

Ken Hiltner, ed. *Renaissance Ecology: Imagining Eden in Milton's England*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2008. xi + 356 pp. + 48 illus. \$62.00. Review by MARY C. FENTON, WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY.

The twelve essays in *Renaissance Ecology* comprise a Festschrift for Diane McColley. Ken Hiltner, who like McColley is a passionate advocate for the contemporary relevance of Milton's ecological ethos, begins his Introduction with an historical account of the profound ecological problems Milton and his seventeenth-century contemporaries faced. Hiltner then establishes the logical infrastructure of the collection and cogently summarizes respective essays indicating how each relates to McColley's life oeuvre.

The first seven essays address Milton and imaginings of Eden. Barbara Lewalski's opening essay, "Milton's Paradises," categorizes paradises broadly to include places or states of happiness. Her synopsis of textual examples and well-established critical topics provides a usefully succinct introduction to and classification of the subject. One wishes she would have engaged further in ongoing critical conversations relevant to her topic, such as Milton's quietism, millenarianism, interiority, and relationships. In "Eve and the Landscape of Love in *Paradise Lost*," Stella Revard's thoughtful and close reading of "sweet" and its classical sources and allusions analyzes how the word changes in its pre- and post-lapsarian meaning. Revard's essay captures, in its own gracefully poetic language, the "sweet" essence of Eden that has been lost: in Adam and Eve's love, in their home, and in the quality of their joy together. Ann Torday Gulden's "A Walk in the Paradise Garden" utilizes the pictorial and textual "trptych" as an apt metaphor and visual model for the conceptual, spiritual, and discursive interrelatedness of Adam and Eve's speeches in Book 4. 610-88 which lead to and enable their retreat to the "innermost bower." Gulden, with fresh insights, considers gendered ways of perception (the compartmental male/inclusive female), and her study is augmented by a wide range of critical views that enrich her own ideas. In "Milton's *Primavera*," William Shullenburger offers an inspired exploration of the fullness of the power of art and creation. His analysis of "A Mask" considers the "harmonic reciprocities" of

classical and biblical sources that make “the text a figural counterpart to the perfected ecological dynamism of the garden it evokes” (66). The essay shows not only an exalted appreciation for Milton’s text, but an intensely spiritual, perhaps phenomenological connection with its art. June Sturrock’s “Eve, Eden, and the Flowers of Experience: Milton, Blake, and Botany,” focuses on Milton’s influence on Blake’s botanical representation of fallen and Edenic states, arguing that Blake wants to correct views of Eve prejudiced by the post-Linnaean sexualization of plants in need of tending.

Continuing the center of attention on the visual arts, Wendy Furman-Adams and Virginia James Tufte’s lengthy but multifaceted essay, “‘Earth Felt the Wound’: Gendered Ecological Consciousness in Illustrations of *Paradise Lost*,” traces the changes in how artists depict Eden and the landscape in illustrations before 1820 (where landscape serves merely as a backdrop) and after 1820, primarily through the work of John Martin and Jane Giraud (the first female illustrator of Milton’s works). Their rich study, supported by numerous images, conveys keen perceptions into Milton’s ecological consciousness from the point of view of gender and visual art. In “Reading Milton Greenly: The Flight Into Egypt in Renaissance Art,” Joan Blythe presents a strikingly original reading of the Nativity Ode, *Paradise Lost*, and *Paradise Regained*, by showing the how the concepts and images recurring in artistic depictions of “The Flight into Egypt” figure significantly in Milton’s poetry. These include Jesus’ role as new Moses, the ‘world view’ presentation of landscape, and the pivotal importance of Mary. Primary among Blythe’s 18 illustrations are “Flight” paintings by Joachim Patinir, Caravaggio, Claude Lorrain, Poussin, and Rembrandt.

