

Viney Intricacies: Medusa & Eve's "Wanton" Gardens in *Paradise Lost*

Sophia Grabiec

Senior Capstone Experience

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Katherine Charles

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Viney Intricacies: Medusa & Eve's "Wanton" Gardens in *Paradise Lost*

She gave him that fair enticing fruit
 With liberal hand: he scrupl'd not to eat
 Against his better knowledge, not deceiv'd,
 But fondly overcome with Female charm.

Book IX Lines 996-999

This project explores seventeenth century garden structures in order to draw the conclusion that Medusa and Eve exist in *Paradise Lost* as reflective female figures associated with predestined sin. I argue that this relationship indicates Eve's predestined damnation. Medusa's presence in Hell unifies Hell and Eden, proposing Eve's original act of sin was prescribed from the beginning. To achieve this comparison, Milton creates two gardens; one in Hell and the Paradisal garden of Eden. Eve and Medusa control these spaces and characterize them as sinful, a product of misogyny inherent to the seventeenth century. Milton's gardens do more than provide a space for these characters to exist, though. Milton's gardens operate as portals into his ideological understandings of Puritan and Catholic paradigms as well as constructions of women figures. As seen in the quoted passage, Eve serves as the catalyst for action in John Milton's *Paradise Lost* when it comes to original Sin; curiosity, power, and wantonness define her being. In considering Eve as one with her environment, she exhibits qualities similarly seen in Hell with Medusa. Hell's garden holds Medusa while Eden's garden holds Eve. In representing a garden in Hell that reflects the one in Eden, Milton provides a predestined place for Eve in Hell. Milton ties a suspension between the above and below, predetermining Eve's fall from the beginning with Medusa existing in Hell while Eve navigates Eden. Eve was designed from her origins to give Adam "that fair enticing fruit," and—Genesis aside— it does not come as a surprise thanks to the narrative tool that is Medusa's landscape. Italian Renaissance garden structures are ever-present in both Eden and Hell, which serves as Milton's primary nod to his critique of Catholicism throughout *Paradise Lost*. By exploring the properties of these gardens and exposing the relationship they construct between Eden and Hell, I suggest there is a tie between Eve and Medusa as characters that contradicts Milton's Puritan rhetoric.

The argument will follow the following construction: First I will provide historical context of gardening practices and trends. Landscaping held particularly high priority in

sixteenth and seventeenth century European estates, which leads to my assertions that their religious and political connotations influenced Milton's gardens of Catholic Eden and Hell. Next, I will use the information about garden structures and apply it to the gardens Milton constructs specifically in *Paradise Lost*. I explore close readings of Milton's topographies in an effort to demonstrate the similarities between Eden and Hell's gardens. After establishing these connections, I conclude with Eve and Medusa's relationship. The two women are symbolically condemned in sin, and Milton tells us this quickly. This final point brings me to my conclusion, where I suggest potential intent for painting the gardens in this way.

Broadly, Eve's occupation in *Paradise Lost* scholarship is greatly explored as the subject of gender (in)equality and feminine subordination. The argument over whether or not Milton treats Eve as a feminist character or as a perpetuation of patriarchal hierarchies has been a long and extensive one. Milton explicitly draws Eve in certain ways in order to accomplish a variety of literary and social tasks. While *Paradise Lost* can certainly be read through a feminist lens, I argue against *Paradise Lost* being a proto-feminist text; this derives from Milton's usage of women as symbolic figures of sinful sexuality and his damnation of female intellect.

Over the past 50 years, *Paradise Lost* scholarship has circled around Eve and her gender dynamics. Diane McColley's contribution to the 1999 *Cambridge Companion to Milton* established that the 1960s and 1970s were dominated by a consensus that Eve existed as "inherently trivial, vain, and inclined to fall, thus denying Milton's assertion of eternal providence."¹ The 1980s brought an emergence of feminist scholarship that reads *Paradise Lost* as dismantling Eve's odious stereotype as argued by authors like Barbara Lewalski, Joan Bennett, and Mary Ann Radzinowicz². They explore Eve in ways that challenge the decade before them, i.e., their analyses support a feminist interpretation of Milton's ideology. However, existing alongside feminist readings in the 1980s are resistant readings of Eve's treatment as an enlightened figure. Jackie DiSalvo, Christine Froula, Marcia Landy, Mary Nyquist, and Patricia Parker³ contribute to the understanding that regardless of Milton's supposed proto-feminist representation of Eve, the patriarchy is so ingrained in her origin/creation that she cannot exist outside this realm of submission.

