



# Notes to Literature

Weekly  
reading  
booklet

#9 : John  
Milton's  
*Paradise Lost*  
(1667/74)

NL

NOTES TO LITERATURE

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Low, Anthony. *Reinvention of Love*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*, edited by Alastair Fowler. *Paradise Lost*. Rev. 2nd ed. Harlow, England ; New York: Longman, 2007.

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# John Milton

## From *Paradise Lost* (1667/1674), Book 1

**I**s this the Region, this the Soil, the Clime,  
Said then the lost Arch-Angel, this the seat  
That we must change for Heav'n, this mournful gloom  
For that celestial light? Be it so, since he  
Who now is Sovran can dispose and bid  
What shall be right: fardest from him is best  
Whom reason hath equald, force hath made supream  
Above his equals. Farewel happy Fields  
Where Joy for ever dwells: Hail horrors, hail  
Infernal world, and thou profoundest Hell  
Receive thy new Possessor: One who brings  
A mind not to be chang'd by Place or Time.  
The mind is its own place, and in it self  
Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n.  
What matter where, if I be still the same,  
And what I should be, all but less then° he  
Whom Thunder hath made greater? Here at least  
We shall be free; th' Almighty hath not built  
Here for his envy, will not drive us hence:  
Here we may reign secure, and in my choyce  
To reign is worth ambition though in Hell:  
Better to reign in Hell, then serve in Heav'n.  
But wherefore let we then our faithful friends,

Th' associates and copartners of our loss  
 Lye thus astonisht<sup>o</sup> on th' oblivious Pool,  
 And call them not to share with us their part  
 In this unhappy Mansion, or once more  
 With rallied Arms to try what may be yet  
 Regaind in Heav'n, or what more lost in Hell?  
 So *Satan* spake, and him *Beelzebub*  
 Thus answer'd.

## From *Paradise Lost*, Book VII

**G**reat things, and full of wonder in our ears,  
 Far differing from this World, thou hast revealed,  
 Divine Interpreter! by favour sent  
 Down from the Empyrean to forewarn  
 Us timely of what might else have been our loss,  
 Unknown, which human knowledge could not reach;  
 For which to the infinitely Good we owe  
 Immortal thanks, and his admonishment  
 Receive with solemn purpose to observe  
 Immutably his sovran will, the end  
 Of what we are. But, since thou hast voutsafed 80  
 Gently, for our instruction, to impart  
 Things above Earthly thought, which yet concerned  
 Our knowing, as to highest Wisdom seemed,  
 Deign to descend now lower, and relate  
 What may no less perhaps avail us known—  
 How first began this Heaven which we behold  
 Distant so high, with moving fires adorned  
 Innumerable; and this which yields or fills  
 All space, the ambient Air, wide interfused,  
 Imbracing round this florid Earth; what cause 90  
 Moved the Creator, in his holy rest

Through all eternity, so late to build  
 In Chaos; and, the work begun, how soon  
 Absolved: if unforbid thou may'st unfold  
 What we, not to explore the secrets ask  
 Of his eternal empire, but the more  
 To magnify his works, the more we know.  
 And the great Light of Day yet wants to run  
 Much of his race, though steep. Suspense in heaven  
 Held by thy voice, thy potent voice he hears, 100  
 And longer will delay, to hear thee tell  
 His generation, and the rising birth  
 Of Nature from the unapparent Deep:  
 Or, if the Star of Evening and the Moon  
 Hasten to thy audience, Night with her will bring  
 Silence, and Sleep listening to thee will watch;  
 Or we can bid his absence till thy song  
 End, and dismiss thee ere the morning shine.”

Thus Adam his illustrious guest besought;  
 And thus the godlike Angel answered mild:— 110

“This also thy request, with caution asked,  
 Obtain; though to recount Almighty works  
 What words or tongue of Seraph can suffice,  
 Or heart of man suffice to comprehend?  
 Yet what thou canst attain, which best may serve  
 To glorify the Maker, and infer  
 Thee also happier, shall not be withheld  
 Thy hearing. Such commission from above  
 I have received, to answer thy desire  
 Of knowledge within bounds; beyond abstain  
 To ask, nor let thine own inventions hope  
 Things not revealed, which the invisible King,  
 Only Omniscient, hath suppressed in night,  
 To none communicable in Earth or Heaven,  
 Enough is left besides to search and know;  
 But Knowledge is as food, and needs no less

Her temperance over appetite, to know  
 In measure what the mind may well contain;  
 Oppresses else with surfeit, and soon turns  
 Wisdom to folly, as nourishment to wind.