The initial constellation of excellent and thoughtfully interrelated essays gets interrupted by Alan Rudrum’s anomalous essay, “God’s Second Book and the Regenerate Mind: Some Early Modern Conversion Narratives,” which focuses briefly on writers such as Boehme, Fox, and Vaughan with an eye toward their preoccupation with the natural world and the idea of its heavenly regeneration. If Rudrum does not seem to engage as vigorously as other contributors with ecological readings, it is perhaps due to his wariness about over-reading seventeenth-century concerns about the natural world in terms of our

own. Seemingly at odds at first with the overall themes of the volume, but nonetheless with genuine and deliberate meditation on the idea of Eden, is Richard DuRocher's astute and deeply poignant, "'Cropt by th'Almighties hand': Allegory as Theodicy in Anne Bradstreet's Poems on Her Grandchildren." DuRocher shows beautifully how Bradstreet's representation of the Edenic, "carrying with it a rich biblical tradition of God's providential care for his suffering people, holds out some comfort for her family upon their otherwise inexplicable losses" (220). The essay contributes valuable contextualization for the other considerations of Eden throughout the collection.

Returning the attention to Milton, the final two essays both make distinctive contributions to ecological readings of *Paradise Lost*. Jeffrey S. Theis' "'The purlieu of heaven': Milton's Eden as a Pastoral Forest," animates seventeenth-century land law and land usage debates, as well as the pastoral tradition, and Theis argues compellingly that Milton engages in the contemporary discourse about woodlands and ecological responsibility through his treatment of Eden in *Paradise Lost* as a forest wilderness. Karen Edwards continues consideration of the literal landscape by aligning Milton's use of "waste" with the ongoing, political arguments and activities of the Levellers and Diggers. Edwards' superb essay, "Eden Raised: Waste in Milton's Garden" signals the peroration for the prescriptive ecological messages of the entire collection.

Diane McColley's concluding essay, "A Happy Rural Seat of Various View," with its reflections on Eden and the environment, reminds us that the "variety is the essence of Eden" and "the variety of its beauty is never static or diminished...because it is all connected" (275). Her personal and biographical tribute to the interconnectedness of her colleagues and friends also affirms the useful work of scholarship still relevant and hopefully still influencing our poetic, natural, and collegial worlds.

The essays in Hiltner's Festschrift collection for Diane McColley not only embody some of the finest critical work currently being done on eco-critical approaches to Milton, but the book also stands as a model of what a true Festschrift ought to be: a generous celebration of an esteemed scholar's contributions to the field. Almost every essay in the volume substantiates McColley's important work on gender,

politics, visual art, and the environment, and thus *Renaissance Ecology* stands as a lovely and worthy tribute. In its own right, *Renaissance Ecology* succeeds in offering new, original, and noteworthy contributions to our understanding of Milton and seventeenth-century historical, artistic, and poetic texts and contexts. On the whole, this book holds to the highest standards of scholarship, from the quality of its essays, to the unusually plentiful array of visual images, to the careful management of the Notes, Bibliography, and Index.

Sharon Achinstein and Elizabeth Sauer, eds. *Milton and Toleration*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. x + 320 pp. \$81.00. Review by JAMES EGAN, THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON.

This collection includes an introduction, an afterward, and fifteen newly-published essays on the concept of toleration, considered expansively enough to include the history of toleration, its legal and social practices, and the extent of Milton's participation, both politically and imaginatively, in the discourses of toleration in the early modern world. The introduction by Achinstein and Sauer argues for the relevance of the collection's contents not only to literary critics, but also to historians, on the assumption that "the images of literature, rhetoric, and poetry present a kind of 'truth' of the past" which critics are "uniquely skilled to explore" (5). *Milton and Toleration* balances its agenda by, on the one hand, treating comparatively narrow issues, such as the ways in which liberty of conscience expands historically into a wider "defence of human freedoms" (10); and, on the other, by constructing frameworks of inquiry for new assessment of the intricacies of Milton's positions on toleration. The editors note that the collection "explores a poetics of tolerance" (19), and thereby qualify the work to join the important post-1990s discussion of the aesthetics of Milton's prose.

The first part, subtitled Revisiting Whig Accounts, includes the following contributions:

Nigel Smith, "Milton and the European Contexts of Toleration"