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Teaching *Paradise Lost*: Radical Contingency, Comparative Studies, and Community Engagement

W. SCOTT HOWARD

This essay connects a reading of *Paradise Lost* to an exhortation for the field of Milton studies, reflects upon my recent pedagogic activities at the University of Denver, and offers suggestions for teaching that emphasize comparative studies and community engagement.¹ My work here derives from my teaching at all levels (from first-year undergraduates to doctoral students) at the dynamic intersections of my community's contiguous cohorts.

My argument is this: *Paradise Lost* is a work of radical contingency beyond Milton's control that likewise exceeds our best efforts to grasp the whole poem, thereby engendering an open work in a vital field of endless variations upon the text's history of adaptation, interpretation, and production. Milton scholars and early modernists should therefore subordinate their desires to control the text (via established critical methods) to the work's generative legacy of artistic collaborations (among authors, editors, musicians, painters and printers, translators and typographers, et al.). Comparative studies across disciplines may be energized in meaningful ways for twenty-first-century students through community-engaged practices that amplify the poem's inherent openness to diversity, multimodality, and transferrable skills. We should celebrate the epic's living legacy through

spontaneous acts of open-access knowledge sharing and experiential learning that could be transformational for the path forward for literary studies. Within the limited scope of this essay's appearance in this cluster, my focus for comparative studies and community engagement will concern literary adaptations of *Paradise Lost* with particular emphasis given to the multimedia fields of book arts and letterpress printing.



Great works of literary art are so much greater than any individual or collective work of scholarship. Indeed, such classics are more than the sum of their parts at every moment in their journeys through time: from their engagements with their source materials and historical moments to their processes of inspiration, composition, revision, production, distribution, exchange, adaptation, interpretation, remediation, and translation.² Such texts are beyond the control of their authors and audiences because their complexities escape capture and conversion; such classics are vibrant, open works that “display an intrinsic mobility, a kaleidoscopic capacity to suggest themselves in constantly renewed aspects.”³ We should embrace this vital spirit of the open work's radical contingency. By *radical*, I mean a fundamental concern for and critique of the linguistic roots of reality; by *contingency*, I mean chance affinities among materials and methods that are neither designed nor foreseen—yet still possible due to either present or absent accidents, conditions, or forces. *Paradise Lost* is certainly intricate, but it is not “designed like a complex clock.”⁴ *Paradise Lost* is a poem of baroque asymmetrical structures and signal escapes engendered by numerous discontinuities within and across the work's individual books as well as among the many paratexts added to the poem after the first three issues of the 1667 ten-book first edition.⁵ Considering these countless edits, revisions, and chance variables involved in the epic's journey from the 1667 edition to the 1674 twelve-book second edition, we should read, discuss, and teach *Paradise Lost* as a work of radical contingency that emerges from collaborative and collective efforts, including the text's dictation, transcription, revision, and preparation for printing and distribution, as William Poole's *Milton and the Making of Paradise Lost* (2017) thoroughly demonstrates. We should celebrate the work's multimodal legacy in the spirit of Blake's illuminated poem that strives to correct Milton's vision by breaking apart his overdetermined selfhood.⁶ Numerous kindred literary adaptations of *Paradise Lost* reimagine and refashion the poem's materials and methods for modern audiences, such as Erin Shields's *Paradise Lost* (2018); Danny Snelson's *RADIOS* (2016); Pablo Auladell's *Paradise Lost*

(2014); Ronald Johnson's *RADI OS* (1977); and John Collier's *Milton's Paradise Lost: Screenplay for Cinema of the Mind* (1973), just to name a few.⁷

Milton's paradoxical refrain, "know to know no more," underscores these principles and reflections in ways that exceed ready explanations—notwithstanding the best efforts of countless editors and scholars to define (and thus stabilize) numerous complexities in the poem in terms of established methodologies and lines of argument that ultimately reify the apparatus of knowledge for specialists in ways that are no longer sustainable in our current precarious times.⁸ Of course, we need specialists and scholarly publications. However, the field of early modern studies (and Milton studies, especially) desperately needs specialists working in collaboration with colleagues and community partners: more diversity and public engagement; more cross-disciplinary and multimodal work that celebrates great (and greatly difficult) literary texts, *not* primarily through established literary critical methods but through comparative studies and transferrable worldly skills, thereby preparing our students for a variety of careers within and beyond academia.