“Know then that, after Lucifer from Heaven  
 (So call him, brighter once amidst the host  
 Of Angels then that star the stars among)  
 Fell with his flaming Legions through the Deep  
 Into his place, and the great Son returned  
 Victorious with his Saints, the Omnipotent  
 Eternal Father from his Throne beheld  
 Their multitude, and to his Son thus spake:—

“At least our envious foe hath failed, who thought  
 All like himself rebellious; by whose aid  
 This inaccessible high strength, the seat  
 Of Deity supreme, us dispossess'd,  
 He trusted to have seiz'd, and into fraud  
 Drew many, whom their place knows here no more:  
 Yet far the greater part have kept, I see,  
 Their station; Heaven, yet populous, retains  
 Number sufficient to possess her realms  
 Though wide, and this high temple to frequent  
 With ministeries due; and solemn rites :  
 But, lest his heart exalt him in the harm  
 Already done, to have dispeopled Heaven,  
 My damage fondly deem'd, I can repair  
 That detriment, if such it be to lose  
 Self-lost; and in a moment will create  
 Another world, out of one man a race  
 Of men innumerable, there to dwell,  
 Not here: till, by degrees of merit rais'd,  
 They open to themselves at length the way  
 Up hither, under long obedience tried;  
 And Earth be chang'd to Heaven, and Heaven to Earth,  
 One kingdom, joy and union without end.



Meanwhile inhabit lax, ye Powers of Heaven;  
 And thou my Word, begotten Son, by thee  
 This I perform; speak thou, and be it done!  
 My overshadowing Spirit and Might with thee  
 I send along; ride forth, and bid the Deep  
 Within appointed bounds be Heaven and Earth ;  
 Boundless the Deep, because I Am who fill  
 Infinitude, nor vacuous the space.  
 Though I, uncircumscrib'd myself, retire,  
 And put not forth my goodness, which is free  
 To act or not, Necessity and Chance  
 Approach not me, and what I will is Fate.

So spake the Almighty, and to what he spake  
 His Word, the Filial Godhead, gave effect.  
 Immediate are the acts of God, more swift  
 Than time or motion, but to human ears  
 Cannot without process of speech be told,  
 So told as earthly notion can receive.  
 Great triumph and rejoicing was in Heaven,  
 When such was heard declar'd the Almighty's will;  
 Glory they sung to the Most High, good will  
 To future men, and in their dwellings peace;  
 Glory to Him, whose just avenging ire  
 Had driven out the ungodly from his sight  
 And the habitations of the just; to Him  
 Glory and praise, whose wisdom had ordain'd  
 Good out of evil to create; instead  
 Of Spirits malign, a better race to bring  
 Into their vacant room, and thence diffuse  
 His good to worlds and ages infinite.

...

...Heaven open'd wide  
 Her ever-during gates, harmonious sound,  
 On golden hinges moving, to let forth  
 The King of Glory, in his powerful Word

And Spirit, coming to create new worlds.  
 On heavenly ground they stood; and from the shore  
 They view'd the vast immeasurable abyss  
 Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild,  
 Up from the bottom turn'd by furious winds  
 And surging waves, as mountains, to assault  
 Heaven's highth, and with the centre mix the pole.

Silence, ye troubled Waves, and thou Deep, peace,  
 Said then the Omnific Word; your discord end !  
 Nor stayed; but, on the wings of Cherubim  
 Uplifted, in paternal glory rode  
 Far into Chaos, and the world unborn;  
 For Chaos heard his voice: Him all his train  
 Follow'd in bright procession, to behold  
 Creation, and the wonders of his might.  
 Then stayed the fervid wheels, and in his hand  
 He took the golden compasses, prepar'd

In God's eternal store, to circumscribe  
 This universe, and all created things:  
 One foot he center'd, and the other turn'd  
 Round through the vast profundity obscure;  
 And said, Thus far extend, thus far thy bounds,  
 This be thy just circumference, O World !  
 Thus God the Heaven created, thus the Earth,  
 Matter unform'd and void: Darkness profound  
 Cover'd the abyss: but on the watery calm  
 His brooding wings the Spirit of God outspread,  
 And vital virtue infus'd, and vital warmth  
 Throughout the fluid mass; but downward purg'd  
 The black tartareous cold infernal dregs,  
 Adverse to life: then founded, then conglob'd  
 Like things to like; the rest to several place  
 Disparted, and between spun out the air;  
 And Earth self-balanc'd on her centre hung.

