

Swarthmore College

Works

English Literature Faculty Works

English Literature

2010

The Country Estate And The Indies (East And West): The Shifting Scene Of Eden In "Paradise Lost"

Eric B. Song

Swarthmore College, esong1@swarthmore.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://works.swarthmore.edu/fac-english-lit>



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

[Let us know how access to these works benefits you](#)

Recommended Citation

Eric B. Song. (2010). "The Country Estate And The Indies (East And West): The Shifting Scene Of Eden In "Paradise Lost"". *Modern Philology*. Volume 108, Issue 2. 199-223. DOI: 10.1086/657329
<https://works.swarthmore.edu/fac-english-lit/27>

This work is brought to you for free and open access by . It has been accepted for inclusion in English Literature Faculty Works by an authorized administrator of Works. For more information, please contact myworks@swarthmore.edu.



The Country Estate and the Indies (East and West): The Shifting Scene of Eden in *Paradise Lost*

Author(s): Eric Song

Source: *Modern Philology*, Vol. 108, No. 2 (November 2010), pp. 199-223

Published by: [The University of Chicago Press](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/657329>

Accessed: 17/07/2014 14:51

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



The University of Chicago Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Modern Philology*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

The Country Estate and the Indies (East and West): The Shifting Scene of Eden in *Paradise Lost*

ERIC SONG

Swarthmore College

As Satan departs from Hell in book 2 of *Paradise Lost*, he is compared to an explorer, “Close sailing from Bengala, or the isles / Of Ternate and Tidore, whence merchants bring / Their spicy drugs.”¹ Yet as the reader knows, Satan’s destination lies not in the Far East, but in the Near Eastern Fertile Crescent. In book 4, another simile compares the “native perfume” of Eden to the “Sabean odours from the spicy shore / Of Arabia the blest” that cheer passing sailors (*PL* 4.159, 164–65). It is somewhat of a surprise, then, that Satan eventually finds himself in a recognizably English setting. As Barbara Kiefer Lewalski has remarked, “The description of Eden as Adam’s estate, his ‘happy rural seat,’ prepares us to discover the structural patterns of the country-house poem within the Edenic idyll. We are led through Eden much as we are led through Penshurst or Appleton House.”² More recently, critics such as D. M. Rosenberg and Christopher Wortham have discussed in greater detail Milton’s revisionary deployment of the country house genre. Rosenberg, for instance, has argued, “Incorporating the country estate poem into his Christian epic, Milton questions its ideological assumptions.”³

Many of the salient features of the country house poem are present in Milton’s Eden. The Jonsonian country house poem celebrates architect-

1. John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Alastair Fowler, 2nd ed. (Harlow: Longman, 1996), 2.638–40, hereafter cited parenthetically as *PL*. Richard Helgerson and David Quint have read this passage as an ironic revision of Vasco De Gama’s voyage in *The Lusians*. Milton emphasizes the mercantile (and thus less heroic) motives of discovery. See Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (University of Chicago Press, 1992), 156; and Quint, *Epic and Empire* (Princeton University Press, 1993), 253–57.

2. Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, “*Paradise Lost*” and the Rhetoric of Literary Forms (Princeton University Press, 1985), 181.

3. D. M. Rosenberg, “Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and the Country Estate Poem,” *Clio* 18 (1989): 134. See also Christopher Wortham, “‘A Happy Rural Seat’: Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and the English Country House Poem,” *Parergon* 9 (1991): 137–50.

tural modesty (“Thou art not, Penshurst, built to envious show”) and the magical fecundity of the landscape (the partridges at Penshurst are “willing to be killed,” while the fish “leap on land” to be consumed).⁴ Milton’s Eden is, naturally, just as bountiful even though its vegetarian inhabitants require no animal sacrifice. Adam and Eve sit down to eat “nectarine fruits which the compliant boughs / Yielded them” (*PL* 4.332–33). “Eden,” in Hebrew, connotes delight, but Milton subordinates pleasure to the Jonsonian design principle of usefulness: “it was a place / Chosen by the sovereign planter, when he framed / All things to man’s delightful use” (*PL* 4.690–92). Instead of opulence, hospitality is praised as the crowning achievement of the country house. In Thomas Carew’s “To Saxham,” “The strangers welcome, each man there / Stamp’d on his cheerfull brow doth wear.”⁵ Adam and Eve are hospitable hosts at their country estate; when Raphael arrives, Adam commands Eve to “bring forth and pour / Abundance, fit to honour and receive / Our heavenly stranger” (*PL* 5.314–16).

Milton did not need to turn to poets like Jonson or Carew for such topoi; *Paradise Lost* and country house poetry share classical sources in the poetry of Horace, Martial, and Virgil. Yet Milton’s description of Eden consistently alludes to classical texts and to contemporary developments in ways that rebut the political and artistic goals of poems like “To Penshurst.” Relying partly upon Lévi-Strauss’s notion of myth as a way to overcome social contradictions, Don E. Wayne details how Jonson’s idyllic vision negotiates between feudal and protobourgeois concepts of nobility and property.⁶ Hugh Jenkins further describes the cultural work that the country house genre was designed (but ultimately failed) to perform: the subgenre attempts to mediate central tensions in Stuart England, including questions of land ownership, class conflicts, and the rift between the urban court and the countryside.⁷ In order to celebrate rural economies as non-

4. Ben Jonson, “To Penshurst,” lines 1, 30, and 37, in *Ben Jonson: The Complete Poems*, ed. George Parfitt (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982), 95. All quotations of Jonson’s poetry are from this volume and are hereafter given parenthetically.

5. Thomas Carew, “To Saxham,” lines 43–44, in *The Poems of Thomas Carew with His Masque “Coelum Britannicum,”* ed. Rhodes Dunlap (Oxford: Clarendon, 1949), 28.

6. Don E. Wayne, *Penshurst: The Semiotics of Place and the Poetics of History* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984).

7. Hugh Jenkins, *Feigned Commonwealths: The Country-House Poem and the Fashioning of the Ideal Community* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1998), esp. 1–33. For other important studies of the country house genre, see G. R. Hibbard, “The Country House Poem of the Seventeenth Century,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 19 (1956): 159–74; Charles Molesworth, “Property and Virtue: The Genre of the Country House Poem in the Seventeenth Century,” *Genre* 1 (1968): 141–57; William A. McClung, *The Country House in English Renaissance Poetry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977); and Heather Dubrow, “The Country-House Poem: A Study in Generic Development,” *Genre* 12 (1979): 153–79.

exploitive and magically abundant, the Jonsonian country house poem must insist upon self-sufficient insularity. Robert Herrick thus praises “The Country Life” for rejecting spices from the “Eastern Ind” and “the Ingot from the West.”⁸ As Richard Helgerson observes, even Elizabethan mercantilism had presented profound cultural challenges: “Here the world of distinct and differentiated objects and cultures, including the distinction of self and other, begins to melt down before the common denominator of ducats and medines.”⁹ The country house poem strives to conceal such consequences of Eastern and Western expansionism.

Milton’s Eden, by contrast, uses the hospitality topos to display the goods of a global economy. When Eve gathers fruit to serve the angelic visitor, she picks “from each tender stalk / Whatever earth all-bearing mother yields / In India east or west, or middle shore / In Pontus or the Punic coast, or where / Alcinous reigned” (*PL* 5.338–42). As John Michael Archer notes, this “oddly global and domestic” moment registers “a primordial anticipation of world economic exchange.”¹⁰ The tension between the global and the rural had notable literary precedents: accounts of blissful cultural insularity are presented as tenuous fictions even in Virgil’s *Eclagues* and *Georgics*. In the Second *Georgic*, Virgil describes the farmers’ happy unawareness of foreign luxuries; an expansive list of these foreign goods ironically underscores the disparity between the farmers’ knowledge and the poet’s.¹¹ Throughout the *Georgics*, Virgil’s impassioned patriotism is defined within and against the knowledge of foreign nations, climates, and goods. Stella P. Revard reminds us that *Paradise Lost* borrows from the *Georgics* to describe both the idylls of rural life and the epic project. Part of what Revard describes as “the epic potential of the *Georgics*” lies, I contend, in the interplay between the rural and the global.¹² Whereas the *Eclagues* resists the impulse to compose epic—“cum canerem reges et proelia, Cynthus aurem vellit et admonuit” (When I was fain to sing of kings and battles, the Cynthian plucked my ear and warned me) (*Eclagues* 6.3–4)—passages such as the proem to the Third *Georgic* anticipate the impe-

8. Robert Herrick, “The Country-Life,” lines 7 and 10, in *The Poetical Works of Robert Herrick*, ed. L. C. Martin (Oxford University Press, 1956), 229.

9. Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood*, 175.

10. John Michael Archer, *Old Worlds: Egypt, Southwest Asia, India, and Russia in Early Modern English Writing* (Stanford University Press, 2002), 87.

11. See Virgil, *Georgics* 2.458–74, in *Eclagues, Georgics, Aeneid I–VI*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, rev. G. P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999). Subsequent references to Virgil’s work are from this edition and are hereafter cited parenthetically.

12. Stella P. Revard, “Vergil’s *Georgics* and *Paradise Lost*: Nature and Human Nature in a Landscape,” in *Vergil at 2000: Commemorative Essays on the Poet and His Influence*, ed. John D. Bernard (New York: AMS, 1986), 278.

rial genre. Yet the Virgilian epic is centrally concerned with actions (seafaring, warfare, and conquest) that are inimical to pastoral's more insular worldview.

The known world had expanded greatly between Virgil's time and Milton's. In *Paradise Lost*, the phrase "India east or west" suggests how Eden is described not only as English and as Eastern but also as American. In book 9, Milton highlights the dizzying slippage between East and West as he describes Adam and Eve after the Fall. The fig leaves that they use as clothing are compared to the leaves of the Indian banyan tree (*PL* 9.1099–10).¹³ A few lines later, however, Milton silently puns on the two meanings of "Indian": "Such of late / Columbus found the American so girt / With feathered cincture, naked else and wild" (*PL* 9.1115–17).

This essay argues that Milton's incorporation of Eastern, New World, and pastoral images in his account of Eden embeds a sustained political critique within his theological and poetic narrative. Recent scholarship has explored Milton's engagements with early modern forms of English nationhood and colonial politics; my focus is how Milton's experimentation with genre relates to his political thought.¹⁴ *Paradise Lost* yokes the pastoral and the epic together into uneasy coexistence. If England's internal tensions necessitated the harmonizing vision of rural poetry, expansionism demanded an epic outlook. This dual perspective allows Milton to interrogate the linked concerns of country house poetry and colonialist writings. This essay will discuss how both of these discourses attempt to mediate exploitive labor relations and associate contested territory with female bodies. By engaging with such matters, *Paradise Lost's* description of Eden suggests that expansionist efforts to enlarge domin-

13. For a meditation on this simile, see Balachandra Rajan, "Banyan Trees and Fig Leaves: Some Thoughts on Milton's India," in *Of Poetry and Politics: New Essays on Milton and His World*, ed. P. G. Stanwood (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1995), 213–28.

14. For some important studies of Milton's thought on English nationhood and its relationship to colonialism, see Sharon Achinstein, "Imperial Dialectic: Milton and Conquered Peoples," in *Milton and the Imperial Vision*, ed. Balachandra Rajan and Elizabeth Sauer (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1999) 67–89; Thomas N. Corns, "Milton's *Observations upon the Articles of Peace*: Ireland under English Eyes," in *Politics, Poetics, and Hermeneutics in Milton's Prose*, ed. David Loewenstein and James Grantham Turner (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 123–34; Andrew Escobedo, *Nationalism and Historical Loss in Renaissance England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004); Linda Gregerson, "Colonials Write the Nation: Spenser, Milton, and England on the Margins," in Rajan and Sauer, *Milton and the Imperial Vision*, 169–90; Willy Maley, "Milton and 'the Complication of Interests' in Early Modern Ireland," in Rajan and Sauer, *Milton and the Imperial Vision*, 155–68; Paul Stevens, "Paradise Lost and the Colonial Imperative," *Milton Studies* 34 (1996): 3–22, and "Milton's Janus-Faced Nationalism: Soliloquy, Subject, and the Modern Nation State," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 100 (2001): 247–68.

ion merely reveal an internally unstable polity.¹⁵ A kingdom divided—or, in the case of Eden, a colony that replicates an empire divided by civil war—cannot stand. Milton’s epic seeks the cause of the loss of paradise; its examination articulates a double-edged critique of domestic and expansionist politics.

“DIVIDED EMPIRE WITH HEAVEN’S
KING I HOLD” (*PL* 4.111)

By the time Milton was composing much of *Paradise Lost*, Andrew Marvell had already exposed some of the cultural tensions that poems like “To Penshurst” had attempted to mediate. Writing during the Interregnum, Marvell tensely but wittily alludes to the revolutionary potential of agrarian class conflict in his country house poem “Upon Appleton House.”¹⁶ In “Bermudas,” Marvell puts the *locus amoenus* in motion, setting the poetry of paradisaical gardens within the related contexts of sectarian conflict and colonialism. The poem takes as its occasion Puritans fleeing Laudian persecution and traveling west “in the expectation of some sort of practical Eden.”¹⁷ Marvell’s account of a garden paradise, like Milton’s, shuttles the reader between East and West. The pomegranates of the Bermudas are said to enclose “Jewels more rich than Ormus shows” (“Bermudas,” 20). Annabel Patterson argues that “Bermudas” is a celebratory poem and that Marvell’s Protestant poetics achieves a “desirable poise” between ac-

15. My overarching claim is informed by David Quint’s description of the anti-imperial epic in the tradition of Lucan and David Armitage’s argument that Milton emerges as a “poet against empire.” See Quint, *Epic and Empire*, esp. 248–340; and Armitage, “John Milton: Poet against Empire,” in *Milton and Republicanism*, ed. David Armitage, Armand Himy, and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 206–25.

16. See Andrew Marvell, “Upon Appleton House,” stanza 50, in which the laborers “masacre the grass” and inadvertently kill a rail, a bird associated with Charles I. Stanza 57 explicitly mentions the Levellers, reminding the reader that Thomas Fairfax had suppressed a Leveller uprising in 1649. Derek Hirst and Steven Zwicker argue that such politically charged allusions do not merely refer to the events of the 1640s but also point to immediate concerns (“High Summer at Nun Appleton, 1651: Andrew Marvell and Lord Fairfax’s Occasions,” *The Historical Journal* 36 [1993]: 247–69). They point out that Leveller leaders were organizing riots near Fairfax’s estate in the summer of 1651. All quotations of Marvell’s poetry are from *The Poems and Letters of Andrew Marvell*, ed. H. M. Margoliouth, rev. Pierre Legouis and E. E. Duncan-Jones, 3rd ed., 2 vols. (Oxford University Press, 1971), hereafter cited parenthetically by stanza or line number as appropriate.

17. Rosalie L. Colie, “Marvell’s ‘Bermudas’ and the Puritan Paradise,” *Renaissance News* 10 (1957): 75. Colie was the first to suggest the similarities between “Bermudas” and Lewis Hughes’s *A Plaine and True Relation of the Goodness of God towards the Somer Islands* (1621). Readers have also noted Marvell’s personal connection to John Oxenbridge, a Puritan minister who had traveled to the Bermudas. See Pierre Legouis, *Andrew Marvell: Poet, Puritan, Patriot*, 2nd ed. (Oxford University Press, 1968), 94–96.

ceptable devotion and excessive sensuality. However, the poem also accommodates ironic readings.¹⁸ The “falling oars” of the last line, for example, may carry an indistinct but ominous suggestion of a fallen paradise, much like the speaker’s literal fall in the bountiful setting of “The Garden.” In spite of the stunning lucidity of “Bermudas,” it is unclear whether the poem celebrates a Puritan paradise or gently derides the quest for a colonial Eden as misguided.