The poem's interdiction, "know to know no more," teaches us this fundamental lesson of radical contingency that exceeds interpretation, calling us back to our existential grounding in shared experiential learning and collaborative making (*PL*, bk. 4, line 775). For example, we have familiar glosses that echo Genesis 2:16–17 and describe the line as "one of many warnings to abstain from desiring to know too much" and to "be wise enough to seek no more knowledge (i.e., of good and evil)."⁹ Such reductive readings take an apodictic stance: *know // to know no more*. We should remember, and we should help our students understand, that *Paradise Lost* is *not* a strict doctrinal work but a poem that relentlessly amplifies complexities beyond our control (and beyond Milton's as well). As a first step and in addition to the abovementioned glosses, we should simultaneously read this line as *know to know // no more*. That is, we should understand that true wisdom exceeds discursive reasoning (knowing to know) and embraces the intuitive reasoning that Raphael discusses with Adam and Eve in Book 5 (lines 469–505).¹⁰ Furthermore, we should also amplify the embedded dialogue between *apophatic* and *cataphatic* modes of inquiry in Book 4 (line 775) and related passages by hearing the co-presence of *no* within *know* that instantly inflects a redoubled litotes (*know to know*) beyond the negative dialectics of subversion and containment (*know // to know no more*).¹¹ Emily Dickinson once expressed a similarly incisive admonition in a letter to Otis P. Lord: "d'ont you know that 'No' is the wildest word we consign to Language?"¹²

And then, of course, we should read these provocative words in Book 4 (line 775) within and against the contrary and contiguous contexts of their immediate verse paragraph (*PL*, bk. 4, lines 736–775), the whole of Book

4, and other variations upon this key theme throughout *Paradise Lost* (in both the 1667 ten-book and the 1674 twelve-book editions). Indeed, this variable motif of “knowing” appears in so many shapes throughout the poem—each nuanced articulation uniquely placed within charged contexts among characters and settings, plots and counter-plots, figurative expressions and rhetorical discourses, micro-poetic forms (within individual books) and macro-poetic structures (across and between books)—that this so-called interdiction readily invites a proliferation of desires for, questions about, and contrasting perspectives concerning human experience and cosmological wisdom. In all of these ways, “know to know no more” affirms Julia Kristeva’s argument that “there is within poetic language . . . a *heterogeneousness* to meaning and signification.”¹³ Such complexity moves readers and writers to ask profound questions about themselves and their worlds, questions that require critically reflective effort when faced with profoundly generative ambiguities that embrace differences and diversities of all kinds. In this regard, Milton’s poetics and praxis in *Paradise Lost* echo Richard Rorty’s resilient belief in poetry: “To see one’s language, one’s conscience, one’s morality, and one’s highest hopes as contingent products, as literalizations of what once were accidentally produced metaphors, is to adopt a self-identity which suits one for citizenship in . . . an ideally liberal state.”¹⁴



I’ve offered this discussion of a minute particular in *Paradise Lost* in order to exaggerate the crux of my argument: that the epic’s radical contingency was beyond Milton’s control and that that radical contingency exceeds our best efforts to grasp the whole poem and engenders an open work in a rich field of endless variations upon the text’s legacy. For the field of early modern studies (and especially for Milton studies), I would also propose these corollaries: that we should subordinate our expertise as literary critics, scholars, and theorists to the poem’s inherent complexities; amplify those dynamics through renewed attention to the work’s cross-disciplinary and multimodal, multilingual, and transnational histories; and collaborate with colleagues, students, and community partners in open-access celebrations of *Paradise Lost* through the public sharing of transferrable skills. Indeed, the robust legacy of *Paradise Lost*—when encountered as a manuscript via the sole scribal copy in the Morgan Library, as a text via the 1667 and 1674 editions, as a published work via any of the subsequent editions, and as an adaptation via any of the innumerable reconfigurations of the poem in various media throughout the centuries—abundantly shows us that Milton’s great poem has always emerged from collaborative and collective efforts to move

the material in new directions for new audiences.¹⁵ We should encourage our colleagues and students to become co-creators in that shared legacy within, across, and, most important, beyond our fields of expertise.



The field of Milton studies is ready for new energy and new voices, more diversity of all kinds and in all forms. We need more work that represents students and faculty of color, more work that represents the LGBTQ community, more work from women, and more collaborative, transnational comparative work.