In the 1990s, the conversation surrounding Milton's treatment of Eve continued with a fair amount of contributions from both sides. Accentuating Milton's sexism is Julia M. Walker's 1998 *Medusa's Mirrors: Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, and the Metamorphosis of the Female*

¹ Diane K. McColley, "Milton and the Sexes" in *The Cambridge Companion to Milton*, ed. Dennis Danielson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 175–92.

² See also: Kathleen Swaim and Joann Webber.

³ See Bibliography.

*Self*⁴ where she argues that Milton's treatment of Eve is deprecatory, and that Eve never gets to actually see her true reflection upon her creation in Book IV (lines 460-465). Eve's relationship to Adam is secondary, which is again iterated in Anne Barbeau Gardiner's 1994 "Milton's Parody of Catholic Hymns in Eve's temptation and Fall."⁵ Heather James also establishes Eve's naturalized hierarchical position in her recognition that Eve's "hazards of postlapsarian sexuality and wandering desires,"⁶ connect with her Classic Ovidian—and thus Catholic—idolatry. Advocating for Eve's inculpability was McColley's work, which read Eve in new, decorous, light. McColley reputedly expanded Milton scholarship in the 1990s; her works stand out as foundational in exploring Eve in Eden visually. *A Gust for Paradise: Milton's Eden and the Visual Arts* includes monumental close readings of the environment in Eden, which, in effect, kick-started an elaborate chain of ecocritical work on Eden. Jane Sturrock⁷, and Lewalski serve as examples of Eco-conscious scholars who note Eden's ecological visuality in reaction to McColley's works⁸.

In response to the polarized latter half of the twentieth century, many twenty-first-century scholars began to lean feminist in reading the treatment of Eve as she exists in Eden, with particular attention on Eve in her environment. Mandy Green provides another Ovidian reading of Eve, claiming the significance in having a first-person narration of her creation story is, "difficult to exaggerate."⁹ Green claims Eve's pivotal points in character development relate to classic tales from Ovid: "Narcissus, then as Daphne, then as Flora, now as the frail and vulnerable Proserpine, now as the unwary gardener Pomona; or when, as she repents her sin, she is seen to resemble the pious and virtuous wife Pyrrha."¹⁰ These readings claim Eve has autonomy standing in the Garden of Paradise. Likewise, Kat Lecky writes a thorough examination of Eve in garden space as an independent figure. Lecky claims Eve was clearly written as representative of "female medical practitioners central to the early modern health care industry," and that Eden's "popular compendia of herbal remedies tempered the tragedy of

⁴ Julia M Walker, *Medusa's Mirrors: Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, and the Metamorphosis of the Female Self* (University of Delaware Press, Newark, 1998).

⁵ Anne Barbeau Gardiner, "Milton's Parody of Catholic Hymns in Eve's Temptation and Fall: Original Sin as a Paradigm of 'Secret Idolatries'" in *Studies in Philology* 91, no. 2 (University of North Carolina Press, 1994): 216-31.

⁶ Heather James, "Milton's Eve, the Romance Genre, and Ovid" in *Comparative Literature* 45, no. 2 (Duke University Press 1993): 126.

⁷ Jane Sturrock, "Eve, Eden, and the Flowers of Experience: Milton, Blake, and Botany" in *Renaissance Ecology: Imagining Eden in Milton's England*, 91–106. (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2008).

⁸ Their essays are published in *Renaissance Ecology: Imagining Eden in Milton's England*.

⁹ Mandy Green. "The Virgin in the Garden: Milton's Ovidian Eve" in *The Modern Language Review* 100. (Modern Humanities Research Association, 2005), 906.

¹⁰ Green, "The Virgin in the Garden: Milton's Ovidian Eve," 922.

the Fall with the promise of a recoverable Eden whose seeds hide in England's flora."¹¹ Lecky commends Eve's ability to sustain the garden around her with precision and devotion to its livelihood. These two articles, in particular, demonstrate the focus on Eve as she appears in relationship to the garden around her.