Let there be Light, said God; and forthwith Light  
Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure,  
Sprung from the deep; and from her native east  
To journey through the aery gloom began,  
Spher'd in a radiant cloud, for yet the sun  
Was not; she in a cloudy tabernacle  
Sojourn'd the while. God saw the light was good;  
And light from darkness by the hemisphere  
Divided: light the Day, and darkness Night,  
He nam'd. Thus was the first day even and morn :  
Nor past uncelebrated, nor unsung  
By the celestial quires, when orient light  
Exhaling first from darkness they beheld;  
    Birth-day of Heaven and Earth; with joy and shout  
The hollow universal orb they fillid,  
And touch'd their golden harps, and hymning prais'd  
God and his works; Creator him they sung,  
Both when first evening was, and when first morn.

## From Anthony Low, "John Milton: 'Because wee freely love'" in *The Reinvention of Love: Poetry, Politics and Culture from Sidney to Milton* (1993)

Throughout much of the modern period, from the late nineteenth century until past the middle of the twentieth century, Milton suffered a series of attacks from famous critics and was generally out of favor. The story is familiar. Yet, even though we may have grown tired of hearing it, it still has a lesson to teach us. Although the attack was on multiple grounds, both substantive and stylistic, one may conclude that religion and politics had much to do with stimulating it. When Sir Walter Raleigh proclaimed that *Paradise Lost* was a monument to dead ideas, he meant that there could be no serious place for Christianity in the modern world. When Ezra Pound assailed Milton mainly on stylistic grounds, he revealed similar motives at the point where he excoriated him for "his asinine bigotry, his beastly hebraism." Milton was not a Jew, but for many critics, of whom Pound was only among the frankest, his particular brand of Christianity was imbued with a disturbing zeal, which they associated with Matthew Arnold's category of "Hebraism," and which they found less attractive than Arnold's more rational and balanced category of "Hellenism."

T. S. Eliot had very complicated reasons for attacking Milton, among them a desire to clear the ground for a new kind of modern poetry, but surely another important reason was his lack of sympathy for Milton's particular brand of revolutionary politics and enthusiastically non-conformist religion. These characteristics were, in part, what made the fiercely religious Dante, but not Milton, acceptable to Eliot as a true "classic." (I am inclined to concur, too, with those who find Eliot's second essay on Milton not much of a retraction.) In the same way, one may make a case that although F. R. Leavis attacked Milton chiefly on grounds of style, Milton's particular brand of morality was also incompatible with what Leavis thought to be moral – and Leavis's version of political morality was an important determinant in all of his influential decisions about which works should remain in the "great tradition" and the

"line of wit" and which should be ousted. Similarly, although A.J. A. Waldock attacked Milton for incompetence in his handling of narrative, it turns out that this incompetence results from Milton's having in the first place foolishly chosen a biblical myth, which was bound to fail as the groundwork for an epic. And the anti-Christian bias of William Empson was so forthright as almost to neutralize itself: "I think the traditional God of Christianity very wicked, and have done since I was at school, where nearly all my little playmates thought the same."

Even among the writings of some of Milton's foremost defenders, one finds evidence of a strong distaste for Milton's "bigotry," as the plain-speaking if bigoted Pound termed it. Tillyard, who is generally sympathetic to Milton's Protestant and democratic tendencies, nonetheless expresses the feelings of many fellow critics when he admits there has "always been a vein of ferocity in Milton." In most of Milton's poetry, Tillyard argues, this ferocity is mitigated by his better qualities, but it shows, to the embarrassing full, in the "ironical gloating" and "tedious butcheries" that typify *Samson Agonistes*.

As we know, Leavis announced to the world in 1933 that Milton had been dislodged from his preeminent position "with remarkably little fuss." As we also know, that "dislodgment" did not stick. Indeed, in one of time's curious reversals, some of the very qualities that made Milton such an object of suspicion among the Modernists eventually endeared him to some of the Postmodernists. Milton's first defenders against the concerted Modernist attack were relative moderates, exemplified by C. S. Lewis and Douglas Bush, not to mention Northrop Frye and Christopher Ricks. But more recently Milton has been admired as a violent revolutionary, as a philosopher of contradictions, and as a purveyor of demolitions – in short, as a kind of political Samson. Marvell's initial suspicions, that in *Paradise Lost* Milton might intend a work of destruction, have been proclaimed correct after all. As Marvell tells us, he feared that the bold, blind poet

would ruine (for I saw him strong)  
The sacred Truths to Fable and old Song,  
(So Sampson groap'd the Temples Posts in spight)  
The World o'rewelming to revenge his Sight.