I've been teaching Milton's poetry and prose in a wide range of undergraduate and graduate courses since the years of my doctoral training (1993–98) at the University of Washington, Seattle, and I know that I still have much to learn from a field that has been richly elaborating itself since the late seventeenth century.¹⁶ My perspective on Milton's life, works, and legacy has been formatively shaped by that past work, and I'm grateful for all of it. And my scholarly work continues, as Sara van den Berg and I are returning to our collaborative research and writing for the second of our volumes investigating the legacy of Milton's divorce tracts from 1643 to the Divorce Reform Act of 1969 and beyond.¹⁷

As I write these paragraphs, though, I'm struggling to reconcile my abiding care and concern for *Paradise Lost* with acute worries about our world today and our future. One of my recurring questions since at least 2016 has been how we might reconfigure the epic's inherent business of providential nationalism (of colonialism, racism, and sexism) into the work of repair.¹⁸ (I recall Regina Schwartz expressing a similar worry, during one of the Milton Society of America dinners in the late 1990s, that the poem's ideology could be co-opted by fascist agendas. As it happens, that concern was prescient: the Assad regime tried to use a 2011 Arabic translation of *Paradise Lost* as propaganda.)¹⁹ Once upon a time in Charlestown State Prison, Malcolm Little read *Paradise Lost* and perceived Milton and Elijah Muhammad as kindred liberators: as political, religious, and social reformers.²⁰

As I see it, the "Remaines" of a "higher Argument" in *Paradise Lost* are the ideological principles of racial, religious, sexual, and social prejudices that inform the work's teleological and transcendental matters of critique. Milton's poem is "sufficient of it self to raise / That name," lines in which I hear simultaneously the multiplicity of transitive and intransitive meanings for *raise* (*PL*, bk. 9, lines 43–44).²¹ Books 10, 11, and 12 struggle to accommodate and reconfigure those intransigent ideological values

within and against the infinitely complex and richly imbricated, swerving contexts of Books 1 through 9. Every moment of violence in the poem illustrates such tensions between contrary and convoluted worldviews of prelapsarian possibilities, fallen problems, and ongoing struggles for racial equity, individual freedom, and social justice. The poem's radical contingency, which manifests itself through bewildering forms and figures of discontinuity, difference, and diversity throughout all twelve books, challenges and escapes the epic's late Medieval, Renaissance, and early modern ideological frameworks. In this regard, I agree with Catherine Martin that *Paradise Lost* epitomizes as well as explodes "the hieratic remnants of its own fragmentation" because no culture "can end and at the same time be reborn without reference to such monumental conceits or their surrogates, which fundamentally derive from the arrogance of the human mind patiently submitting the universe, both its beginnings and its ends, to its own self-justifying means."²² The poem ultimately releases all of those factors and forces into an increasingly secular world.

The editorial, critical, and scholarly histories of *Paradise Lost* have been dominated by countless endeavors to control the text and to subordinate the poem's radical contingency to the patient work of humanist syncretism and learned arguments for the work's unified and stabilized structure, all of which begins with fantastical notions about Milton's solitary authorial genius, as if the poem were not also shaped by many other hands and voices.²³ That said, and just to be clear, I am *not* recapitulating the vexed hypothesis of Richard Bentley's 1732 edition of *Paradise Lost* that portrays Milton's great poem as the result of a deceptive amanuensis "who rewrote the text of the dictated poem before sending it to the printer."²⁴ Poole's scrupulous research cogently shows us how as well as why Milton's poems and prose works emerged from fluid, asynchronous contexts of collaboration, editing, revision, transcription, and translation punctuated by countless chance variables.

We have thus been trained by specialists to construct arguments for specialists; those elitist methods have overdetermined our priorities to make our work relevant for a "fit audience . . . though few" (*PL*, bk. 7, line 31). In this regard, we find a critical difference between the field of Milton Studies compared with that of Shakespeare Studies.²⁵

When I was a graduate student, the ethos of Milton Studies—an ethos of private inspiration, "A Paradise within," characterized by patient, often painful work in isolation—struck me like lightning (*PL*, bk. 12, line 587). All these years later, I'm still confronting the consequences. How many of my colleagues completed their dissertations? How many were successful in their pursuits of academic jobs?

Those are also the worries today of someone who has served as Director of Graduate Studies in my department. How may we do a better job of being mindful of the communities we build together each quarter/semester? How may we build more inclusive communities that support our students and colleagues in their search for employment within and beyond academia?