In *Paradise Lost*, Milton’s descriptions of Eden mount a critique that is both more artistically expansive and more politically direct. When Milton describes Adam and Eve’s bower as the seat of a rural estate, he also suggests that Eden is a colony, “a place / Chosen by the sovereign planter” (*PL* 4.690–91). This description of God as a “sovereign planter” is the first example that J. Martin Evans gives of the “explicitly colonial terms” that *Paradise Lost* deploys. There is ample evidence to validate Evans’s claim that, “Nowhere is the colonial theme in *Paradise Lost* more evident than in Milton’s treatment of the garden of Eden.”¹⁹ Raphael, for instance, refers to “this new created world / The addition of his empire” (*PL* 7.554–55). God’s motivation for this addition is at once recognizably Virgilian and resonant with early modern European imperialism. He is planning on recreating an old empire in a new setting. Anthony Pagden has described how “the conquerors and colonizers of America did their best to transform this ‘New’ world . . . into a likeness of the Old.”²⁰ God explains to the Son that he creates in order to “repair / That detriment” that Satan has effected upon heaven (*PL* 7.152–53). The Edenic colony is designed to mend a divided kingdom and thus to advance God’s quest for wholeness: “And earth be changed to heaven, and heaven to earth, / One kingdom, joy and union without end” (*PL* 7.160–61). Yet this fulfillment can never take place in history, and Eden quickly collapses in ways that reveal the fault lines within God’s latest project.

Poets such as Milton and Marvell were not alone in drawing imaginative connections between plantations at home and abroad. Radical dissenters compared domestic exploitation to imperial subjugation. The Levellers Richard Overton and Charles Lilburne and the Digger Gerrard Winstanley traced unjust monarchies, private land ownership, and the

18. Annabel Patterson, “Bermudas and the Coronet: Marvell’s Protestant Poetics,” *ELH* 44 (1977): 490. Tay Fizdale has argued that Marvell undermines any straightforward celebration of a Puritan paradise (“Irony in Marvell’s ‘Bermudas,’” *ELH* 42 [1975]: 203–13). Marvell, according to Fizdale, articulates a critique that is subtle enough that it never lapses into a “scathing denunciation” (211).

19. J. Martin Evans, *Milton’s Imperial Epic: “Paradise Lost” and the Discourse of Colonialism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 1996), 4, 43.

20. Anthony Pagden, *European Encounters with the New World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 10.

detested practice of enclosure to the Norman Yoke.²¹ Yet there was a more literal link between the country house and the colony. Evans describes the so-called purgative rationale, according to which the burdens of England's overpopulation could be relieved by shipping indigents, criminals, and other undesirables to the colonies. Evans quotes Hakluyt the Elder, who describes the necessity of "deliver[ing] our commonwealth from multitudes of loiterers and idle vagabonds . . . which, having no way to beset on work, be either mutinous and seek alteration in the state, or at least very burdensome to the commonwealth."²² Hakluyt's proposal would fully take effect in the seventeenth century, when the clamor of the multitudes was turning revolutionary, especially in rural England.

As Bruce McLeod argues, the country house and the colony share strategies "to gain control of land and, subsequently, control over the dispossessed populations. Put another way, country house, colony, and expanding town . . . begin to grapple in earnest with the project of enclosing and controlling space contested by 'outsiders,' usually those who used to inhabit and use it."²³ The country house poem was designed to quell the dissenting voices of the disenfranchised. It is difficult to read a poem like "To Penshurst" without recalling Raymond Williams's argument that the Jonsonian country house poem conceals an exploitive economy "by a simple extraction of the existence of labourers."²⁴ Milton's Eden, on the other hand, explicitly requires labor. Wortham argues that *Paradise Lost* imagines a tenuous and ultimately unstable balance "between a *labor* of georgic and the *otium*, or leisure, of pastoral."²⁵ Edenic labor serves as a rejoinder to seventeenth-century-country house poetry. Milton insists upon the necessity of labor even in an unfallen world, but the nonexploitive economy of Eden is, to borrow a phrase from Jonson's "To Penshurst," genuinely "reared with no man's ruin, no man's groan" (46). In a case of unalienated labor, the lord and lady of the Edenic estate are also its only workers. Similarly, if Adam and Eve are described as colonists, their dominion does not dispossess anyone.²⁶

21. For a discussion of the widespread use of the Norman Yoke rhetoric, see Christopher Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution: Studies in Interpretation of the English Revolution of the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Schocken, 1964), 50–122.

22. Hakluyt the Elder, quoted in Evans, *Milton's Imperial Epic*, 33.

23. Bruce McLeod, *The Geography of Empire in English Literature, 1580–1745* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 80.

24. Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 32.

25. Wortham, "Happy Rural Seat," 149.

26. Eden does have indigenous residents. God grants Adam and Eve dominion over Eden "and all things that therein live, / Or live in sea, or air, beast, fish and fowl" (*PL* 8.340–41). However, there is no violence done to these animals by the vegetarian Adam and Eve, nor does the original couple use any creatures in their labor. If Adam and Eve do

As both rural estate and colony, Eden does indeed seem nonexploitive and perfect. Rosenberg argues that Hell is the so-called prodigy house that serves as a foil to Eden's modest perfection: "The bower is created by the art of God for the love of man; Pandemonium is an artifice erected for the self-love of Satan."²⁷ The contrast between the appropriately modest estate and the prodigy house serves an important role in the country house genre's attempt to mediate the rift between urban center and the countryside.²⁸ Responding to the flight of nobility from the country to London, James I undertook a strategy that Leah Marcus has termed "repastoralization"—an attempt to stabilize order by endorsing the gentry's aristocratic and "natural" control of the rural landscape. Yet James's project was contradictory, for repastoralization threatened to set "court against the court," implicitly pitting aristocratic feudalism against centralized monarchical power.²⁹ As Heather Dubrow explains, the "negative formula, a kind of understated compliment" becomes a prominent feature of the country house genre.³⁰ Rather than competing with the court, the Jonsonian country house is hospitable without being ostentatious, and it is eager to receive royal visitations. Milton's rural paradise, as we have seen, is welcoming to angelic emissaries yet relatively modest in its natural fruitfulness.

Pandaemonium, by contrast, does look like the prodigy house spurned by the country house genre. Jonson praises Penshurst for not having "polished pillars, or a roof of gold" (3); Pandaemonium features "Doric pillars overlaid / With golden architrave," "bossy sculptures," and a roof of "fretted gold" (*PL* 1.714–17). However, Milton also describes Pandaemonium admiringly. Its construction is likened to harmonious music, "with the sound / Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet" (*PL* 1.711–12). When the devils are finally assembled in their new headquarters, a famous simile transforms the "ample spaces" of Pandaemonium into a beehive (*PL* 1.725). This simile unsettles the simple identification of Pandaemonium with the prodigy house; the devils suddenly occupy the "narrow room" of a natural physical space (*PL* 1.779).

Pandaemonium proves prodigious only to the extent that its opulence mirrors that of the heavenly court. Milton points out that Pandaemo-

subjugate the animals, theirs is a nonexploitive colonialism that could never occur in postlapsarian history.

27. Rosenberg, "Milton's *Paradise Lost*," 131.

28. As Jenkins points out, recent scholarship has complicated the dichotomy of court and country, yet this basic split seems unavoidable in a discussion of the genre. See Jenkins, *Feigned Commonwealths*, 34–38.

29. Leah Marcus, *The Politics of Mirth: Jonson, Herrick, Milton, Marvell, and the Defense of Old Holiday Pastimes* (1986; repr., University of Chicago Press, 1989), 37.

30. Dubrow, "Country-House Poem," 161.

nium is designed by a prominent heavenly architect whose “hand was known / In heaven by many a towered structure high” (*PL* 1.732–33). Similarly, while the devils are censured for their ecologically destructive excavation of gold, Mammon is described as having acquired his love of the precious bane from the “riches of heaven’s pavement, trodden gold” (*PL* 1.683). In the country house genre, the rejection of the prodigy house negotiates currents in domestic politics; in an epic perspective, architectural prodigiousness reflects global divisions. The devils’ palace is repeatedly compared to the seats of Eastern despotism. Thus, the opening lines of book 2 compare Satan’s “throne of royal state” to “the wealth of Ormus and of Ind, / Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand / Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold” (*PL* 2.1–4). Even the exoticized opulence of Pandaemonium has its counterpart in divine architecture. When Satan reaches the border between the chaotic and divine empires, he sees the lavish gate that God has erected, “With frontispiece of diamond and gold / Embellished” (*PL* 3.306–7). The decoration of this frontispiece is described in terms (“thick with sparkling orient gems”) that recall the earlier descriptions of satanic and Eastern despotism (*PL* 3.507).

