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# MAJOR INTERPRETATIONS OF THE SENSE OF SCIENCE IN PARADISE LOST

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## ABSTRACT

The history of interpretation of Paradise Lost has itself seen only inconsistent and uncertain attention given to the topic of contemporaneous science. If this Galileo's telescope in John Milton's Paradise Lost history has often emphasized Paradise Lost as a great epic work in a predominantly literary tradition; a theologico-political rewriting of Biblical tropes; an encyclopaedic philosophical essay on abiding problems of free-will and history; a post-Republican lament for the Republic; and so on, it has never really taken on the full force of the scientific revolution, nor its impact upon the writing, publication, and reception of the poem.

**Keywords:** Milton and Science, import, content, imagery, syntax, language.

## INTRODUCTION

It is precisely the impact of the scientific revolution on Milton's thought that I wish to point to here. Certainly, there have been a number of concerted attempts to speak of "Milton and Science." The major twentieth-century monographs on this conjunction include those of Kester Svendsen, Lawrence Babb, Harinder Singh Marjara and, most recently, Karen Edwards and Angelica Duran; there are also a number of related studies, including those by such writers as Douglas Bush, Stephen Fallon, John Rogers and Catherine Gimelli Martin, as well as some quite surprising left-field interventions by such people as the great science-fiction writer Isaac Asimov.

## METHODOLOGY

There have also several classic studies that focus on particular elements and images in Paradise Lost, notably Katherine Morse on cosmology, Marjorie Nicolson's work on the telescope or Grant McColley's work on the import of seventeenth-century theories of the plurality of worlds for Milton. However, the

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methodologies, evidence and results of these studies are so heterogeneous that they are difficult, if not impossible to reconcile. Svendsen, in his classic work on the subject, argues that Milton's "science" was in fact already anachronistic in his time, a judgement essentially echoed by Lawrence Babb; Bush, on the other hand, argues that Milton was familiar with, but ambivalent about, the new cosmological theories of Copernicus, Brahe, Kepler and Galileo; Stephen Fallon examines the development of Milton's metaphysical monism as an up-to-the-minute response to countervailing tendencies in the reigning 'mechanical' theories of the time; Harinder Singh Marjara claims that Milton's attitude towards such discoveries was neither mediaeval nor obscurantist; John Rogers has shown how Paradise Lost draws from diverse sources in seventeenth-century vitalist materialism; Karen Edwards has argued for the determining role played by natural history, of a comparable order to that of Thomas Browne and Robert Hooke, in the poem; and Catherine Gimelli Martin demonstrates that Milton's cosmology is informed by Baconian and Galilean themes. Moreover, several of these studies not only attempt to show how modern Milton is in his uptake of science, but how this scientific content is redeployed for specific political and poetic effects within the text of Paradise Lost. Thus Edwards argues that the very modes by which the poem depicts the natural world are calibrated to inspire in its readers a new kind of attentiveness that is continuous with the endeavours of seventeenth-century natural scientists. For Edwards, it is not just that Milton draws on the new content available from the new researches into nature, but that, in doing so, he develops an absolutely novel poetic procedure that attempts to induce, in and by the poetry itself, his readers into thinking differently about science, politics and the world. This "performative" element is therefore crucial to take into account when reading Paradise Lost, for it implicates the content, imagery, syntax, language, aims and ends of the poem.

## RESULTS

In any case, we are confronted by a rattle-bag of opinions regarding Milton's relationship to science. Milton allegedly knew very little of contemporary science and did not care for it, though he worried a lot about its consequences and drew on it for his imagery (Svendsen); he knew a lot about it, and armed much of it, particularly the cosmology (Martin); he drew heavily on the medical vitalist texts of the period and drew political consequences (Rogers); he recognized that science had radically shattered the unity of knowledge and responded ambivalently (Bush); he knew a lot about science and drew happily on it for his poetic ambitions, and nothing more

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(Marjara); he liked the technological innovations and their implications, but only really for poetic inspiration and effects (Nicolson); he knew a lot about the particularities of nature, and, taking on the injunction to encourage people to assume a scientific attitude, tried to use the poem itself as a re-educative goad for the reader (Edwards); he is part of a general enthusiasm for poetic and scientific collaboration, with no real sense of irreconcilable differences (Duran), etc. What emerges, then, from these studies is that none of the authorities can agree on what, exactly, the "science" of Milton is, what use he makes of it, or its significance for understanding the poem. What is lacking in the authorities to date is an adequate theory of discourse able to account for the very radical shifts in the course of the seventeenth-century that stem from the emergence of what is already recognizably "modern science" and, a fortiori, the effects of this emergence on such discourses as poetry and political theory.

## DISCUSSION

To conclude all, we can say the value of Paradise Lost on Cosmos and Individual on context of experimental science can be hardly ever overestimated. It is not just poetry or prose in itself, but an entire world of philosophy, world of brilliant ideas and world of crushed hopes for the future of mankind. It shows usthe widest range of human potential to analyze and feel, the universe of dreams collected in lines of masterpieces that will outlive the centuries.

If one term can be used to describe the forces that have shaped the Milton's world, it is Puritanism. It was a series of movements that had dynamic impacts on art, literature, science, religion, economics, politics, and an individual's understanding of self.This chapter was dedicated to some of the most well-known researchers :Several masterpieces Kester Svendsen, Lawrence Babb, Harinder Singh Marjara and, most recently, Karen Edwards and Angelica Duran ere taken as the basis for the study. As the result of this research certain peculiarities have been found – the texts are enriched with various stylistic devices, commonly used to describe and praise nature, doom, and human's potential for freedom and self-realization. The nature and its elements are largely personified, and play often a meditative role, significant for understanding of reality by the reader. Often we observed the reference to the Bible in terms of impending doom and inevitable punishment for the deeds of the human race. God is praised as that eternal ideal which we must seek for self-development.

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## CONCLUSION

But one should be said for sure – it is a magnificent movement, a philosophy in itself that draws our attention to the grace and power of the nature, strong will in overcoming obstacles, and faith in God as the main way of understanding man's destination, and foremost individual freedom. Jon Milton tried to prove all mentioned thoughts in his great work "Paradise Lost".

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