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978-0-521-10182-0 - Milton's Warring Angels: A Study of Critical Engagements

William Kolbrener

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The centrality of Milton to the study of English literature often obscures the intense debates that rage about his ideological allegiances. The reception and interpretation of Milton's texts consistently present him as either a Christian republican or a committed individualist, a radical, heretical free-thinker, or a traditional absolutist. In *Milton's Warring Angels*, William Kolbrener provides a critical account of the reception and interpretation of Milton's texts. He argues that the governing scheme of Milton criticism, the opposition of "satanic" and "angelic" readings, derives from a historiographical tradition rooted in the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment antithesis between reason and authority, Kolbrener argues, has generated a set of interpretive approaches that inevitably end up violating the meaning of Milton's texts. Kolbrener shows how Milton articulates his thought in lexicons which are never fully assimilable to paradigms of modernity drawn from the Enlightenment. Instead, Milton's prose and poetry mediate between apparently contradictory positions; they join without ever reconciling the satanic and the angelic. By showing how Milton has for centuries resisted tendentious appropriations and reductive readings, Kolbrener explains the continuing critical fascination with this most enigmatic of writers.

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Frontispiece to *Milton's Paradise Lost*, ed. Richard Bentley, D. D.  
(London: Jacob Tonson, 1732)

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# MILTON'S WARRING ANGELS

*A study of critical engagements*

WILLIAM KOLBRENER

*Bar-Ilan University*



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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
 Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi

Cambridge University Press  
 The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)  
 Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521581042](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521581042)

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First published 1997  
 This digitally printed version 2008

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data*

Kolbrener, William.  
 Milton's warring angels: a study of critical engagements /  
 William Kolbrener.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0 521 58104 4 (hardback)

1. Milton, John, 1608–1674 – criticism and interpretation – History.

2. Milton, John, 1608–1674 – Political and social views.

3. Christian poetry, English – History and criticism. 4. Milton,

John, 1608–1674. De Doctrina Christiana. 5. Milton, John,

1608–1674 – Religion. I. Title.

PR3588.K65 1997

821'.4 – dc20

96–23377

CIP

ISBN 978-0-521-58104-2 hardback  
 ISBN 978-0-521-10182-0 paperback

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*For my parents*

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## *Acknowledgments*

I am grateful to the Woodrow Wilson Foundation and the Lady Davis Fellowship Trust for supporting the early stages of the research for this book. Though these institutional debts are great, they are far out-weighted by my debts to colleagues and teachers. Many have responded to parts of this work: I am especially grateful to Vince Blasi, Sanford Budick, Kathy Eden, Margaret Ferguson, Harold Fisch, Jean Howard, Murray Roston, James Shapiro, Maria DeSantis, Victoria Silver, Dan Vitkus, John Whitman, Joseph Wittreich, and Richard Wohlman. I must also thank Francine Horowitz who helped me overcome many of the challenges of doing research in Israel.

Janel Mueller trusted my “newer voice” and included my paper on *Areopagitica* for a General Session on Milton at the MLA Convention in 1990; this book largely grew out of that initial scholarly engagement. David Norbrook helped me – also in the early stages – to conceive the general contours of this study; he was also indispensable in sharpening the arguments of chapter 1. Marshall Grossman and J. G. A. Pocock provided much needed criticism of chapter 6; while Paula Loscocco’s insights enabled me to refine the arguments of chapter 7. I must also express my gratitude to Stanley Fish who has remained a generous teacher and colleague, even when I have engaged critically with his work.

There are three scholars, however, to whom I owe a special debt of gratitude: Edward Taylor taught me – among *many* other things – the virtues of *reading*, while Jeffrey Perl continues to provide a model of scholarly discipline and integrity which I can only hope to emulate. David Scott Kastan (a Miltonist if ever there was one) continually astounds me with both his generosity and his learning; without his encouragement and guidance, this book simply would not have been written.

Finally, to my wife Leslie, *eishes chayil*, and to my parents – to whom



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*Acknowledgments*

this book is dedicated – the extent of my debts can hardly be expressed, never fully requited.

An earlier version of chapter 2, “‘Plainly Partial’: The Liberal *Areopagitica*” appeared in *English Literary History* (1993), and is reprinted with permission of the Johns Hopkins University Press; chapter 6 includes material from a *Common Knowledge* article, “‘In a Narrow and to Him a Dark Chamber’: Milton Unabridged” (1996). The frontispiece, from Richard Bentley’s 1732 edition of *Paradise Lost* (London: Jacob Tonson), is reproduced from the General Collections of the Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Columbia University.