(p. 7), but it nevertheless does make a pretty impressive first foray. Milton's bibliography of primary printed sources runs to a staggering fifteen large, fine-printed pages, most of whose entries are only one-line long; the bibliography is complemented by twelve pages of secondary sources and three pages of primary manuscript sources. This work does not do the violence necessary to narrowly marshal the evidence towards proving its thesis. Nonetheless, its very catholicity, in the oldest sense of the term, assures it of a place on library shelves for decades to come. We can only hope that Milton inspires similarly energetic historians to explore the resources into which he has made impressive pioneering efforts, and that consulting *Catholic and Reformed* does not become a substitute for navigating through the forest of primary texts.

SEAN K. LAWRENCE, *University of British Columbia*

P. G. Stanwood, ed. *Of Poetry and Politics: New Essays on Milton and his World*. Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 126, 1995. Pp. xxi, 333.

P. G. Stanwood's *Of Poetry and Politics* is an attempt to offer "a unified study illustrative of the best and most typical work on Milton today" (p. xv). The collection represents a selection of papers presented at the Fourth International Milton Symposium held in 1991. Far from being a random sampling of scholarship, the papers group themselves nicely into the three complementary areas of the volume's organization: Milton's prophetic voice, gender and personal identities, and politics. Drawing on various recent theoretical developments, these essays seek to contextualize Milton in terms of the complex social, political, and intellectual landscape of his time.

The first section of the volume, on Milton's prophetic voice, begins with three genre studies. Louis Martz argues that *The Reason of Church Government* follows the structural pattern of the biblical prophetic writings, a pattern that may also be traced in the *Second Defense* and *Paradise Lost*. John Hale's analysis of the Latin ode "To John Rouse" shows Milton's resistance to contemporary use of Latin verse to celebrate royal power; instead, Milton chose to praise a dutiful librarian who "stood for the prevailing of law and religion and conscience, even in time of civil war" (p. 32). In her study of *Lycidas*, Stella Revard adroitly reveals Milton's deployment of Pindaric conventions, first by exploring the use of "thematic figures and mythic digression" and subsequently by explaining how "the ostensible subject is different from its real one" (p. 36). The prophet's voice is also to be heard, according to Lee M. Johnson, in Milton's use of circles and other patterns of enclosure to create the illusion of innocence in Adam and Eve. The enclosure of the

soliloquy is the topic of David Robertson's essay, which challenges J. B. Broadbent's assertion that "the characters of *Paradise Lost* do not soliloquize until they have fallen" (p. 59). In contrast, Robertson sees the soliloquy as involving a "potential questioning of God's wisdom" (p. 77) in the larger process of forging a new self, whether good or evil. Milton's prophetic voice is again heard in the archangel Michael's narrative of human history, a narrative that, as Douglas Chambers contends, shares much with the popular art of contemporary tapestries. Perhaps the most striking essay in this section is T. H. Howard-Hill's carefully documented study which argues that Milton had virtually no interest in, or experience of, the English theatre. Milton's own closet drama *Samson Agonistes*, in Michael R. G. Spiller's view, creates a metapoesis that allows the reader to understand the work as a monument inspiring further virtuous action.

The second section begins with Mary Ann Radzinowicz's exploration of sketches that Milton made for tragedies that he planned to write. The heroines (Sarah, Lot's wife, Dinah, and Tamar) suggest Milton's interest in sexual difference, in the social relativism of gender concerns, and in political critique. Dayton Haskin considers two other biblical women, Mary and Ruth, in an analysis of Sonnet 9. The sonnet's complex interplay of allusions marks a shift in Milton's practice of scriptural interpretation: from acceptance of the plain meaning of the text to a recognition of the need to interpret through imaginative and compassionate renegotiation. Haskin's argument has since been expanded in *Milton's Burden of Interpretation*. The crux of many gender studies of Milton is the first description of Adam and Eve in *Paradise Lost*. Michael Wilding insists on Milton's radical egalitarianism and therefore views the description as a result of Satan's perspective on the couple, a perspective which projects "a political, hierarchical hell onto an Eden that is something other" (p. 174). The argument about equality is extended by Donald M. Friedman, who suggests that no society is possible "Among unequals" (*PL* 8.384) who are not fit to enter into genuine conversation with one another. Thus, consequent upon the Fall, "those meanings of 'sex' that attach themselves to outward and visible signs, the 'letter' of sexual difference, come to replace the spirit of sexuality, in which mutuality and the exchange of potency and fertility are the inward signs" (p. 212). Milton's own sexuality is considered in the course of John Leonard's rejection of the notion that Milton made youthful vows of celibacy.