Far from serving as a prodigy house that contrasts with the perfection of the Edenic country house, Pandaemonium reveals the surprising connections between the satanic and divine kingdoms. The Eastern imagery used to describe divine and satanic structures raises troubling theological questions. As Michael Bryson argues, “The earliest portions of the Hebrew Bible . . . reveal that the roots of heavenly kingship are no less ‘oriental’—and therefore . . . no more ‘despotic’—than are the roots of the satanic monarchy so vividly realized in *Paradise Lost*.”³¹ In a dismal outpost of God’s recent creation, the devils design what Homi Bhabha calls the “area between mimicry and mockery.” Pandaemonium serves as a site of “almost the same, but not quite” that “problematizes the signs of racial and cultural priority.”³² Satanic architecture also raises questions about Eden’s perfection. If Pandaemonium mimics heaven in a case of “court against the court,” Eden’s rural modesty should contrast with heaven’s opulent splendor. As a colony, however, Eden is explicitly designed to mirror the imperial center. As Wortham observes, “Milton’s divinely-built palace of nature has . . . its pillars of acanthus (later used in stylized form to decorate the capitals of Corinthian columns), its self-constructing artefacts of flowery mosaics, and its rich Tyrian carpetry. . . . It all sounds very lavish and ornate, but who could accuse God of bad taste?”³³

31. Michael Bryson, *The Tyranny of Heaven: Milton’s Rejection of God As King* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004), 49–50.

32. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 86–87.

33. Wortham, “Happy Rural Seat,” 143.

But much more is at stake than the possibility of God's bad taste. By occupying the roles of both country estate and colony, Eden bears witness to the inconsistencies of God's empire.

The troubling connections between Heaven, Hell, and Eden are amplified by Milton's monism, according to which "Heaven and Earth, like angels and men, are ontologically continuous."³⁴ Although Hell is a grosser branch of creation and its new residents have become debased, their continued existence in a monistic world confirms their ontological ties to the divine and human realms. Yet Milton's ostensibly monistic cosmology is upset by dynamics that are described in political and geographical terms. Rachel J. Trubowitz argues that "the unstable monism and dualism of Milton's epic" reveals ideas about "the emerging modern nation."³⁵ Open-ended theological problems can accommodate incisive political commentary, especially because Milton's theodicy offers politically charged causes for the Fall. One such cause is a lapse in divine oversight. Milton repeatedly describes God as an omniscient overseer, yet in book 3, which opens by describing the poet's blindness, God's vision also breaks down. Uriel fails to detect Satan's presence, "For neither man nor angel can discern / Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks / Invisible, except to God alone" (*PL* 3.683–85). The necessary qualification, "except to God alone," sounds strained. Only some thirty lines earlier, Milton has gone out of his way to remind us that Uriel (whose name means "light of God" in Hebrew) serves as God's "eyes / That run through all the heavens, or down to the earth / Bear his swift errands over moist and dry / O'er sea and land" (*PL* 3.650–53). This episode dramatizes thorny questions that have already been raised in book 3: How could an omniscient God allow the Fall to occur? Why does God allow Uriel's error to have such dire consequences? These questions gain urgency in the opening lines of book 4, which lament the absence of a "warning voice."

Few readers have suggested the implications of such theological problems in *Paradise Lost* as trenchantly or as controversially as William Empson. He argues, for example, that God's apparent joke about the warring angels' threat to his omnipotence in book 5 is "appallingly malignant," because "God has a second purpose in remaining passive; to give the rebels false evidence that he is a usurper, and thus drive them into real evil."³⁶ In book 3, the "light of God's" inability to detect Satan's presence seems like another bafflingly cruel joke, although it seems that this joke is at the expense of humankind. God proves omniscient and omnipotent

34. Stephen M. Fallon, *Milton among the Philosophers: Poetry and Materialism in Seventeenth-Century England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 195.

35. Rachel J. Trubowitz, "Body Politics in *Paradise Lost*," *PMLA* 121 (2006): 402.

36. William Empson, *Milton's God*, rev. ed. (Cambridge University Press, 1981), 97.

only to the extent that his “permissive will” allows Satan to fool Uriel (*PL* 3.686). His foreknowledge represents something to be explained away rather than a source of comfort or aid.

Recent strands of Milton scholarship have shown a willingness to expand selectively upon the insights of Empson’s criticism. Richard Strier reminds us that Empson was keenly aware that the question of Milton’s theodicy is “all weirdly political”; Strier goes on to show how the devils raise genuine questions regarding the source of God’s political authority.³⁷ Peter C. Herman relies upon Empson more extensively to explore the political dimensions of theological controversy in *Paradise Lost*. Whereas Herman claims that the epic’s pervasive spirit of uncertainty undermines any straightforward commitments, my concern is to show that Milton embeds a cogent political message within difficult theological problems.³⁸ In the episode of Uriel’s failure, Milton displaces the temporal gap between divine foreknowledge and present action onto the spatial or geographical distance between the heavenly center and the peripheries of creation. Uriel is commissioned “down to the earth,” “over moist and dry / O’er sea and land.” Distance should have no effect on an “uncircumscribed” God, yet these lines suggest that even God relies upon an overseer to manage an expanding empire (*PL* 7.170).

Uriel represents God’s administration over his newest, distant colonial project. Uriel’s failure can be seen to reveal one way in which Milton relates country house poetry to the discourses of nascent empire.³⁹ The politicization of sight as an instrument of surveillance is a common trait of travel narratives, descriptions of New World colonies, and seventeenth-century–country house poetry. Marvell parodies this aspect of the country house genre when he describes the vertiginous loss of visual control over the potentially revolutionary workers at Appleton House. The poet initially views these workers from high above, “Where Men like Grasshoppers appear,” but immediately his perspective plunges into the depths of “that unfathomable Grass,” so that “Grasshoppers are Gyants

37. Richard Strier, “Milton’s Fetters, or, Why Eden Is Better than Heaven,” *Milton Studies* 38 (2000): 174.

38. According to Herman’s reading, the poem aligns God with absolutism and Satan with the Ancient Constitution, but “Milton is as disenchanted with God as with Satan, as fed up with the Ancient Constitution as with absolutism” (Peter C. Herman, *Destabilizing Milton: “Paradise Lost” and the Poetics of Incertitude* [New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005], 104–5).

39. There are other clues that God’s neglectful administration might explain the Fall. In book 2, the reader wonders why God has left the duty of guarding the gates of Hell to Sin, whose essence is transgression. Later, when Satan is admonished by Gabriel for escaping from Hell, his response is as cogent as it is defiant: “Let him surer bar / His iron gates, if he intends our stay / In that dark durance” (*PL* 4.897–99). Gabriel has no satisfying response.

there: / They, in there squeeking Laugh, contemn / Us as we walk more low then them" ("Upon Appleton House," stanza 47). Faced with such loss of control, the poet eventually flees the scene.

All country house poems offer a carefully guided tour through the perspective of the poet, which strives to be aligned with that of the estate's owner. The poet's eye oversees the laborers of the estate, placing them in their prescribed roles and containing their unruly potential. "To Penshurst" imposes hierarchical order on the landscape: "The lower land, that to the river bends, / Thy sheep, thy bullocks, kine, and calves do feed: / The middle ground thy mares, and horses breed" (22–24). James Turner observes that "the division of the grounds into 'lower land', 'middle grounds' and the haunts of gods corresponds precisely to the social divisions within the hall."⁴⁰ Jonson attempts to present Penshurst's economy as magically nonexploitive; yet as Marvell's later country house poem suggests, the visual perspective of the genre is very much linked to the disciplinary control that maintains the rural economy.

Jonson's hierarchical ordering of Penshurst's grounds reminds us of the steep ascent that Satan encounters when he arrives at Eden:

whose hairy sides
 With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild,
 Access denied;

 A sylvan scene, and as the ranks ascend
 Shade above shade, a woody theatre
 Of stateliest view. Yet higher than their tops
 The verdurous wall of Paradise upsprung:
 Which to our general sire gave prospect large
 Into his nether empire neighbouring round.

(*PL* 4.135–37, 140–45)

The description of Eden as an "enclosure green" (*PL* 4.133) would still have carried a political charge in the 1660s and 1670s, and the estate is indeed sealed off by a physical wall. Eden is not only supposedly egalitarian but devoid of human inhabitants to monitor; nonetheless, it is strategically elevated to give Adam a position of mastery. Even before the Fall, Milton's Eden gestures toward concerns about estate management.

