact that belies olfaction's low position in the traditional hierarchy of the senses (29). In the ensuing essay, Seth Herbst attends to the ear. He argues that as Milton shifts toward a monist worldview, he describes music as having a material existence. Such a claim is at once intuitive (insofar as a materialist orientation would lead to the conclusion that music can only have a physical basis) and powerfully counterintuitive (insofar as we think of music as having a formal existence apart from its physical manifestations). "Music provided, for Milton," Herbst concludes, "a surrogate discourse in which he could reason about the unity of seemingly separate things without the conceptual baggage of inherited Christian theology" (55). Through the ontological question of music's existence, Herbst presents a smart, detailed survey of Milton's thinking as it evolves within his poetry. If the physical effect of celestial music is merely a fantasy of restoration to be banished in Milton's early Nativity Ode, that fantasy nonetheless anticipates the elaborate accounts of music's material bases and effects in *Paradise Lost*. Herbst develops the provocative insight that the relationship between music and allegory in the earlier Ludlow *Masque* helps us account for the notorious criss-crossing of reality and allegorical abstraction in the early books of *Paradise Lost*, when Satan encounters Sin and Death.

The second section features essays that consider "Human Embodiment." Ryan Hackenbracht's essay examines the importance of walking in *Paradise Lost*. Classical epic places special significance on heroic strides. Hackenbracht reminds us that "Aeneas and Turnus are the sole striders in the *Aeneid*" (62). Yet Milton "reinvents the epic motif of walking" in the course of redefining heroism around Christian rather than martial values (64). Hackenbracht details how Milton associates walking with the humbler values of contemplation and learning. Satan's efforts to stride as a martial hero mark him as proud and sinful, in contrast to faithful angels such as Abdiel. Even after the Fall results in the construction of a footbridge between Hell and Earth, Hackenbracht concludes, *Paradise Lost* achieves a happier

conclusion by conferring heroic value on Adam and Eve's future perambulations outside of Eden. The next essay, by Erin Murphy, considers the political and religious significance of genealogy and kinship. Murphy locates within *Paradise Regained* Milton's "critique of the reproductive futurity that underwrites the Stuart project" (83). Whereas the Gospel of Luke locates Jesus in the royal lineage of David through Joseph, Milton highlights the irony of this patrilinear claim. In *Paradise Regained*, only Satan announces Jesus as a son of King David; the poem as a whole shows Jesus working to manifest the truth that he is not the son of Joseph but rather the Son of God. The manifestation of divine descent is not physical but rather verbal: the voice that proclaims Jesus to be God's beloved Son "establishes new relations among the characters rather than merely revealing a preexisting kinship" (94). Murphy argues that this turn away from reproduction and toward discursive faith governs Milton's thinking about Marian motherhood as well as divine fatherhood. The early use of the phrase "reproductive futurity" anticipates this essay's final turn to an explicit engagement with Michael Warner's and Lee Edelman's critiques of a modern, heteronormative political imagination that aims at a (perpetually deferred) future of and for children. In the 1990s, Gregory Bredbeck worked almost single-handedly to initiate a productive exchange between Milton scholarship and queer studies, yet that conversation has only resumed in recent years. Murphy's essay seeks to continue this work by suggesting that Milton thwarts a royalist politics of reproductive futurity—not in spite of, but rather alongside his particular commitment to heterosexual marriage.

The third pair of essays advances the question of how, exactly, a monist imagination can produce complex rather than uniform understandings of embodiment. Both Rebecca Buckham and Lara Dodds begin with the blush of Raphael, a blush that has long raised questions about sex, affect, and the materiality of Milton's angels. Buckham's essay is the most theoretically ambitious of this volume. She takes not only the angelic blush but also the worldview that Raphael articulates as invitations to a non-anthropocentric mode of understanding. Buckham cites Timothy Morton to describe how non-human alterity can foster an awareness of ecological "interconnectedness that is not holistic or totalitarian but rather quite vexed" (116). Raphael's descrip-

