



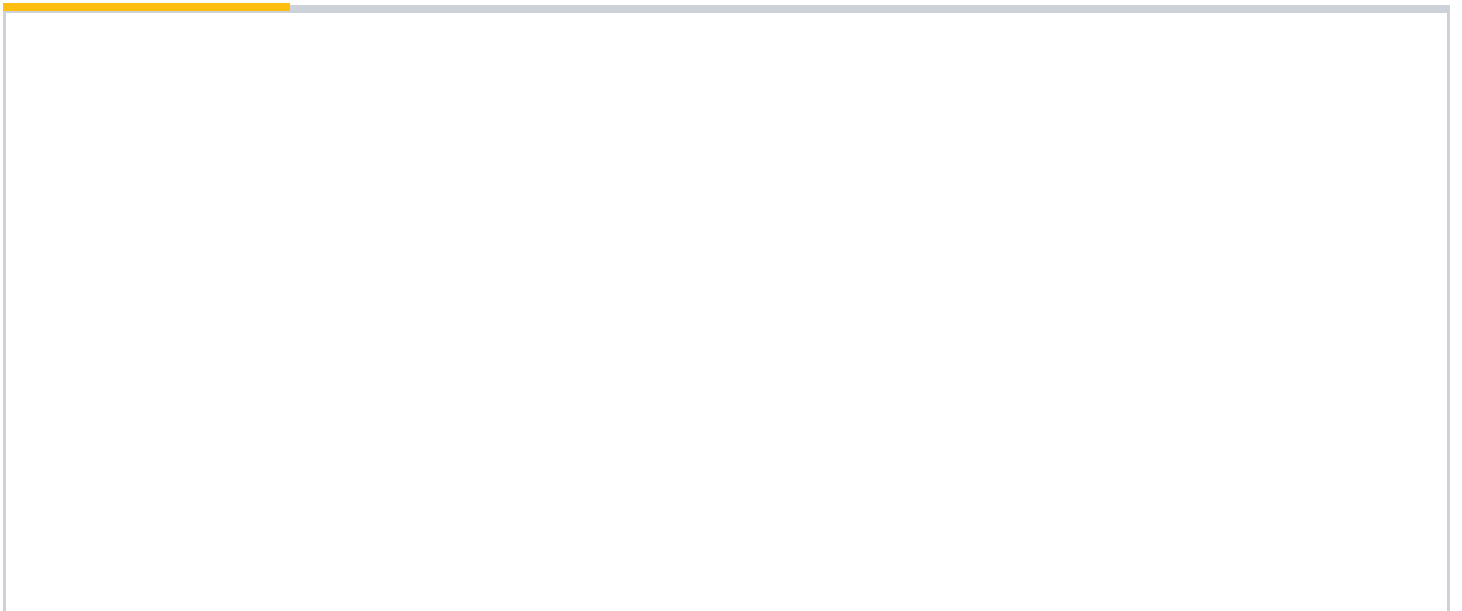
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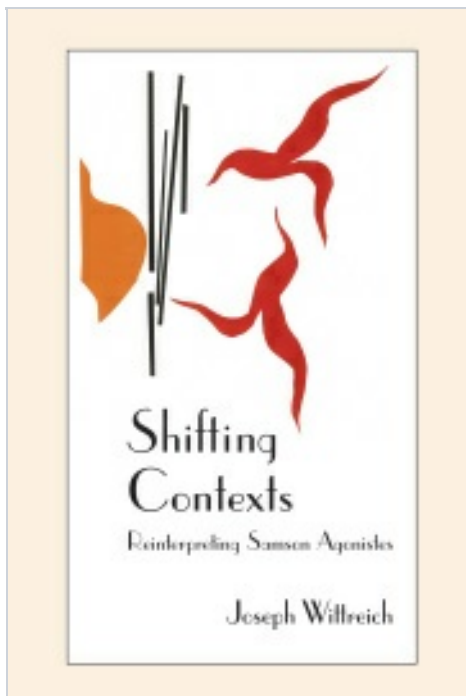


Shifting Contexts:
Reinterpreting *Samson*
Agonistes



In this Book





Shifting Contexts: Reinterpreting *Samson Agonistes*

By Joseph Wittreich

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SUMMARY

Samson Agonistes is the climax and completion of Milton's poetic vision. As such, it has become the work at which the critical controversies in Milton studies converge and from which new critical perspectives on Milton's poems emerge. In 1969, John Carey heralded the birth of new critical perspectives when he contended that Milton's dramatic poem "is not a drama of inner regeneration," a view that flies in the face of traditional interpretation, which tends to perceive Samson as a hero of regeneration. Carey also focused on Samson's "tragic sulk" and the "theatre-demolition" at the feast of Dagon. Following Carey's lead, other critics, notably Irene Samuel, began to question the various elements, large and small, of the traditional interpretation of Milton's dramatic poem. Milton's religious and political thinking, his use of prosody and verse, his outlook on tragedy, and the like were all reexamined. Since



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