To further demonstrate the fairly acute occupation in scholarship with Eve in relationship with her surroundings are Amy Tigner's publications between 2008 and 2012.¹² Tigner provides a plethora of research on environmental, agricultural, and consumption-based readings of Milton in conjunction with other Early Modern texts as demonstrated in *Eating with Eve, Literature and the Renaissance Garden From Elizabeth I to Charles II : England's Paradise*, and "The Flowers of Paradise: Botanical Trade in Sixteenth-and-Seventeenth-Century England." Within this collection, Tigner repeats references to Italian garden structures as being highly influential to English gardens. In considering Eve living *in* these places, Tigner's consideration of Eve's environment shapes the ways in which readers consume her as a character.

Ecocritical and environment-based publications are by no means Eve-exclusive—a great deal of research has examined Milton's Paradise from ecological, agricultural, horticultural, and economic perspectives, as well. Katherine Bootle Attie¹³ reflects on garden polemics in the 1650s, which shapes the contextual landscape on which I ground my argument. Attie provides a rich history of England's rural land as an object experiencing scrutiny and monumental change. Many scholars notably contribute to the breadth of ecocritical scholarship surrounding Milton's Eden¹⁴.

While contemporary scholarship on Eve focuses on gender and space with abundance and breadth, the literature on Medusa in *Paradise Lost* is minute. My research finds the triad of Eve, garden space, and Medusa appearing in secondary literature only in James Dougal Fleming's, "Meanwhile, Medusa in *Paradise Lost*" (2002.) Fleming recognizes Medusa as a foregrounded character, emphasizing her *apotropaic* presence in Hell. Apotropaic refers to the warding off of evil in a certain space; as I will reference later, Medusa and Eve both serve as guardians or gatekeepers of their respective realms. Fleming's conclusion that Medusa cannot be qualified as a fallen angel raises questions, for him, of her purpose. I will respond to Fleming

¹¹ Kat Lecky, "Milton's Experienced Eve" in *Philological Quarterly* 96, no. 4 (Bucknell University, 2017), 453.

¹² See Bibliography for list of Tigner's publications.

¹³ Katherine Bootle Attie, "Enclosure Polemics and the Garden in the 1650s," in *Studies in English Literature*, (Rice University, 2011): 135-157.

¹⁴ See also: Karen L. Edwards, Wendy Furman-Adams and Virginia James Tuft, Mark Stoll, Nick Pici, and Nancy Langston.

with my assessment of Medusa's purpose in *Paradise Lost* as a whole, though I will particularly focus on Medusa as a reflection of Eve.

In uniting these two schools of scholarship, I aim to contribute a close reading of Medusa as purposeful in Milton's representation of the fall of humanity. Joining the two women together provides ample evidence for Milton's predestined place for Eve in Hell, which strengthens Medusa's ontological importance as a gatekeeper in Book II. Milton's Eve has largely been read as if she were an autonomous character with agentic tendencies, but I suggest otherwise. Because of the nature of prescriptivism in depicting Biblical events, reading Eve in the context of 1667 social expectations exposes the layers of misogyny present in *Paradise Lost*. Both the social landscape and the physical landscapes of seventeenth-century England provide a rich backdrop for reading Eve; seventeenth-century England's adoption of gardening practices became inextricably linked to social developments and values, which proves to be relevant in Eve's placement in garden space. The intervention I am offering is a contextual exploration in order to appropriately address Eve in her environment.

Eve in her environment is almost exclusively in the garden of Eden. This idea of a perfect Eden was sweeping the English countryside in the middle of the seventeenth century, which inherently held polarized religious implications. First, physical gardens in England will serve as a defining factor in claiming Milton wrote Hell as a Catholic spectacle. England's gardens were directly influenced by the Italian Renaissance, and Milton litters both Paradise and Hell with these signifiers of Italian catholic symbolism. I will provide evidence for the basis of these garden ideologies. I will follow this with a close reading of Eden and Hell's topographies. Then, to compare Eve and Medusa as women gatekeepers of these places allows us to assume Hell and Eden are naturally paralleled. Their creation stories and physical descriptions unite them. In tandem with Eve/Medusa, I will explain the more minute nuances Milton employs in order to strengthen the connection between Hell and Eden; his Catholic imagery, references to classical Greek forms, and emphasis on reflection establishes Medusa and Eve as mirrors that expose their predestined fates in Hell. In doing so, Milton raises questions about predestination and God's foreknowledge; what is he claiming to be true?