When these lines describe Adam's seat of power over his "nether empire," the imperial language in this "sylvan scene" reminds us that ru-

40. James Grantham Turner, *The Politics of Landscape: Rural Scenery and Society in English Poetry, 1630–1660* (Oxford University Press, 1979), 38.

ral poetry and colonialist discourses encode related forms of social control and surveillance. The central role of visual perspective in early modern texts of discovery and conquest is a point that hardly needs to be belabored.⁴¹ Ralph Hamor opens *A True Discourse of the present estate of Virginia* by explaining his God-given commission to write his account: “A task I know by himselfe and others, meerey because I have being *Oculatus testis*, thus imposed upon me.”⁴² Hamor promises empirical knowledge and truthfulness; he expects the reader to accept Plautus’s maxim “*Pluris est oculatus testis unus quam auriti decem; qui audiunt, audita dicunt, qui vident plane sciunt*” (One eyewitness is greater than ten hear-sayers; hearers speak of what they have heard; those who see wholly know).⁴³ Milton’s Satan agrees: disguised as a young cherub, he tells Uriel that he has chosen to visit the new world out of an “unspeakable desire to see, and know” (*PL* 3.662).

In texts of travel and discovery, the eyewitness is often a scout or a spy, roles that Satan assumes when he enters Eden. In fact, Satan has a power that imperial explorers would have envied, as he can mimic (and even possess) the native’s body to expedite his missions. Disguised as a cormorant, Satan chooses the Tree of Life, the “middle tree and highest” (*PL* 4.195) as his perch:

yet not true life
 Thereby regained, but sat devising death
 To them who lived; nor on the virtue thought
 Of that life-giving plant, but only used
 For prospect, what well used had been the pledge
 Of immortality.

(*PL* 4.196–201)

Satan’s actions suggest his role as a spy reconnoitering in a new world, but the setting reminds us that this particular new world shares traits with familiar poetic terrain. In Aemilia Lanyer’s “The Description of Cooke-

41. See Pagden, *European Encounters*, 51–87, for an account of “the autoptic imagination” in early modern descriptions of the New World. For the role of the eye in colonialist writings, see also Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (University of Chicago Press, 1991), esp. 119–51. In *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992), Mary Louise Pratt offers an influential account of narratives of travel and cross-cultural contact in the eighteenth to twentieth centuries.

42. Ralph Hamor, *A True Discourse of the present estate of Virginia* (London, 1615), B1.

43. Plautus, *Truculentus*, act 2, scene 6, lines 489–90, in *Stichus, Three Bob Day, Truculentus, The Tale of a Travelling Bag, Fragments*, trans. Paul Nixon, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1938). The translation is my own.

ham,” the motif of visual mastery centers on the “comely Cedar straight and tall,” whose towering height affords a strategic vantage point:

Where beeing seated, you might plainly see,
Hills, vales, and woods, as if on bended knee
They had appeared, your honour to salute,
Or to preferre some strange unlook'd for sute.⁴⁴

Yet the poem then presents religious meditation as the alternative and preferred mode of perspective that the tree offers: “What was there then but gave you all content, / While you the time in meditation spent, / Of their Creators powre, which there you saw” (75–77). This is precisely the holy mode of “prospect” that Satan rejects in book 4, preferring instead the imperial mode of seeing. Milton divides the dual role of Lanyer’s tree, for in the epic’s final books Adam will ascend “a hill / Of Paradise the highest” in order to witness human history and, ultimately, the redemptive power of providence (*PL* 11.377–78).

McLeod elides the differences between Satanic and Adamic sight when he argues that an imperial mode of seeing represents Milton’s position. Such a reading ignores aspects of Milton’s epic that resist and even actively contradict such a claim. McLeod thus talks about the poet’s “satellite-like vision” but does not adequately account for his blindness. If Adam’s mountaintop vision of human history supposedly constitutes “an imperial perspective,” it is telling that Adam’s sight falters.⁴⁵ Michael declares to him:

but I perceive
Thy mortal sight to fail; objects divine
Must needs impair and weary human sense:
Henceforth what is to come I will relate,
Thou therefore give due audience, and attend.

(*PL* 12.8–12)

After laying down his supposedly imperial vision, Adam hears some of the most explicitly anti-imperialist lines in *Paradise Lost*. Michael proleptically censures Nimrod, who will “arrogate dominion undeserved / Over

44. Aemilia Lanyer, “The Description of Cooke-ham,” lines 57 and 67–70, in *The Poems of Aemilia Lanyer: Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, ed. Susanne Woods (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), hereafter given parenthetically. We do not know with certainty whether Milton read Lanyer’s poetry. However, Kari Boyd McBride and John C. Ulreich have described meaningful connections between the two poets’ modes of biblical interpretation as well as the political implications of their respective hermeneutics. See their “Answerable Styles: Biblical Poetics and Biblical Politics in the Poetry of Lanyer and Milton,” *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 100 (2001): 333–54.

45. McLeod, *Geography of Empire*, 131, 140.

his brethren" (*PL* 12.27–28). Sight is inculcated in dynamics of power and control, but *Paradise Lost* unsettles any stable relationship of viewing subject/viewed object. As Regina Schwartz remarks, "The temptation of voyeurism, the temptation to master, is never wholly achieved."⁴⁶ As I have argued, even Uriel, the light of God, cannot successfully maintain visual mastery.⁴⁷ It is unsurprising that book 12 underscores the limitations of human vision—a lesson that has been repeated frequently in the work of a blind poet.

Michael eventually gives Adam a clue about the significance of the failure of sight and the transition from seeing to hearing. He prophetically describes Abraham: "I see him, but thou canst not, with what faith / He leaves his gods, his friends, and native soil" (*PL* 12.128–29). This juxtaposition of sight, blindness (or *aporia*), and faith evokes a biblical definition: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). Milton, pace Plautus, asserts the supremacy of a certain kind of hearsay over being an eyewitness: only the former can be a basis of redemptive faith. This theological lesson, in turn, advances Milton's political critique. J. Martin Evans argues that the modes of poetic inspiration in *Paradise Lost* correspond to two modes of colonial discourse, one aiming at empirical observation, the other (less common) mode based on secondhand information. He claims that the epic presents a harmonious fusion of the two patterns.⁴⁸ Yet the epic does not present the two principal strategies that Evans describes as equal alternatives but suggests the necessity of one rather than the other. Indeed, an excessive desire to see is a satanic temptation: "your eyes that seem so clear, / Yet are but dim, shall perfectly be then / Opened and cleared, and ye shall be as gods" (*PL* 9.706–8). The triumph of mediated faith over eyewitness knowledge helps to undermine the perspective of power assumed both by rural poetry and by texts of discovery and conquest.

"AND YET UNSPOILED / GUIANA" (*PL* 11.410)

Although *Paradise Lost* describes a lapse in God's administration over his Edenic country estate/colony as one cause of the Fall, Milton's emphasis on human free will preserves his theodicy. The true line of defense against temptation must lie within Adam and Eve. At the center of Edenic life,

46. Regina Schwartz, "Through the Optic Glass: Voyeurism and *Paradise Lost*," in *Desire in the Renaissance: Psychoanalysis and Literature*, ed. Valeria Finucci and Regina Schwartz (Princeton University Press, 1994), 156.

47. Herman describes how Milton's ostensibly omniscient Muse ("for heaven hides nothing from thy view" [*PL* 1.27]) proves a questionable source of knowledge and judgment (*Destabilizing Milton*, 117–19).

48. Evans, *Milton's Imperial Epic*, 123.

however, Milton posits a structural anomaly that might itself account for the Fall: “Hail wedded love, mysterious law, true source / Of human offspring, sole propriety, / In Paradise of all things common else” (*PL* 4.750–52). Whether “sole propriety” refers to “wedded love” or to “human offspring,” the need to control reproduction undermines the radical communalism of paradise. John Rogers notes that the “inflexible aristocratic hierarchy” of marital relations in Milton’s Eden conflicts with its otherwise egalitarian nature: “The situation, in other words, is untenable; the contradictory social formation of paradise, inherently unstable.”⁴⁹ As we shall see, this tension between egalitarian and patriarchal values persists to trouble the poem’s optimistic conclusion. However, by presenting the demands of dynastic reproduction as a source of the Fall, Milton contests the Jonsonian ideal of aristocratic birthright and ownership. The epic perspective of *Paradise Lost* allows it to show that the cultural logic of expansionism shares with country house poetry a troubled politics of sexual reproduction, both literal and imagined.