What Marvell once feared, however, is now frequently welcomed. For some time Milton has been seen as much more congenial to modern times than Donne, who seemed so "modern" just a generation ago. Milton is now acclaimed as the great forerunner of our times, as a destroyer of custom and tradition, as a revolutionary who would willingly pull down the whole of society out of fervor to replace it with something better. His violence is sometimes still deprecated – yet at the same time admired, as a source of poetic energies and a necessary, if brutal, stage in the evolution of humanity.

One cannot write usefully about Milton and love without first reconsidering his work in the light of all those many charges of bigotry and violence that were raised against him by earlier generations of critics, or without also reconsidering it in the light of the (sometimes ambivalent) praise more recently accorded him for his masterful exposition of revolutionary political, cultural, and religious violence. Is love compatible with hate? Is Milton's ever truly a poetry of love? In contemporary eyes, religious love - or zeal - is likely at first glance to seem either anachronistic or dangerous. It may seem dangerous, in particular, if it is "fundamentalist" (a liberal code-word for any religion that threatens to overleap its bounds and tell you and me what we would rather not hear). Deeply influenced by western democratic liberalism and by post-Romantic individualism, we are especially suspicious of religious conformity. We value our freedom, and we suspect that religious conformity may somehow encroach on it. But we may be less aware of certain other dangers, which are sometimes to be found in religion that does not conform. These are dangers especially relevant to Milton.

In *Paradise Lost*, Raphael restates an ancient formula when he describes the religious love of the angels:

freely we serve,  
Because wee freely love, as in our will  
To love or not; in this we stand or fall. (5-538-40)

This view of love as free service, which is recapitulated in the familiar collect of the Book of Common Prayer, in the assertion that the service of God is "perfect freedom," goes back at least to St. Augustine's formulation in the *Enchiridion*: "For only he is free in service who gladly does the will of his Lord."

In the old Christian view, absolute freedom is impossible to a contingent being. In the modern, pragmatic view, it might also seem impossible, since the demands of each free individual compete against those of every other free individual, as well as against those of the family and the public interest. In Milton, however, the balance of freedom and service, which he sees as underlying the love of God, is unconstrained by the normative influence of Church or community, or by more than a notional solidarity with others.

For this reason, a good place to begin analyzing divine love in Milton is with his handling of the biblical marriage trope, which we also found useful earlier in helping us to understand the human flavor and the particular qualities of the loves that Donne, Herbert, and Crashaw felt toward their God. These were the loves that reflected their ultimate allegiances and that reordered their priorities, both public and private. Religious love – or its replacement by some other kind of paramount love, from the altruistically political to the selfishly material – is fundamental. Tell me what you love above all other things, and I will tell you what you are.

Donne and Herbert, like others belonging to the Anglican confession, accepted the biblical image of the Church as the Bride of Christ. Although both might sometimes wonder where that true Bride could be found, amid the corruptions of the world and the violent disputes of Christian Churches and sectaries, neither doubted that such a true Church existed, in spite of all her superficial divisions and blemishes. With Milton it was quite another matter. Most of his voluminous writings about the Church are concerned with matters of church governance, as suggested by the title of his early tract, *The Reason of Church-Government* (1642). In practice Milton viewed the institutional Church as having been, throughout most of its history, a sink of wicked superstition and an impediment to the enlightenment of individual souls by God's spirit of truth and prophecy. From about 1638 onward, in his eyes the Anglican Church was no better than the Roman Catholic Church - only more "privy" in its depredations. His is the extreme version of the view of history first adumbrated by Wyclif, who identified the Church of his day with Antichrist and called for its destruction in order to recover the holiness of a long-lost primitive Church. Martin Luther gave Wyclif's view irresistible new energy and set it loose to sweep through the western world and through the thinking of all who lived under the Christian dispensation. The Church of a thousand years was the

Whore of Babylon. The true Church had not been seen among men since the days of Christ and the Apostles.

