

*Graeco-Roman Antityrannicism
in Milton and Hobbes*

Mary Nyquist
University of Toronto



Could Milton's decision to use biblical rather than Arthurian materials for his national epic have been politically motivated? Can *Paradise Lost* be read as a response to the charge that he and other proponents of popular sovereignty rely on pagan, Graeco-Roman authors? Professor Nyquist will explore these possibilities by arguing that in its representation of the angelic Fall, *Paradise Lost* performs a complex, multiply ironized defense of Graeco-Roman antityrannicism. This will involve analyzing, first, *Leviathan's* stunningly polemical interpretation of Graeco-Roman liberty and Asiatic monarchy as it relates to earlier defenses of absolutism; second, the continuing dominance of Romantic and neo-Romantic readings of *Paradise Lost* in critical literature; and, third, *Paradise Lost's* use of Graeco-Roman critiques of ritual obeisance in representing the rebel angels as prehistorical "barbarians" in Books 5, 6, 1, and 2. Milton, this paper will suggest, continues to synthesize classical and scriptural traditions in *Paradise Lost*, which challenges specific tenets of absolutism, including Hobbes's position on ritual obeisance.

Coffee and refreshments will be served before the seminar.

This program is free and open to the public, but space is limited and **registration in advance is required.**

Register online by 10 am Friday, November 20, at:

www.newberry.org/renaissance

Organized by Stephen Fallon, University of Notre Dame; Christopher Kendrick, Loyola University Chicago; Paula McQuade, DePaul University; and Regina Schwartz, Northwestern University.