In the Second Epode, Horace sets a precedent for describing the virtuous family as central to happy rural life. In Jonson’s translation, the happy Horatian farmer has “a chaste wife meet / For household aid, and children sweet” (40–41). “To Penshurst” preserves this motif, but the concern shifts to the lady’s role in the succession of estate property:

These, Penshurst, are thy praise, and yet not all.
Thy Lady’s noble, fruitful, chaste withal.
His children thy great Lord may call his own:
A fortune, in this age, but rarely known.

(89–92)

These lines invoke Barbara Gamage not as the wife of Robert Sidney but as the Lady of Penshurst; her primary duty is not “household aid” but the perpetuation of the family’s land ownership. The poem attributes to the lady the imagined function of mediating between nature and culture, between the terrain and its inhabitants. As Wayne shows, “To Penshurst” navigates between a feudal sense of lordly entitlement and a protobourgeois sense of property as an expression of personal identity. The poem does so by generating a myth of “the house’s ‘organic’ relation with its environs and with those who dwell there.”⁵⁰ If the country house reflects the personality of its lord, the landscape mirrors the lady. The closing line of “To Penshurst” celebrates the fact that Robert Sidney dwells in his house (rather than having merely built it), but earlier we learn that the

49. John Rogers, “Transported Touch: The Fruit of Marriage in *Paradise Lost*,” in *Milton and Gender*, ed. Catherine Gimelli Martin (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 125.

50. Wayne, *Penshurst*, 51.

cope is named for Gamage. Edmund Waller attributes to Lady Sidney an Orphic ability to domesticate the terrain: she “has such more than human grace / That it can civilize the rudest place / . . . / The plants acknowledge this, and her admire.”⁵¹ This deep affinity between the fertile landscape and the maternal body serves to naturalize familial control of the estate.

Jonson wryly remarks, however, that wifely chastity is “rarely known.” He acknowledges the pervasive anxiety that arises from a patriarchal system of succession, turning the lady’s sexual virtue into the focus of uneasy scrutiny. Before Jonson composed “To Peshurst,” “Cooke-ham” had already revealed the precarious position that ladies of country estates occupied. Lanyer’s poem begins as a farewell to the estate that she praises; what makes Cookham untenable, and what makes its loss particularly poignant, is its fleeting status as female domain, populated by “that Grace” (2), Margaret Clifford, Countess of Cumberland, her daughter Anne, and Lanyer herself.⁵² Lanyer anticipates the Jonsonian country house poem when she describes the countess’s organic connection to and power over the estate. Unlike Lady Sidney, however, the countess cannot maintain the bond of ownership through the work of childbearing. Lanyer describes the countess as a guest at an estate that does not belong to her. Her relationship to the landscape turns agonistic as she is described as a Diana-like huntress:

The little creatures in the Burrough by
Would come abroad to sport them in your eye;
Yet fearefull of the Bowe in your fair Hand,
Would runne away when you did make a stand.

(49–52)

51. Edmund Waller, “At Peshurst,” lines 7–10, in *The Poems of Edmund Waller*, ed. G. Thorn Drury (London: Routledge, 1900), 46.

52. Upon his death in 1605, George Clifford excluded his only surviving heir, Anne, from most of his inheritance, bequeathing his estates instead to his brother Francis Clifford. Lady Margaret took to litigation to restore Anne’s claim. Although Margaret successfully argued her case before the court in 1607, Francis Clifford would continue to occupy many of the family estates. “Cooke-ham” and the family tensions to which it refers reveal the tenuous position that the country house lady actually occupied. Barbara Lewalski has argued influentially that Lanyer attempts to imagine an ideal female community, especially by refashioning the patronage system. See, e.g., Lewalski, *Writing Women in Jacobean England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), 213–41. Other critics have stressed the importance of class dynamics in Lanyer’s writings. See Ann Baynes Coiro, “Writing in Service: Sexual Politics and Class Position in the Poetry of Aemilia Lanyer and Ben Jonson,” *Criticism* 35 (1993): 357–76; Mary Ellen Lamb, “Patronage and Class in Aemilia Lanyer’s *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*,” in *Women, Writing, and the Reproduction of Culture in Tudor and Stuart Britain*, ed. Mary E. Burke, Jane Donaweth, Linda L. Dove, and Karen Nelson (Syracuse University Press, 2000), 38–57; and Su Fang Ng, “Aemilia Lanyer and the Politics of Praise,” *ELH* 67 (2000): 433–51.

Lanyer suggests that the countess's procreative powers had gone for naught. Because her only surviving offspring was a daughter, the countess could not perpetuate her family's connection to the landscape.

The opening lines of *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* anticipate the indirect allusion to Diana by invoking the late Elizabeth I as Cynthia. Lanyer goes on to endorse virtuous celibacy as a way to transcend exploitive gender relations. In "Cooke-ham," Anne Clifford's marriage to "noble Dorset" is at best a bittersweet event, one that the poet must celebrate even though it marks the end of her blissful stay at Cookham (160). Writing several decades later, Marvell also elevates limited forms of virginity to express ambivalence about the structures of succession.⁵³ "Upon Appleton House" attempts to achieve poetic closure by celebrating the virginal youth of Thomas Fairfax's aptly named daughter, Mary. However, the poem acknowledges that Mary's marriage will result in her loss of sexual innocence and in her removal from the family line. As a result, the happy bond between Mary and the landscape proves transitory: "Mean time ye Fields, Springs, Bushes, Flow'rs / ... / Employ the means you have by her" (stanza 94).

Paradise Lost's narrative of the Fall seems to revolve around a similarly vexed drama of reproduction and land ownership. Milton follows biblical and Horatian precedent when he describes Eve as Adam's "fit help" in the tasks that Eden requires (*PL* 8.450). However, as in the country house genre, the importance of the wife's role in reproduction is central. Milton echoes the biblical injunction to "Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth, / Subdue it, and throughout dominion hold" (*PL* 7.531–32). Only by being fruitful will Adam populate the new creation, thus fulfilling God's imperial design to repair his kingdom and ultimately to unite heaven and earth. Eve, who is created "Female for race," is instrumental to this plan (*PL* 7.530). In the separation scene of book 9, the events immediately leading to the Fall revolve around questions of reproduction. Eve first proposes a separation by describing their current childlessness: "but till more hands / Aid us, the work under our labour grows / Luxurious by restraint" (*PL* 9.207–9). When Adam eventually concedes, the departing Eve is compared to a nymph of Diana's (or "Delia's") train, and then to Diana herself (*PL* 9.386–89). Milton goes on to compare Eve to Pomona fleeing from Vertumnus, "or to Ceres in her prime / Yet virgin of Prosperina from Jove" (*PL* 9.935–36). Eve has had sex with Adam, but she, like Lanyer's countess, is described as a virginal wife whose ability to propagate familial dominion is suspended. When Eve separates,

53. For a discussion of virginity as a political principle during the seventeenth century, see John Rogers, "The Enclosure of Virginity: The Poetics of Sexual Abstinence in the English Revolution," in *Enclosure Acts: Sexuality, Property, and Culture in Early Modern England*, ed. Richard Burt and John Michael Archer (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 229–50.

she rejects the patriarchal economy of marriage and eventually turns to the Tree of Knowledge. In book 5, an earlier allusion to the Ovidian Pomona-Vertumnus episode describes trees as metaphorical husbands: the masculine elm is barren but provides support for the fertile vine (*PL* 5.215–19). In Lanyer’s “Cooke-ham,” the “comely Cedar” acts as a kind of surrogate husband, offering the countess a joyous embrace. The Tree of Knowledge, by contrast, appeals to Eve as a maternal body that needs no husbandly support. Satan tempts Eve both by addressing her as a sovereign “Queen of the universe” (*PL* 9.684) and by hailing the tree as the “Mother of science” (*PL* 9.680).