How shall we work within, against, and through such a tough text as *Paradise Lost* with such urgent matters at stake? How shall we work with a text that chastens and challenges us so often and so variously, *know to know no more*?

Well, we should begin by returning to key elements that animate the inherent radical contingencies in *Paradise Lost*: materials and methods from Milton's time that make the poem wonderfully available to many hands and voices today, especially for our students who need to learn transferrable twenty-first-century analog and digital skills, such as editing, translation, and publishing; book design, typography, and graphic design; literary adaptation and performance; data visualization, marketing, and public communications—all of which may be deftly energized by old-fashioned scholarly practices dedicated to close studies of early modern difficult texts, especially Milton's. We should return to these elements in *Paradise Lost*, however, *not* in order to reaffirm the work's unchanging transcendent values but in order to enrich dialogue and comparative studies across centuries and fields so that our forms of knowing and making—our poetics and praxis—may shape new forms of action that will engender positive social change.

In the space remaining in this essay, I'll offer a selection of electronic and print resources that I've found to be very useful when teaching *Paradise Lost*, and then I'll close by describing some of the activities and methods that have been successful in my recent courses.

During my years of graduate training, I joined the Milton Society of America, which is a truly remarkable community of dedicated scholars.²⁶ I would also recommend a companion cohort, The John Milton Discussion List.²⁷ And, of course, there's The Milton Reading Room, which is an invaluable resource. Edited and published by Thomas H. Luxon, in collaboration with his colleagues and students, The Milton Reading Room provides open access to reliable, richly annotated hypertexts of Milton's works and accompanying scholarly essays. The field's two leading journals, *Milton Quarterly* and *Milton Studies*, will amplify these paths of study for your students.

Electronic editions of *Paradise Lost* are just as valuable as printed editions, especially when both are engaged side-by-side for comparison. Whichever edition you may choose, help your students understand how and why that text has been assembled and published: which editorial choices were made (and which were not); which text of the poem and which of the paratexts have been included; how the notes have been written to amplify which lines of argument in the field; how and why the introduction and any other accompanying documents have been written; which illustrations have been chosen; which blurbs have been included, and how the overall work has been designed to compete in the marketplace. This sort of critical attention to your edition of *Paradise Lost* is just as important as your close analysis of the text itself because, as Marshall McLuhan would remind us, “the medium is the message,” and this poem in particular has always emerged from dynamically mediated and remediated collaborative processes.²⁸ You might also consider encouraging your students to produce their own editions of one book, or of selected passages; or you could encourage your students to create their own adaptations of *Paradise Lost* in the media of their choice, including reflective statements on how those reconfigurations embody the story in new ways.²⁹



My community, the Department of English and Literary Arts at the University of Denver, values the integration of creative writing and literary studies with cross-disciplinary and multimodal work that connects our faculty and students to a vibrant cohort of artists and makers of all kinds. Our website articulates these priorities: “We believe writers are enriched by great literature in conjunction with philosophy, history, critical and aesthetic theory, anthropology, art history, and the history of science. ... Such a curriculum encourages students to cross genre boundaries in their writing, to relate theory to practice, and to work creatively with scholarly projects.”³⁰ In that spirit, I have shaped many of my courses following the theme of adaptation, emphasizing with *Paradise Lost* the poem’s rich history of book arts illustrations from William Blake (1807–22), John Martin (1823), and Gustave Doré (1866) to Carlotta Petrina (1933), Mary Elizabeth Groom (1937), and Pablo Auladell (2016), among others.³¹ Most recently, I worked with my library faculty colleague, Katherine Crowe, to host an event featuring adaptations of *Paradise Lost* from our fine press and artists’ books collection, including Jan Owen’s *Milton Marginalia* (2016), Maureen Cummins’s *In the minute before / In the Minute After* (2013), and Fred Hagstrom’s *Paradise Lost* (2012).³² For that event, we collaborated

with two local letterpress artists, Jason Wedekind and Jeff Shepherd, from Genghis Kern Letterpress and Design. Their presentation about printing practices during Milton's times and concerning contemporary book arts methods brought new life to *Paradise Lost* for all of us. We invited each of my students to bring one word to class for a collaborative activity. Following Jason's and Jeff's guidance and working with their materials—a desktop poster press, at least five trays of different typefaces, furniture, magnets, spacers, inks, brayers, papers, etc.—we set our words into a letterpress form and pulled broadsides, engendering anew the poem's vital complexities through our shared experience.