tion of a cosmos linked in a chain of digestion certainly does suggest a holistic and hierarchical interconnectedness, with God at the top. Yet Buckham locates in Raphael's poetic cosmology the indications of a more diffuse, non-hierarchical assemblage of material beings. In response to Raphael's articulation of a monist worldview, Buckham seeks an interpretive practice "informed by the sort of strangeness Morton describes," whereby the success of metaphors "reside not only in their ability to produce synthesis but also a fair amount of dissonance" (127). I remain genuinely uncertain about the ecocritical engagements that Buckham pursues. To what extent can a belief in Milton's presentation of angels (as a religious belief, as a literary suspension of disbelief, or as something in between) advance a non-anthropocentric understanding of the world (in which we know—in whatever sense—that very real non-human entities thrive and suffer)? Yet this uncertainty strikes me as productive—as a real inducement to further thought and inquiry. Whereas Buckham fosters this kind of theoretical conversation, Dodds appeals to "a more careful historicization" in order to reconsider the meaning of Raphael's blush (140). Dodds locates Milton's depictions of angels within a Homeric tradition of reporting heroic facial gestures. Yet the parallels between Miltonic angels and epic heroes do not suggest the angels' basic human qualities but rather helps to establish their "distinct ontology" (146). Buckham's theoretically-minded and Dodds' historicist readings converge on a shared sense that Milton's angels occasion an inter-species challenge of interpretation that always contains a degree of indecipherability. Dodds's essay ends with an explanation of how Raphael's blush is accompanied by a "contracted brow" that attempts to shore up the angel's heroic superiority. Yet Adam's ensuing questions about angelic sex throws Raphael off balance and occasions angelic self-consciousness—which undercuts the angelic bid for heroic condescension while also resisting full human comprehension. Taken together, Buckham's and Dodds' essays demonstrate how literary criticism can pursue its own concerns—heightening its own disciplinary self-consciousness—while adding historical and imaginative richness to our shared awareness of present-day realities. Even if performing both of these tasks simultaneously proves difficult, these essays demonstrate the value of doing them both and doing them together.

Yet this is not the final rapprochement that this volume offers. The last pair of essays redirects historicist literary scholarship toward the future of Miltonic thinking in nineteenth-century America and in twenty-first century America, respectively. John Rogers offers a vivid and powerfully lucid account of how Milton's vitalist monism—expressed both in *De Doctrina Christiana* and in *Paradise Lost*—influenced the formation of Mormon theology and church leadership. Rogers focuses specifically on Orson Pratt, who was (along with his older brother Parley) an important figure in the early development of Mormonism. After studying the monist views of Milton's theological and poetic writings, Orson Pratt sought to modernize "Milton's metaphysics with reference to post-Miltonic discoveries such as that of electricity" (170). Yet Pratt did not just update Miltonic thinking but rather pushed its theological implications to new extremes. Pratt's 1851 treatise *Great First Cause* argues that "God ... is himself a creature. God himself is but a belated effect of matter's capacity to combine and unite itself into meaningful formations" (178). Rogers—one of our canniest critics when it comes to the way philosophical and theological controversies express and feed into political struggles—traces how Pratt's radical theology was opposed by Brigham Young, who "only worked harder to affirm the eternity of Deity" as he sought to enhance prestige of the office of the Mormon Presidency (182). As Orson Pratt failed in his ecclesiastical struggle to have the Church led by the Quorum of Twelve rather than by a singular figurehead, his audacious theology was denied official church endorsement. Yet for this very reason, Rogers's excavation of the Miltonic (and post-Miltonic) thinking within Mormon history is consequential—not only for Milton scholars and for Mormons, but for anyone interested in the genealogy of religious life in America. David Harper's essay responds to a more current example of Milton's reemergence in the United States. In recent years, Cody Wilson has cited *Areopagitica* to argue for the social benefit of "distributing free, downloadable plans for the print-at-home gun he named 'The Liberator'" (190). For Harper, defining the exact contours of Milton's monism is not merely a matter of intellectual history but rather the grounds for an informed response to—and a rebuttal of—Wilson's claims. After revisiting Milton's oft-quoted descriptions of books as alive (as preserving the

essential qualities of their authors), Harper reminds us that *Areopagitica* “privileges original ideas, not the proliferation of mere copies” (201). For Harper, this means that the 3-D printing of guns (“a revolution in manufacturing rather than a revolution in ‘printing’” [199]) does not fall under the kind of personal freedom that Milton endorses. Harper finds validation for his reading of *Areopagitica* in Milton’s repeated poetic depictions of gunpowder. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton’s “apparent disdain for modern weaponry” intertwines with his monist cosmology: the satanic invention of gunpowder is a perversion of the vitality inherent in all matter (204). Rogers’s and Harper’s essays conclude this volume by demonstrating how a sustained, scholarly engagement with Milton’s writings can be put into the service of writing with a wider—and more politically urgent—appeal.

All of the essays in this collection originated as papers delivered at the 2013 Conference on John Milton; this conference did not have a more specific topical focus. It is all the more impressive, then, that the editors have been able to organize these essays in a way that demonstrates both eclecticism and coherence (thus recreating a productive tension internal to Milton’s thinking about monism). It would be too much to ask of a single volume to confirm decisively that current theoretical discussions on topics as wide-ranging as ontology, the environment, and animality in relation to the human should be more attuned to single-author literary studies. Yet this volume amply succeeds in showing how Milton scholarship continues to refine its own insights while also advancing our shared understandings of the religious, erotic, and political underpinnings of materialisms, past and present.

Ellen R. Welch. *A Theater of Diplomacy: International Relations and the Performing Arts in Early Modern France*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017. 312 pp. + 10 illus. \$75.00. Review by HALL BJØRNSTAD, INDIANA UNIVERSITY.

*A Theater of Diplomacy* is an important and timely book that will reorient the way in which we think about both diplomacy and theater in early modern France and beyond. The book brings sharp scrutiny to