The concluding section provides new and fascinating accounts of Milton's political imagination. The first two studies explore the colonialist strain in the poet's work. Balachandra Rajan considers Milton's imagistic apprehension of India, and finds that while India is often associated with vainglory and the sumptuous excess of empire, it is sometimes treated positively or at least ambivalently. In the end, however, as India begins to assume its role as the coveted object of imperial conquest, Milton "cannot quite say that the pursuit of empires can only be destructive ..." (p. 226). J. Martin Evans's paper, since expanded into *Milton's Imperial*

Epic: Paradise Lost and the Discourse of Colonialism, considers how the conquest of the New World has been played out, with all its attendant anxieties, on a cosmic scale in Milton's epic. If Satan can play the roles of "buccaneer, pilgrim, and empire builder" (p. 234), then Adam and Eve can be colonists, indentured servants, and welcoming aboriginal people. Milton's politics are more straightforwardly revealed in Gary D. Hamilton's consideration of *Paradise Regained*. The work is not concerned with the interiority of religion, but is rather a "public event" (p. 240) which offers "encouragement to nonconformist communities" (p. 247) threatened with the enforcement of laws against "conventicles" or private houses. Milton's political sensitivities may also be seen in his practical sense of the publishing marketplace (Peter Lindenbaum) and his early republicanism detected through his use of the discourse of the estates in *Of Reformation* (Janel Mueller). Milton's response to *Eikon Basilike*, supposedly written by Charles I on the eve of his execution, forges a new Puritan aesthetic even as it mocks the king's idolatrous self-representation and derivative (and thereby false) creations; as Aschah Guibbory explains, Milton's apprehension of the bad artist in Charles leads to a lasting change in Milton's own style. An essay on one of the seemingly driest of subjects, Milton's Latin grammar text, turns out to be a lively and provocative assessment of the politics of educational curricula: Wyman H. Herendeen concludes that Milton "unthroned the royal grammar and secularized it, deconstructing both monarch and episcopacy in the process" (p. 310). Finally, Ken Simpson evaluates Milton's anti-episcopal writings, suggesting that while Milton strategically accepted the argument for presbyterial government of the church, such an argument was "almost irrelevant since discipline depends on individual piety" (p. 322).

The editor of the collection has provided an effective introductory overview as well as an index of important names, places and subjects, though not of criticism. In all, the volume offers an excellent survey of significant recent scholarship that contextualizes Milton's work. The best essays seem to begin with small details that lead gradually to wide-reaching, sometimes unexpected, conclusions: a consideration of one powerful passage of *The Reason of Church Government* leads to the realization of Milton's self-staging of his prophetic voice; an analysis of Milton's occasional comments about the stage provokes the realization that Milton had no use for English theatre; a revisitation of a classic statement suggesting the inferiority of one sex to the other points ultimately to Milton's search for a radical human equality; similes concerning India and imagery of America reveal Milton's conflicting attitude toward conquest; and a second look at a grammar text uncovers a denunciation of tyranny in church, state, and learning. In such essays, the authors demonstrate how to animate the complexity of Milton's context: "by small / Accomplishing great things" (PL 9.566-67).

PAUL W. HARLAND, *Augustana University College*