Notes

1. Those points of emphasis are in sync with my work during 2018–2020 in collaboration with the Center for Community Engagement (CCESL), <https://www.du.edu/ccesl/>, and the John Madden Center for Innovation in the Liberal and Creative Arts, <https://liberalarts.du.edu/about/strategic-plan/madden-center/current-projects>.

2. Attentive readers will note, in my methodology, the strategic placement of source materials and historical moments before poetic inspiration, composition & etc. Such emphasis echoes the agency, in *Paradise Lost*, of pre-existing cosmic raw materials—“embryon Atoms” (bk. 2, line 900), “dark materials” (*PL*, bk. 2, line 916), and “the vast immeasurable Abyss / Outrageous as a Sea, dark, wasteful, wilde, / Up from the bottom turn'd by furious windes / And surging waves” (*PL*, bk. 7, lines 211–214)—not created by Milton's God, but radically contingent in their vital (if chaotic) co-presence. See Dennis Richard Danielson, ed., *The Book of the Cosmos: Imagining the Universe from Heraclitus to Hawking* (New York: Perseus, 2000); and Stephen M. Fallon, *Milton among the Philosophers: Poetry and Materialism in Seventeenth-Century England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).

3. Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), 56.

4. William Poole, *Milton and the Making of Paradise Lost* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 161. However, I do agree with the rest of Poole's observation that “changes in the motion in one part [of the poem] set in motion changes in the others.”

5. See Murray Roston, *Milton and the Baroque* (New York: Palgrave, 1980). For rich discussions of the variables specific to the six issues of the ten-book first edition, see John T. Shawcross and Michael Lieb, eds., *Paradise Lost: A Poem Written in Ten Books: An Authoritative Text of the 1667 First Edition* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2007), and their accompanying edited collection of essays, *Paradise*

Lost: A Poem Written in Ten Books: Essays on the 1667 First Edition (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2007).

6. “I in my Selfhood am that Satan: I am that Evil one ! / He is my Spectre! in my obedience to loose him from my Hells / To claim the Hells, my Furnaces, I go to Eternal Death.” William Blake, *MILTON: A Poem*, ed. Robert N. Essick and Joseph Viscomi (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), plate 12, lines 30-32.

7. Erin Shields, *Paradise Lost* (Toronto: Playwrights Canada Press, 2018); Danny Snelson, *RADIOS* (Make Now Press, 2016); Pablo Auladell, *Paradise Lost*, trans. Ángel Gurria (London: Jonathan Cape, 2014); Ronald Johnson, *RADI OS* (Chicago: Flood Editions, 2005; Berkeley: Sand Dollar, 1977); John Collier, *Milton's Paradise Lost: Screenplay for Cinema of the Mind* (New York: Knopf, 1973).

8. John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (bk. 4, line 775), The John Milton Reading Room, https://milton.host.dartmouth.edu/reading_room/pl/book_4/text.shtml. All quotations from *Paradise Lost* will correspond with this open-access electronic text from *The John Milton Reading Room: the complete poetry and selected prose of John Milton*, with introductions, research guides, and hyperlinked annotations; Thomas H. Luxon, General Editor © Trustees of Dartmouth College, 1997–2019; henceforth cited parenthetically in the text as *PL*.

9. “And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: / But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” The Holy Bible: King James Version (New York: Meridian, 1974), 10. The John Milton Reading Room, https://milton.host.dartmouth.edu/reading_room/pl/book_4/text.shtml; David Scott Kastan and Merritt Y. Hughes, eds., *Paradise Lost* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2005), 136, note 775; and Merritt Y. Hughes, ed., *John Milton Complete Poems and Major Prose* (New York: The Odyssey Press, 1957), 296, note 775.

10. Alastair Fowler’s note on Book 4 (line 775) offers a kindred yet contrasting view: “either ‘know that it is best not to seek new knowledge (by eating forbidden fruit)’ or ‘know . . . how to limit your experience to the state of innocence.’” Alastair Fowler, ed., *Paradise Lost* (New York: Longman, 1971), 242, note iv, 775. Scott Elledge offers a useful discussion in his edition; see John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Scott Elledge (New York: Norton, 1975), 470. See especially Leonard’s discussions of knowledge in the poem: John Leonard, “Introduction” to John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (New York: Penguin, 2000), xxxi-xxxiv; and “Language and Knowledge in *Paradise Lost*,” *The Cambridge Companion to Milton*, ed. Dennis Danielson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 130–43.