I: Garden Polemics

*"At the beginning of the century the garden was the place where statues were displayed with little regard for any kinds of arrangements. . . chronological, geographical or topical. By the end of the century the garden and its design had become the focus of interest and the antiquities had become decorations."*¹⁵

Elisabeth MacDougall

Gardens, husbandry, and cultivation served as a socially and politically powerful backdrop for writers during and after the English Restoration. Due to the combination of air pollution in London and the havoc wreaked on English farmlands throughout the Civil War [1642-1651], "enclosure polemics"¹⁶ bore relevance. Though smog in London was "hardly a new problem in the Renaissance, with the first of many commissions to study the problem in London being set up in 1286,"¹⁷ the vast increase in London's population from 1500 to 1700 ignited a public response to the ecological crisis. Some of the English population shifted out of London and into the countryside, but because "the war made agricultural improvement an issue of higher national priority than ever before,"¹⁸ those relocating had to begin growing food. Gardens of *production* as opposed to just aesthetics were a priority. A rise in population coinciding with food shortages inspired—rather, demanded— an emergence of agriscience in these rural parts of the country. The agricultural and economic crisis of 1650¹⁹ pushed forth this escapist perspective, influencing estate-owners to cultivate the grounds outside their homes, uniting with the environment around them. In these gardens, at first, was practicality. Next came ideological construction; "antiquities had become decorations."²⁰

With the growing number of gardens came the publication of numerous husbandry tracts of all purposes. Over time, the English garden eventually followed a suggested formula: "a flower garden or garden of pleasure; a vegetable garden; and an orchard"²¹. As people began cultivating, they also began designing. Jim Bartos succinctly connects the burst of husbandry texts produced in the mid-seventeenth century to Edenic replication trends. The influx of

¹⁵ Elisabeth Blair MacDougall, "Fountains, Statues, and Flowers: Studies in Italian Gardens of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," in *Renaissance Quarterly* 50, no. 2, (Washington, D.C., 1997), 25.

¹⁶ Attie, "Enclosure Polemics and the Garden in the 1650s."

¹⁷ Ken Hiltner, "Introduction" in *Renaissance Ecology: Imagining Eden in Milton's England*, (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2008), pp. 2.

¹⁸ Attie, "Enclosure Polemics and the Garden in the 1650s," 138.

¹⁹ Laura Brace, *The Politics of Property: Labour, Freedom, and Belonging* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 16-7.

²⁰ Elisabeth Blair MacDougall, "Fountains, Statues, and Flowers..." 25.

²¹ Jim Bartos, "The Spiritual Orchard: God, Garden and Landscape in Seventeenth-Century England Before the Restoration," *Garden History* 38, no. 2 (The Gardens Trust, 2010). 180.

practical gardening manuals and architectural design recommendations published in the mid-seventeenth century England provides a fairly acute summary of the Edenic aesthetics sweeping the country; meticulous care was put into the architectural construction, arrangement, and yield of a garden. The replication of Eden included more dense plantings, horticulture was arranged for beauty, and paths were built for wandering. Edenic replications mirrored the Paradise's organized yet bountiful quality. How these trends took shape physically and conceptually are the questions most useful to my research. In other words, how did Catholic estates construct their versions of Eden as opposed to Protestant estates?

Very few garden remnants can be found due to their ephemerality. Husbandry guides build our contemporary understanding of how the English constructed gardens due to the lack of tangible fossils. Published in 1629, botanist John Parkinson's *Paradesi en Sol* established a general guide that suggested a correct organization to gardens. Prior to describing individual plants, the preparatory chapters establish the pious "'ordering' of the garden, the optimal placing of the three gardens in relation to each other and advice on caring for the plants in each garden."²² In 1640, Parkinson published another botanical guide, *Theatrum Botanicum: The Theatre of Plants*, which catalogued herbs and their purposes. Author and physician Sir Thomas Browne published *Hydriotaphia & The Garden of Cyrus* in 1658, William Coles published *Adam in Eden: or, Nature's Paradise* in 1657, and nurseryman Ralph Austen published *A Treatise of Fruit Trees* in 1653. Important to note about these publications is their general implication that humans needed to regain or recreate an Edenic atmosphere. The estate garden should be one of production and tranquility. Though the authors had differences in their recommendations in "such technical matters as planting, fertilizing, and grafting, the improvers consistently employ the same rhetorical strategy: they revise Adam's curse of agricultural labor into an opportunity to recover in England at least part of what mankind lost in the Garden of Eden."²³ Publications of reference and practicality arising in popularity "serve[s] to underline the importance of Eden as a point of conceptual reference,"²⁴ in seventeenth century English country estates.