## From T.S. Eliot, "*Milton I*" first published 1936; *Combined essays* published 1968.

The most important fact about Milton, for my purpose is his blindness. I do not mean that to go blind in middle life is itself enough to determine the whole nature of a man's poetry. Blindness must be considered in conjunction with Milton's personality and character, and the peculiar education which he received. It must also be considered in connection with his devotion to, and expertness in the art of music. Had Milton been a man of very keen senses - I mean of all the five senses - his blindness would not have mattered so much. But for a man whose sensuousness, such as it was, had been withered early by book-learning, and whose gifts were naturally aural, it mattered a great deal. It would seem, indeed, to have helped him to concentrate on what he could do best.

At no period is the visual imagination conspicuous in Milton's poetry. It would be as well to have a few illustrations of what I mean by visual imagination.

From *Macbeth*:

This guest of summer,  
The temple-haunting martlet, does approve  
By his loved mansionary that the heaven's breath  
Smells wooingly here: no jutting, frieze,  
Buttress, nor coign of vantage, but this bird  
Hath made his pendent bed and procreant cradle:  
Where they most breed and haunt, I have observed  
The air is delicate.



It may be observed that such an image, as well as another familiar quotation from a little later in the same play,

Light thickens, and the crow  
 Makes wing to the rooky wood.

not only offer something to the eye, but, so to speak, to the common sense. I mean that they convey the feeling of being in a particular place at a particular time. The comparison with Shakespeare offers another indication of the peculiarity of Milton. With Shakespeare, far more than with any other poet in English, the combinations of words offer perpetual novelty; they enlarge the meaning of the individual words joined: thus 'procreant cradle', 'rooky wood'. In comparison, Milton's images do not give this sense of particularity, nor are the separate words developed in significance. His Language is, if one may use the term without disparagement, artificial and conventional.

O'er the smooth enamel'd green . . .  
 ... paths Of this drear wood  
 The nodding horror of whose shady brews  
 Threats the forlorn and wandering passenger.

('Shady brow' here is a diminution of the value of the two words from their use in the line from *Dr. Faustus*: "Shadowing more beauty in their airy brews.")

The imagery in *L'Allegro* and *II Penseroso* is all general:

While the ploughman near at hand,  
 Whistles o'er the furrowed land,  
 And the milkmaid singeth blithe,  
 And the mower whets his scythe,  
 And every shepherd tells his tale  
 Under the hawthorn in the dale.

It is not a particular ploughman, milkmaid, and shepherd that Milton sees (as Wordsworth might see them); the sensuous effect of these verses is entirely

on the ear, and is joined to the concepts of Ploughman milkmaid, and shepherd. Even in his most mature work, Milton does not infuse new life into the word, as Shakespeare does.

The sun to me is dark  
And silent as the moon,  
When she deserts the night  
Hid in her vacant interlunar cave.

[14]

Here interlunar is certainly a stroke of genius, but is merely combined with 'vacant' and 'cave', rather than giving and receiving life from them. Thus it is not so unfair, as it might at first appear, to say that Milton writes English like a dead language. The criticism has been made with regard to his involved syntax. But a tortuous style, when its peculiarity is aimed at pretension (as with Henry James), is not necessarily a dead one; only when the complication is dictated by a demand of verbal music, instead of by any demand of sense.

Thrones, dominations, principedoms, virtues powers,  
If these magnificent titles yet remain  
Not merely titular,  
Another now hath to himself engrossed  
All power, and us eclipsed under the name  
Of King anointed, for whom all this haste  
Of midnight march, and hurried meeting here,  
This only to consult how we may best  
With what may be devised of honours new  
Receive him coming to receive from us  
Knee-tribute yet unpaid, prostration low  
Too much to one, but double how endured  
To one and to his image now proclaimed

With which compare:

'However, he didn't mind thinking that if Cissy should prove all that was likely enough their having a subject in common couldn't but

practically conduce; though the moral of it all amounted rather to a portent, the one that Haughty, by the same token, had done least to reassure him against, of the extent to which the native jungle harboured the female specimen and to which its ostensible cover, the vast level of mixed growths stirring wavingly in whatever breeze, was apt to be identifiable but as an agitation of the latest redundant thing in ladies hats.

taken almost at random from *The Ivory Tower*, is not intended to represent Henry James at any hypothetical 'best', any more than the noble passage from *Paradise Lost* is meant to be Milton's hypothetical worst. The question is the difference of intention, in the elaboration or styles both of which depart so far from lucid simplicity.