11. Apophatic: “Applied to knowledge of God obtained by way of negation.” Cataphatic: “Defining God positively or by positive statements.” Oxford English Dictionary, <https://www.oed.com/>. See James Dougal Fleming, *Milton's Secrecy and Philosophical Hermeneutics* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008). Whereas “most Milton scholars . . . argue or assume, implicitly or explicitly, that studying [or editing] the poet’s work entails a search for hidden meaning” (4)—hence, the plurality of interpretive methodologies throughout the twentieth century predicated upon esotericism—Fleming aims to correct that bias for secrecy and discovery by returning

to Milton's textuality (ix-x) and the apt placement of his works within a nearly forgotten tradition of early-modern exotericism (6-25).

12. "Letter 562," *Emily Dickinson: Selected Letters*, ed. Thomas H. Johnson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 246. See also W. Scott Howard, *Archive and Artifact: Susan Howe's Factual Telepathy* (Northfield: Talisman House, 2019), 232.

13. Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, ed. Leon S. Roudiez, trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine, and Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 133.

14. Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 61.

15. See "John Milton's *Paradise Lost*," The Morgan Library and Museum, <https://www.themorgan.org/collection/John-Miltons-Paradise-Lost>. "The only surviving manuscript of *Paradise Lost* is this thirty-three-page fair copy [of Book One], written in secretary script by a professional scribe, who probably transcribed patchwork pages of text Milton had dictated to several different amanuenses. This fair copy was corrected by at least five different hands under Milton's personal direction and became the printer's copy, used to set the type for the first edition of the book." We still do not know the identities of these "five different hands." For detailed studies of this manuscript, see Poole, *Milton and the Making of Paradise Lost*; Shawcross and Lieb, eds., "*Paradise Lost: A Poem Written in Ten Books*"; and Helen Darbishire, ed., *The Manuscript of Milton's "Paradise Lost," Book I* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931).

16. See Calvin Huckabay and David V. Urban, *John Milton: An Annotated Bibliography, 1989-1999*, ed. David V. Urban and Paul J. Klemp (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2011); John T. Shawcross, *Milton: A Bibliography for the Years 1624-1700 (Revised) and for the Years 1701-1799* (Toronto: ITER, 2009), <https://www.itergateway.org/resources/milton-bibliography>; Calvin Huckabay, *John Milton: An Annotated Bibliography, 1968-1988*, ed. Paul J. Klemp (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1996); and Calvin Huckabay, *John Milton: An Annotated Bibliography, 1929-1968* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969).

17. Sara J. van den Berg and W. Scott Howard, eds., *The Divorce Tracts of John Milton: Texts and Contexts* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press / University Press of New England, 2010).

18. These concerns are widely shared among scholars in the Milton community as well as by other eminent writers. See, for example, Mary Nyquist, *Arbitrary Rule: Slavery, Tyranny, and the Power of Life and Death* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013); Mary C. Fenton and Louis Schwartz, eds., *To Repair the Ruins: Reading Milton* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2012); Debra Johanyak and Walter S. H. Lim, eds., *The English Renaissance, Orientalism, and the Idea of Asia* (New York: Palgrave, 2009); Mary C. Fenton, *Milton's Places of Hope: Spiritual and Political Connections of Hope with Land* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006); Balachandra Rajan, *Under Western Eyes: India from Milton to Macaulay* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999); and J. Martin Evans, *Milton's Imperial Epic: Paradise Lost and the Discourse of Colonialism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996).

19. Islam Issa, *Milton in the Arab-Muslim World* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 41. Issa observes that Hanna Aboud's 2011 translation of *Paradise Lost* "was funded and published by the [Syrian] government during an uprising against it that has since escalated into an ongoing civil war." In their endorsement of Aboud's translation, the Syrian government asserted that "Milton lived through contexts of personal loss and countrywide tension, and in theory, these similarities suggest that this would be a suitable time for Syrians to read and understand the epic" (41). See also Eid Abdallah Dahiyat, *Once Upon the Orient Wave: Milton and the Arab-Muslim World* (London: Hesperus Press, 2012).