This desire to re-attain an Edenic state during time of war is logical; exploring the actual manifestations of this regression, though, is to discover the implications of England's garden design. The adaptation of Protestant (and thus English) values, specifically, in gardening practices in seventeenth century England has apparent evidence in the manuals above as well as

²² Bartos, "The Spiritual Orchard: God, Garden and Landscape in Seventeenth-Century England Before the Restoration," 180.

²³ Ibid, 138.

²⁴ Ibid, 179.

artistic renditions of Jacobean and Caroline gardens. Strong work ethic, strict planning, and taut organization characterizes the English garden pre-Civil War. Roy Strong curates a comprehensive guide of images that synthesize English garden aesthetics as they developed prior to and after the English Civil War, as well. Directly prior to the Civil War, English gardens were constructed as “large-scale geometric garden[s], often laid out with deliberate symbolic intent.”²⁵ In other words, they were meticulous in concise design and humble delivery. See Fig. 1.

In the Oxford college gardens depicted below four distinct knots determine walking space for leisure (Fig. 1). Within the confines of the walls are specific barriers, e.g. the tree line and the perimeters of the decorative knots; leisure and pleasure are guided by boundaries in this garden.

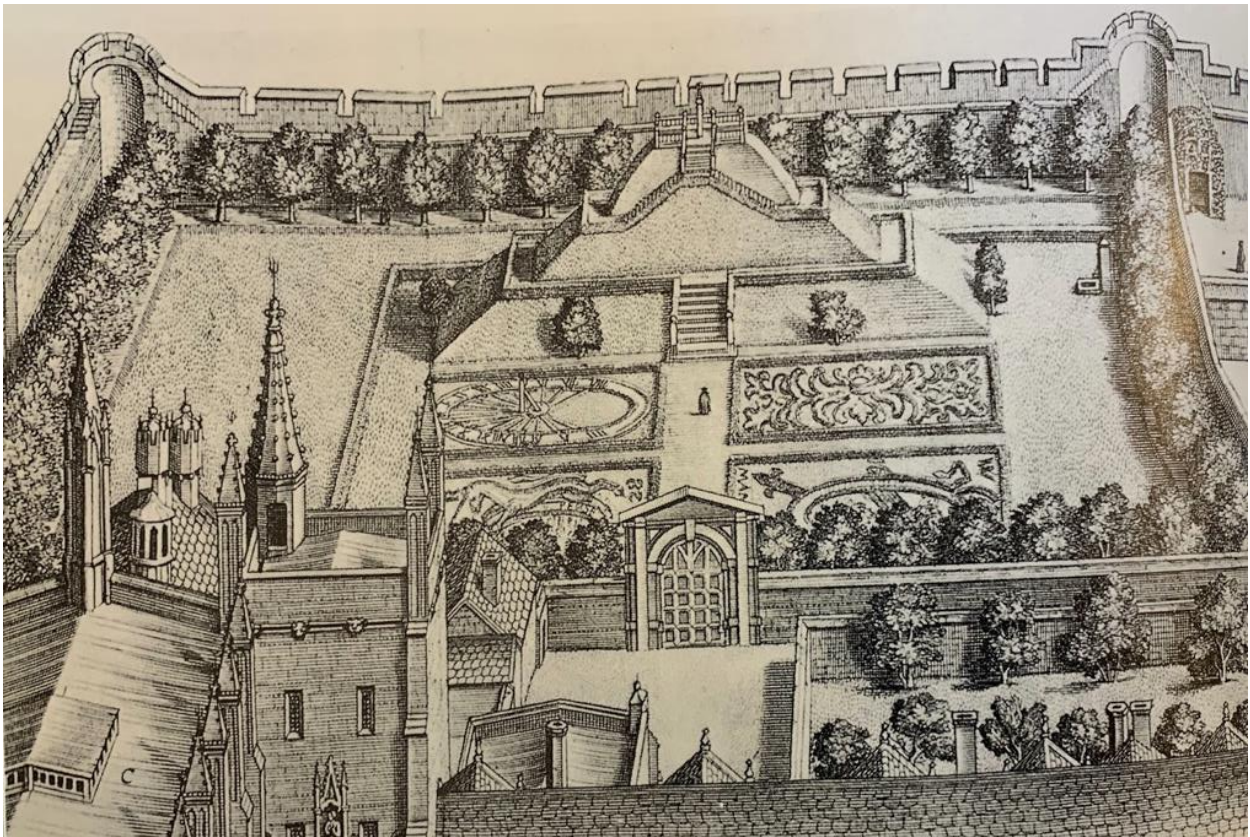


Figure 1: Oxford college gardens recorded by David Loggan in the 1670s. Jacobean in style. (Strong 116).

