

Blair Hoxby, *Mammon's Music: Literature and Economics in the Age of Milton* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002) pp. xii, 320, \$45, ISBN 0-300-09378-0.

Through a finely nuanced reading of Milton's works and of select works across the political spectrum, Hoxby attempts to show the depth to which mid-century thinkers were engaged with the evolving economy and economic thought. His re-readings certainly bring out a more ambivalent and therefore less simplistic reaction to the "commercial revolution" in Milton than has been the norm; Hoxby's is a Milton as aware of the dangers of "unreflecting habits of thrift" as of luxury and one keenly attuned to the connection between Protestantism and the age's new behaviors, thus anticipating Weber (p. 238) by centuries. Hoxby's claim that Milton was a more astute "political economist" (p. 77) than usually assumed is not without merit, and is not unsupported by the evidence presented, but that does not make Milton quite as "coherent and creative" (p. 78) as Hoxby enthusiastically judges him to be, largely on the basis of the federal scheme in Milton's *Readie and Easie Way*. Splitting up governmental powers does not prevent local governments from making the same policy mistakes as might national ones; it simply shifts the burden of policy making from one organ to another.

As has become increasingly common, Hoxby pays particular attention to what were once the neglected stepchildren of literary studies, the court masques and coronation festivities in which everything was a stage set meant to reinforce the ideology of the era. This is a fruitful endeavor. However, since we are asked to rethink our opinions of Milton's economic views, Hoxby might have made a stronger case if he had paid more attention to the era's economic thought (and the body of secondary sources dealing with it), as well as to the historic traditions out of which some of Milton's own imagery arose. For example, Milton's *Maske Presented at Ludlow Castle* (1634) is set against the famous debates between Malynes, Misselden, and Mun during the trade recession of the 1620s (p. 20). Later Hoxby prefaces a discussion of "Royalist Topography and the Epic of Trade" with the remark that "trades natural resistance to modes of representation like narrative . . . encouraged poets writing about commerce to think in terms of charts, maps, and panoramas" (p. 128). Hoxby seems unaware that economic writers, Malynes and Misselden in particular, had preceded his poets in this regard with their "circles" (latitudes) of trade. Hoxby's book has no bibliography, so the reader is left to ferret out his sources from his notes, an investigation that shows far more attention paid to primary and secondary sources in his own field than in that of the economic literature against which Milton's innovations need equally to be set.

There is less of Josiah Child, William Petty, and John Locke (whose original essay was written in the period in question, as Letwin, whom Hoxby did read, would have informed him) than one might have hoped for, and Hoxby barely scratches the surface of the range of interpretations of—and the depth of interpretive disagreement over—this material (p. 255). This can cause Hoxby to understate Milton's innovations as often as it leads him to overestimate them. Hoxby moves quickly from the era's debate over monopolies to calls for freedom for the "true" religion to Milton's vision of a "free market" in ideas in *Areopagitica* (pp. 27–34). Hoxby seems unaware, however, of how little the early debates over monopolies were actually

about a truly free market and of the extent to which calls during in the 1630s and '40s for freedom for the true religion were not calls for freedom for error, downplaying Milton's innovation. A simple perusal of the debates between Robert Ashton and Theodore Rabb in the 1960s might have led Hoxby to a more nuanced presentation. Since Hoxby does not share the fashionable disdain for any secondary source more than ten years old, one only wishes he had dug a little deeper into the older works. His references to the profitability of learning (p. 49) would have benefited from a closer examination of the ubiquity of the phrase in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century primary sources. I am also not quite certain of the benefit of comparing Milton with Hume (who is not in the index) as Hoxby does (pp. 88–89), for whatever light this might shed on the sources of Hume's thought, it cannot shed any on the sources of Milton's. Furthermore, some of Hoxby's economic pronouncements are disingenuous at best. To say that "distribution will be the sole important factor in an economy only if growth is not an important consideration (p. 23)" is to minimize the continuing concern with economic justice in dynamic as well as in static economies, and more to the point, to ignore the extent to which it was as vital a concern to seventeenth- and eighteenth-century writers who accepted economic growth as to those who did not.

This is not to say that Hoxby has written a useless book, only a flawed one that might have been stronger if he had stepped farther away from his narrow focus.

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J. E. King (Ed.) *The Elgar Companion to Post Keynesian Economics* (Northampton, MA, USA. and Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2003), pp. xiii, 405, \$169, ISBN 1-84064-630-6.¹

John King's edited volume surveys a number of issues judged to be at the heart of Post Keynesian economics, broadly defined. In the introduction, John King explains the motivation and structure of the volume and also refers to a useful range of introductory reviews of Post Keynesian economics. The focus is on macroeconomic concepts,

¹With thanks to Philip Arestis and Geoff Harcourt for commenting on an early version of this review.