20. "In either volume 43 or 44 of The Harvard Classics, I read Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The devil, kicked out of Paradise, was trying to regain possession. He was using the forces of Europe, personified by the Popes, Charlemagne, Richard the Lionhearted, and other knights. I interpreted this to show that the Europeans were motivated and led by the devil, or the personification of the devil. So Milton and Mr. Elijah Muhammad were actually saying the same thing." Alex Haley and Malcolm X, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (New York: Random House, 1964), 214.

21. Stanley Fish contends "the question of the 'status of his own discourse' is not one [Milton] evades or dodges or misses, but one he raises and raises with all of the rigor to which a deconstructionist might lay claim." Stanley Fish, "Wanting a Supplement," *Politics, Poetics, and Hermeneutics in Milton's Prose*, ed. James Turner and David Loewenstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 44.

22. Catherine Gimelli Martin, *The Ruins of Allegory: Paradise Lost and the Metamorphosis of Epic Convention* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 4, 342.

23. See Poole's discussion of Milton's amanuenses. "Did Milton actually dictate his lines in near-perfect form? We do not know" (*Milton and the Making of Paradise Lost*, 132–33). The sole scribal copy (discussed above in note 15) "was not itself taken down from dictation but copied from a prior written text" (154).

24. Poole, *Milton and the Making of Paradise Lost*, 285.

25. See Nigel Smith, *Is Milton Better Than Shakespeare?* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

26. The Milton Society of America, <https://miltonsociety.commons.gc.cuny.edu/>.

27. Milton-L—John Milton Discussion List, <https://lists.richmond.edu/mailman/listinfo/milton-l>.

28. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Cambridge: MIT, 1964), <http://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/mcluhan.mediummessage.pdf>. "In a culture like ours, long accustomed to splitting and dividing all things as a means of control, it is sometimes a bit of a shock to be reminded that, in operational and practical fact, the medium is the message. This is merely to say that the personal and social consequences of any medium—that is, of any extension of ourselves—result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by each extension of ourselves, or by any new technology" (1).

29. In addition to the selected materials already cited in this essay, I would like to recommend a few more electronic and print resources.

Electronic: *ABO: Interactive Journal for Women in the Arts, 1640–1830*, <https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/abo/>; *Appositions: Studies in Renaissance / Early Modern Literature & Culture*, <http://appositions.blogspot.com/>; *Early Modern Literary Studies*, <https://extra.shu.ac.uk/emls/journal/index.php/emls>; *The Hare: An Online Journal of Untimely Reviews in Early Modern Theater*, <http://thehareonline.com/>; *Journal of the Northern Renaissance*, <http://www.northernrenaissance.org/>.

Print: Heidi Brayman Hackel and Ian Frederick Moulton, eds., *Teaching Early Modern English Literature from the Archives* (New York: MLA, 2015); Sharon Achinstein, *Milton and the Revolutionary Reader* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014); Peggy Keeran and Jennifer Bowers, *Literary Research and the British Eighteenth Century: Strategies and Sources* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2013); Peter Herman, ed., *Approaches to Teaching Milton's Paradise Lost*, 2nd ed. (New York: MLA, 2012); Jennifer Bowers and Peggy Keeran, *Literary Research and the British Renaissance and Early Modern Period: Strategies and Sources* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2010); Nicholas McDowell and Nigel Smith, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Milton* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Laura Lunger Knoppers and Gregory M. Colón Semenza, eds., *Milton in Popular Culture* (New York: Palgrave, 2006); Thomas N. Corns, *A Companion to Milton* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001); and Barbara K. Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).

30. University of Denver, Department of English and Literary Arts, <http://www.du.edu/ahss/english/>.

31. See W. Scott Howard, "Milton and Blake: The Poetics & Praxis of Adaptation," *Romantic Textualities: Literature & Print Culture, 1780–1840, Miltonic Legacies*, ed. Daniel Cook, Tess Somervell, and Brian Bates (Cardiff University, February, 2017), <http://www.romtext.org.uk/teaching-romanticism-xviii-miltonic-legacies/>. See also Wendy Furman-Adams, "The Fate of Place in *Paradise Lost*: Three Artists Reading Milton," *To Repair the Ruins: Reading Milton* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2012), 283–338.

32. Jan Owen, *Milton Marginalia* (Belfast: Jan Owen, 2016); Maureen Cummins, *In the Minute before / In the Minute After* (High Falls: Maureen Cummins, 2013); Fred Hagstrom, *Paradise Lost* (Northfield: Strong Silent Type Press, 2012).