The sound, of course, is never irrelevant, and the style of James certainly depends for its effect a good deal on the sound of a voice, James's own, painfully explaining. But the complication, with James, is due to a determination not to simplify and in that simplification lose any of the real intricacies and by-paths of mental movement; whereas the complication of Miltonic sentence is an active complication, a complication deliberately introduced into what was a previously simplified and abstract thought. The dark angel here is not thinking or conversing, but making a speech carefully prepared for him; and the arrangement is for the sake of musical value not for significance. A straight-forward utterance, as of a Homeric or Dantesque character, would make the speaker very much more real to us; but reality is no part of the intention.

We have in fact to read such a passage not analytically, to get the poetic impression. I am not suggesting that Milton has no idea to convey which he regards as important: only that the syntax is determined by the musical significance, by the auditory imagination, rather than by the attempt to follow actual speech or thought. It is at least more nearly possible to distinguish the pleasure which arises from the noise, from the pleasure due to other elements, than with the verse of Shakespeare, in which the auditory imagination and the imagination of the other senses are more nearly fused, and fused together with the thought. The result with Milton is, in one sense of the word, rhetoric. That term is not intended to be derogatory. This kind of 'rhetoric' is not necessarily

bad in its influence; but it may be considered bad in relation to the historical life of a language as a whole. I have said elsewhere that the living English which was Shakespeare's became split up into two components one of which was exploited by Milton and the other by Dryden.

# Further Reading Suggestions

Recommended Secondary Literature:

- \* Forsyth, N. *The Satanic Epic* (2003)
- \* Lewalkski, B. *Paradise Lost and the Rhetoric of Literary Forms* (1985)
- \* Norbrook, D. *Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics, 1627-1660* (1999)
- \* Quint, D. *Inside Paradise Lost: Reading the Designs of Milton's Epic* (2014)

You can find a full list of suggestions for further reading and secondary literature on all of the primary texts in these booklets on the website:

**<https://www.notestoliterature.com/twelve-books-to-have>**

# *About Notes to Literature*

Notes is an e-learning project that offers personalised higher-education tuition in European literature, history and philosophy. At its core are 12 short courses on modern and classical authors, including (among others) Homer, Sophocles, Plato, Dante, Shakespeare, Karl Marx, and James Joyce. The courses can be taken on a one-to-one or a small group basis, and starting dates are flexible. Just sign up for modules of interest on the website. Notes was set up with the specific idea of creating a short series of courses that would provide adult and young adult learners with a foundational, integrated and critical study of the history of Western thought and literature. This idea reflects our belief that creative and critical response to this tradition has an important role to play in understanding our current selves and predicaments, as well as in imagining and fashioning our possible futures.

If you would like more information about Notes to Literature, please do get in touch with me at [jonathan@notestoliterature.com](mailto:jonathan@notestoliterature.com) or visit the website: [notestoliterature.com](http://notestoliterature.com).

If you are a school, or a company, and would like to inquire about arranging courses for your students or employees, please reach out. I can provide further details on the different kinds of approaches and services I offer depending on the particular learning contexts.

If you would like to pursue further independent reading on any of the authors in the booklet, or if you are setting up a reading group, I'm always happy to send on reading lists and guided reading questions that might be helpful for your discussions.

And of course, if you are interested in taking a course with Notes, I'd be delighted to hear from you. I offer free no-obligation meetings to discuss your goals, talk about some aspects of my approach, and think about how the courses could be tailored for you.

Happy reading.



## *About Me : Jonathan Gallagher*

I received my doctorate in 2019 from the University of Edinburgh, where I taught several undergraduate courses, ranging from medieval and early modern literature, to Romantic, Modernist and Late-Modernist poetry and drama. My doctoral research examined the relationship between processes of state-formation in early modern England and the spectacular flourishing of religious poetry witnessed during the same period. This work has been published by leading academic journals in my field, and tries to show that religious poetry was vitally and critically responsive to broad changes in social relations and practices of rule in 17C England.

In my teaching, as in my research, I'm drawn to examining intellectual history and literary art in the context of given social and political conditions. With that in mind, in 2022, I founded Notes to Literature. My hope is that Notes will grow into a distinguished provider of personalised adult education in the humanities. The plan is to go about this one client at a time.

You can learn more about Notes and me here: <https://www.notestoliterature.com/my-work>

<https://edinburgh.academia.edu/JonathanGallagher>