²⁵ Roy Strong, *The Renaissance Garden in England*, (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1979), 124.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, all of the aristocratic garden architecture that had emerged throughout the seventeenth century had been destroyed; statues and fountains were auctioned off and the horticulture arrangements were burned. As aforementioned, people felt a panic to develop an agricultural system during the war, making the English country a place in ecological limbo. But after King Charles II restored England's prosperity, royal gardens developed again under Baroque aesthetics and conventions. In my view, because Milton's garden is Eden his garden of Paradise also regresses to a time of repose in England prior to war. After all, "gardening is essentially one of the arts of peace,"²⁶. In illustrating peace, Milton would be illustrating a time in England's history piqued in creative interests and connection with the natural world. While *Paradise Lost* was published post-war, we must consider the fact that the majority of Milton's life experience with the English garden—and what a garden meant ideologically—was prior to the English Restoration.

The trends seen in early seventeenth-century England were direct reflections of the Italian Renaissance half a century prior. "The explosion in garden making in the Jacobean and Caroline periods, in fact, is this Italian Mannerist phase arriving in England fifty years on,"²⁷. *Mannerist*, here, refers to the Italian gardening period roughly between 1540 and 1570 where "gardens, grottos, and waterworks,"²⁸ dominated the *mise-en-scène*. The Mannerist gardens of Italy, "still carried with it the medieval tradition of the garden as the earthly paradise and as a setting for courtly dalliance, but it became much more."²⁹ The garden evolved from a royal entertainment place alone to a dense space for medicinal research and development, philosophical thought, celebrations, feasts, and architectural creativity over the course of the seventeenth century. The intricate designs intertwined the "classical contrast between the more formal, cultivated parts of the garden and the wilder, informal parts," which most commonly featured divisions via "avenues and vistas focusing on statuary and fountains, but between the avenues are dense plantings of trees and evergreens."³⁰ The Jacobean Mannerist garden was, ultimately, "a walled enclosure within which nature tamed by art is made to fulfil the wildest of Mannerist fantasies, above all by means of the new hydraulics."³¹ England adopted these features eventually, though they were delayed by geography: "England responded to all that happened in garden design in Italy of the Renaissance."³² English gardens saw Mannerist

²⁶ Strong, *The Renaissance Garden in England*, 197.

²⁷ *Ibid* 22.

²⁸ *Ibid* 22.

²⁹ *Ibid* 20.

³⁰ *Ibid* 21.

³¹ *Ibid* 136.

³² *Ibid* 20.

conventions as early as 1615 when Inigo Jones, architect, returned to England and popularized the style. England's adoption of the Italian Renaissance aesthetic can be seen in Fig. 2 in the water parterre, "a feature best known in Italian gardens."³³ The garden at Wilton was "the third to be made in England in the Italian manner,"³⁴ in 1635. What characterizes it as Italianate are the foci on water parterre that can be seen in the middle section of the image, cutting across the garden. They are the only diagonally moving lines in the garden, interrupting the structured rectangles. A water parterre refers to a waterway or stream that separates garden sections. Parterres generally refer to the organization of horticultural beds by way of either walking pathway or hedging. This inclusion of water parterre serves a functional purpose, as it feeds the coronet fountains, which can be seen just above the parterre, also signature to Italian decoration.



Figure 2: The aerial view of the garden from the Jardin de Wilton house looking towards the grotto. The garden is located on the Wilton Estate in Wilton, Wiltshire, England. The original architecture was redesigned and renovated in 1737. Strong, pp. 137.

³³ Strong, *The Renaissance Garden in England*, 156.

³⁴ *Ibid* 148.

While the Italian renaissance trend certainly paved its way through England, only the most aristocratic gardens met this architectural movement. And when they did, the intricacy in the sculptures, fountains, and layouts simply replicated the Italian art form (as opposed to branching into an innovative style or form). Also important to note, less revered estates maintained more puritanical spaces than did aristocratic and perhaps Catholic estates. This distinction bears relevance when considering Milton's alignments with Puritanism. While architect Jones was popularizing³⁵ the Italian architectural style, Puritan-built gardens and gardeners were equally present throughout England³⁶.