Whereas Jonson inscribes aristocratic continuity onto the landscape he celebrates, Lanyer, Marvell, and Milton deal with rupture and instability. Yet Milton subverts aristocratic designs more strenuously than writers working directly through the country house genre. Milton’s Eve shares with country house ladies her vital link to the landscape, but because Milton writes of Eden he invites the reader to believe that he literally depicts what the country house poet can only hyperbolically suggest. Eve’s unity with Eden is not a flattering conceit but an aspect of unfallen monism. As Stephen Fallon puts it, Milton’s vitalist animism “turns the pathetic fallacy on its head—it is no longer an illusion to speak of nature sharing thoughts and emotions.” Sin results in the related curses of death and dualistic modes of thought and action.⁵⁴ Adam articulates a fallen mind/body dualism in his Hamlet-like soliloquy about the fears that plague the otherwise comforting prospect of death (*PL* 10.782–93). Adam declares that his spirit will die because it is guilty of sin and that his body will die because it never “properly” had life (*PL* 10.791). Fallon points out that mortalism is the “inevitable concomitant” of Milton’s monism and animist materialism.⁵⁵ *Christian Doctrine*’s heretical declaration that “the whole man dies” relies upon the earlier dictum that man “is not double or separable.”⁵⁶ Adam’s speech, by contrast, reaches a mortalist conclusion (“All of me then shall die”) through dualistic reasoning (*PL* 10.792).

This curious combination of mortalism and dualism is anticipated by Adam’s bitter remarks about reproduction earlier in the speech:

Oh voice once heard
Delightfully, *Increase and multiply,*

54. Fallon, *Milton among the Philosophers*, 201. See 203–6 for an account of the devils’ Cartesianism.

55. *Ibid.*, 80.

56. John Milton, *Christian Doctrine*, trans. John Carey, in *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, ed. Don M. Wolfe et al., 8 vols. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1973–82), 6:318.

Now death to hear! For what can I increase
Or multiply, but curses on my head?

(*PL* 10.729–32)

The enjambment at the end of line 731 invites the reader to believe that “death” is precisely the answer to Adam’s half-articulated question. After the Fall, the commission to propagate life and dominion carries the ironic possibility that Adam and Eve may only be able to reproduce moribund life and corrupted power. The very confusion in Adam’s logic points to important principles in Milton’s political thought. At stake is not just the issue of land ownership but dynastic forms of succession in general, including kingship. Adam’s soliloquy, according to Trubowitz, reveals how “after the Fall, birthright and bloodline no longer guarantee the dynastic nation’s corporate perpetuity, as royalist rhetoric of the king’s two bodies proclaimed they did.”⁵⁷ Trubowitz demonstrates how Milton shifts between monistic and dualistic rhetoric to support his antimonarchical position. Birth-based forms of succession and primogeniture rely on the mere fact of reproduction; in a fallen (and potentially dualist) world, biological ties do not ensure the continuity of moral worth.⁵⁸ *Paradise Lost* makes this point succinctly by declaring that the Son is elevated “By merit more than birthright” (*PL* 3.309). There should be no cleavage between birthright and worth in this unique case of succession, but the poet’s postlapsarian perspective leads him to make the contrast, and his antidynastic principles lead him to privilege merit. Lanyer describes this troubling split between aristocratic birthright and virtue in her dedicatory poem to Anne Sackville (née Clifford). For obvious reasons, Lanyer must praise (but also anxiously enjoin) the noble union of biological and spiritual succession: “You are the Heire apparent of this Crowne / Of goodnesse, bountie, grace, love pietie, / By birth its yours, then keepe it as your owne” (65–67). Milton, as a fervently antiaristocratic poet with no wealthy patron to please, can be more openly critical of dynastic structures.

Paradise Lost articulates an uneasy solution to the problem of reproductive politics. Eve’s proposal of celibacy must first be overcome as a false solution to the problems of postlapsarian reproduction (*PL* 10.979–91). (Eve herself suggests that willfully refusing sex will lead to suicidal despair.) When the Son arrives in Eden, he announces the redemp-

57. Trubowitz, “Body Politics,” 399.

58. For a discussion of Milton’s critical attitude toward primogeniture, see Su Fang Ng, *Literature and the Politics of Family in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 49–75. See also Richard C. McCoy’s discussion of Milton’s attack on the sacred bases of kingship in *Alterations of State: Sacred Kingship in the English Reformation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 87–122.

tion not only of mankind but also of reproduction and, more specifically, of motherhood. The incarnation of “Jesus son of Mary second Eve” will restore the spiritual integrity of biological reproduction after the Fall; his conception will grant the “second Eve” access to God without male mediation (*PL* 10.183). Milton emphasizes, however, that this theologically predictable solution does not undo the systematically inequitable practice of marriage. The Son’s promise to Eve is accompanied by the twin curses of pain in childbirth and increased subjection to her husband. Although Milton mounts a theological and poetic critique of dynastic succession, the patriarchal strains of his thought continue to pose a limit to his egalitarian politics.⁵⁹ Eve’s final speech in the poem betrays an uneasy compromise. She declares satisfaction in her role as dependent wife but adds that she finds “further consolation” in the Marian prophecy of an independent motherhood: “By me the promised seed shall all restore” (*PL* 12.620).

The ending of *Paradise Lost* attempts to surmount any lingering tensions with its famous appeal to inward forms of happiness. Yet these lines are effective partly because they share with “Cooke-ham” an elegiac sense of the loss of the “happy rural seat.” Indeed, the *felix culpa* appeal to a happier “paradise within” underscores the loss of a monistic paradise where spiritual and physical bliss are integrated (*PL* 12.587). John Rogers has described the “monistic description of the expulsion,” whereby the garden itself responds “to the Fall by ejecting the tainted human body from the garden’s harmonious air.”⁶⁰ Even before the expulsion, the Fall and its consummation result in bodily shame: Adam and Eve use leaves as “broad as Amazonian targe” to “gird their waist, vain covering if to hide / Their guilt and dreaded shame” (*PL* 9.1111–12). This shield is “vain” because outer coverings cannot conceal the couple’s spiritual guilt. Both “dreaded shame” and an inadequately physical reaction to it signal Adam and Eve’s broken link to the monistic purity of Eden.

Milton makes explicit the connection between sexual shame and colonial politics. Before the reference to the Amazons, the leaves that the Adam and Eve don are compared to the leaves of the Indian banyan tree;

59. I cannot engage here fully the larger debate over Milton’s profeminism or conventional misogyny. I find convincing Mary Nyquist’s argument that any meaningful subjectivity that accrues to Eve ultimately serves Adam’s sense of a need for another self. See Nyquist, “The Genesis of Gendered Subjectivity in the Divorce Tracts and in *Paradise Lost*,” in *Remembering Milton: Essays on the Texts and Traditions*, ed. Mary Nyquist and Margaret W. Ferguson (New York: Methuen, 1988), 165–93. For important arguments otherwise, see Diane Kelsey McColley, *Milton’s Eve* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983); and Joseph Wittreich, *Feminist Milton* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987).

60. John Rogers, *The Matter of Revolution: Science, Poetry, and Politics in the Age of Milton* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 148–49.

afterward, the couple will be compared to “the American so girt / With feathered cincture, naked else and wild.” This compact sequence rapidly expands a domestic, conjugal narrative into a global one. Originally commissioned to spread dominion throughout the earth, Adam and Eve now find themselves likened to the dispossessed—the “wild” natives discovered by Columbus. Paul Stevens has described the rhetoric of holiness that structures colonialist discourses: according to what Stevens terms “Leviticus thinking,” the “*quid pro quo* becomes land for sexual purity.”⁶¹ English apologists for expansionism appeal to a sense of national holiness to defend the subjugation of supposedly impure peoples.⁶² In the great English epic, however, the narrative of loss reflects Milton’s conviction that sinful debasement negates the commission to possess and expand. Milton relies on Leviticus thinking but suggests that the link between sexual purity and ownership—central to a monistic landscape—no longer justifies dominion in a fallen world.

The lost vital connection between the untainted body and the Edenic landscape helps us to trace how Milton broadens his critique of the aristocratic strains of rural verse into a commentary upon the logic of expansionism. Paradise is lost due to a struggle over the body of Eve (who is organically linked to the land) and over the territory of Eden, which is often described in bodily terms. When Satan first approaches Eden, its “enclosure green” is described as a “rural mound” with “hairy sides” (*PL* 4.133–35). (These lines led C. S. Lewis to remark, “The Freudian idea that the happy garden is an image of the human body would not have frightened Milton in the least.”)⁶³ Satan’s ability literally to penetrate this garden-body through the rivers that fertilize it prefigures his ability “to reach / The organs of Eve’s fancy” (*PL* 4.801–2). Physical intrusion allows for psychological manipulation. Only afterward can Satan enter figuratively “into the heart of Eve” with his words (*PL* 9.550).

61. Paul Stevens, “‘Leviticus Thinking’ and the Rhetoric of Early Modern Colonialism,” *Criticism* 35 (1993): 449.

62. Milton, as Stevens points out (“Leviticus Thinking,” 456–58), does so when he denounces the Irish in texts such as *Eikonoklastes* and *Observations upon the Articles of Peace* (both 1649). Yet *Eikonoklastes* articulates the narrow limits of England’s supposed ascendancy: unless the English defend their liberties against tyrannical monarchy, they are no better off than “the *Turkes, Jewes, and Mores*” (Milton, *Complete Prose*, 3:574). Milton’s later disillusionment with the citizenry and politics of his country is well known. Fredric Jameson has claimed that the inward, spiritual focus of Milton’s later works marks a retreat from politics. See Jameson, “Religion and Ideology: A Political Reading of *Paradise Lost*,” in *1642: Literature and Power in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Francis Barker et al. (Colchester: University of Essex Press, 1981), 315–36. As David Quint reminds us, however, “Critics as different as Northrop Frye and Christopher Hill warn us not to confuse this attitude with a mere quietism” (*Epic and Empire*, 268).

63. C. S. Lewis, *A Preface to “Paradise Lost”* (London: Oxford University Press, 1942), 47.

The simultaneous contestation over the land-as-woman and woman-as-land reminds us that the discourses of nascent empire link territorial rights to reproductive sexuality. Such writings imagine lands as maternal bodies. Columbus, in the account of his third voyage, describes the world as pear shaped, featuring “something like a woman’s nipple.”⁶⁴ This nipple marks the location of paradise, and the potential for reclaiming it leads Columbus to imagine the lands he has reached as the focus of sexual and infantile longing. As Anne McClintock has remarked, Africa and the Americas became “porno-tropics for the European imagination—a fantastic magic lantern of the mind onto which Europe projected its forbidden sexual desires and fears”—fears as well as desires, because “if, at first glance, the feminizing of the land appears to be no more than a familiar symptom of male megalomania, it also betrays acute paranoia and a profound, if not pathological sense of male anxiety and boundary loss.”⁶⁵ Among English writings, few texts express the sexual energy of conquest with the chilling precision of Walter Raleigh’s declaration that “Guiana is a countrey that hath yet her maydenhead.”⁶⁶ Milton admired Raleigh’s writings and, in 1658, he published a collection of aphorisms titled *The Cabinet-Council* under the mistaken belief that Raleigh was its author.⁶⁷ Milton also includes a quotation from Raleigh’s *History of the World* in his *Commonplace book* (under, appropriately enough, the heading “Of Marriage”).⁶⁸ In *Paradise Lost*, when Adam sees a vision of “yet unspoiled / Guiana,” the reference is almost certainly to Raleigh (*PL* 11.410).

Milton’s reference to the Amazons in book 9 links the reproductive concerns of rural verse and of colonialist writings. In the *Discovery of Guiana*, the connection between conquest and reproduction is highlighted by Raleigh’s curiosity about the Amazons, which leads him to venture into an uncharacteristic digression. At the heart of his description is an

64. Christopher Columbus, “Third Voyage of Columbus,” in *Select Documents Illustrating the Four Voyages of Columbus*, trans. and ed. Cecil Jane, 2 vols. (London: Hakluyt Society, 1930), 2:30.

65. Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 22, 24.

66. Walter Raleigh, *The Discovery of the Large, Rich, and Beautifull Empire of Guiana*, in *The Principal Navigations Voyages Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation*, ed. Richard Hakluyt, 12 vols. (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1903–5), 10:428.

67. For an argument that Milton published the piece ironically, as a veiled act of protest against Cromwell, see Martin Dzelzainis, “Milton and the Protectorate in 1658,” in Armitage, Himy, and Skinner, *Milton and Republicanism*, 181–205. Paul Stevens argues that Milton’s admiration for Cromwell and Raleigh was genuine; see Stevens, “Milton’s ‘Renunciation’ of Cromwell,” *Modern Philology* 98 (2001): 363–92.

68. The quotation describes marital customs within the context of missionary work in Africa. Raleigh observes that the Christian condemnation of polygamy ultimately leads the natives of Congo to reject conversion. See John Milton, “Of Marriage,” in *Complete Prose*, 8:411.

account of the Amazon's highly ceremonial mode of procreating, which allows them "to increase their owne sex and kind."⁶⁹ As Louis Montrose remarks, "the conceptual shift from *the land as woman* to *a land of women*" implies "the possibility of representing women as collective social agents."⁷⁰ The Amazons represent similar concerns in country house poetry. Marvell relates the history of Appleton House as a convent where "subtle nuns" tempt Isabella Thwaites to remain a virgin and to reject her betrothal to William Fairfax. One of these nuns describes invokes the Amazons to describe the joys of a militant virginity: "'Here we, in shining Armour white, / Like *Virgin Amazons* do fight'" (stanza 14). Unlike Raleigh's Amazons, these Catholic Amazons do not reproduce. Like Adam and Eve's "Amazonian targe," this "shining armour" is designed to deflect the reproductive demands of patriarchal succession. Before Marvell praises the temporary chastity of young Mary Fairfax, he describes the Catholic threat of permanent virginity. William Fairfax's triumph over the nuns (and the eventual dissolution of the convent) allows him to join the Fairfax and Thwaites bloodlines and to establish Appleton as a familial estate.

In Raleigh's *Discovery*, the Amazons successfully maintain a female domain. They reemerge at the text's conclusion, which crystallizes the ideological link between dynastic succession and expansion abroad. Raleigh again asks Queen Elizabeth for a commission for an excursion into Guiana: the Amazons "shall hereby heare the name of a virgin, which is not onely able to defend her owne territories and her neighbours, but also to invade and conquer so great Empires and so farre removed."⁷¹ Whereas the Amazons maintain possession through ritualized reproduction, Elizabeth's status as the Virgin Queen raises pervasive concerns about succession. Yet Raleigh uses this concern as a final spur to expansion. Imperialism will be an alternate form of childbearing allowing the Virgin Queen "not onely . . . to defend" but to expand her territories. Despite her ostensible virginity, Elizabeth can trump the Amazons. Raleigh hopes to be the virile agent of such expansion, but events would soon prove him politically impotent. As much as any explorer, Raleigh had cause for a "sense of male anxiety and boundary loss."

In book 8 of *Paradise Lost*, Adam relates to Raphael his struggle to maintain authority over Eve. Although Adam insists that sex is not the primary source of Eve's charm, book 9's description of Eve's "virgin majesty" eroticizes her disarmingly regal presence (*PL* 9.270). Albert Lab-

69. Raleigh, *Discovery*, 10:367.

70. Louis Adrian Montrose, "The Work of Gender in the Discourse of Discovery," *Representations* 33 (1991): 25. In *Tough Love: Amazon Encounters in the English Renaissance* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), Kathryn Schwarz provides an extensive analysis of the figure of the Amazon in early modern English writings; see esp. 50–78.

71. Raleigh, *Discovery*, 10:431.

riola argues that Milton's (and, quite often, Satan's) descriptions of Eve evoke the imagery of the cult of Elizabeth.⁷² Although Eve is a wife, she recuperates some of her virgin majesty by arguing for her separation from Adam and temporarily resisting the demands of marriage and dynastic reproduction. Even without the specific connection to Elizabeth I, we have seen that Satan's fawning address to Eve as "Queen of the universe" contains a kernel of truth about Eve's resistance to and Adam's insecurities within a patriarchal system.

Allusions to both country house poetry and colonialist writings reveal the historical and literary links between Adam's failure to control his wife and the loss of the Eden. The conjugal narrative of *Paradise Lost* mirrors the suspicious fascination with the female reproductive body in such seemingly disparate texts as "To Penshurst" and *The Discovery of Guiana*. Whereas writers like Jonson and Raleigh appeal to the link between reproduction and dominion, Milton associates dynastic structures with the fall of paradise. Through descriptions of Eden as country estate, as Near and Far Eastern destination, and as New World colony, Milton's narrative works to unsettle both insular myths and expansionist ambitions. *Paradise Lost* amplifies this political critique poetically, through the interplay between pastoral and epic modes, and theologically, within the biblical narrative of the Fall.

72. Albert C. Labriola, "Milton's Eve and the Cult of Elizabeth I," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 95 (1996): 38–51.