To place original Italian garden sculptures/grottos/fountains next to the replicated English versions is to see where true palatial qualities reside. Though the dates differ, that is to reflect the more appropriate timeline of the implementation of the style per area. Though both places feature fountains and terraces, it is clear England's presentation of the trending features are subdued and less luxuriant in detail (Fig. 4). They resemble order and civility while the Zucchi painting emits depth, complexity, and unison with the natural world (Fig. 3).

Milton unexpectedly reflects this Italian Mannerist style in his description of Eden in *Paradise Lost*. The desire to regress to peace, tranquility, and beauty spanned his country during the time the trend was adopted. As Ken Hiltner iterates, What made Eden of particular interest to early modern England was that, as a pristine garden, it captured the imagination of a country in the midst of an environmental crisis of unprecedented proportions.”³⁷ The preoccupation with the tame-ability of nature allowed people to live sustainably and independently in relatively peaceful environments. Adam and Eve's Paradise, as exhibited in Book IV, lines 200-285 describes explicitly Italian garden structures due to their grandeur: “All Trees of noblest kind for sight, smell, taste”; “Southward through EDEN went a River large”; “Rose a fresh Fountain, and with many a rill/ Waterd the Garden”; “divided into four main Streams, Runs divers”; “Saphire Fount”; “Flours worthy of Paradise which not nice Art In Beds and curious Knots”; “Betwixt them Lawns, or level Downs”; “umbrageous Grots and Caves Of coole recess”; and “murmuring waters fall/ Down the slope hills, disperst, or in a Lake.” The water, the fountains, the elaborate knots, and the variety of artistic flower arrangements characterize Eden as Catholicly ornate. These particular features are the tangible structures described in Book IV as the reader approaches Eden for the first time. With such an emphasis on

³⁵ See Strong pp. 161-2 for Wilton's influence on other English estate gardens.

³⁶ William Lawson, “A Nevv Orchard and Garden, or, The Best Way for Planting, Grafting, and to Make Any Ground Good for a Rich Orchard Particularly in the nor and Generally for the Whole Kingdome of England,” *Early English Books Online*. (London: J.H. for F. Williams, 1626).

³⁷ Hiltner, *Renaissance Ecology: Imagining Eden in Milton's England*, 1.

water, one must conclude Milton's reference to Italian architectural design. The Grotto ("Grot") and the canal ("River large") define this space as vast—particularly characteristic of the gardens at Italian villas. Though England was copying subdued versions of knots, fountains, and terraces, they were less likely to replicate the grottos, the caves, and the canals due to their grandeur and their agricultural and ecological sustainability. The clear value on symmetry in the former half of seventeenth-century England versus the wandering, expansive priority in Renaissance Italy distinguishes Eden as rooting in Italian tradition. Throughout Eden's description, the references to traditional Italian landscape design solidifies its place in Italian and Catholic origin. This distinction proves the insinuated connection between Eden and Hell.



Figure 3: Jacob Zucchi, *Villa Medici, Rome*. c. 1576, photo I. C. C. D. Rome, E 86694.



Figure 4: "MR ROSE, THE ROYAL GARDENER, PRESENTING TO KING CHARLES II. THE FIRST PINEAPPLE RAINED IN ENGLAND." From a Painting by Thomas Stewart.

II: Italian Topographies in Eden and Hell

“I want to ask again what we should make of the wild aspect of Milton’s garden, and how recognizing the character and effect of this wildness might alter our perception of the life of Adam and Eve, at least of their work as gardeners.”³⁸

John Knott

A regression to Eden’s natural, untouched countryside is recognizable, and Protestant virtue became synonymous with working outdoors under the eyes of God. Milton’s Paradise did reflect Puritan work ethic; but to clarify, he only did so in the characters of Adam and Eve and not the landscape. Though scholars have investigated the state of Milton’s Eden, there is a lapse in attention to the differences between English gardens and Italian ones. For example, Amy Tigner asserts “the public impact of *Paradise Lost* and Milton’s radical theory of ‘the Edenic’ caused a significant change in horticultural principles, transforming ideas of how land should be imagined and managed.”³⁹ Helen Gardner claims similar sentiments wherein Milton’s garden influenced and was influenced by English countryside.⁴⁰ In my reading, they both miss the theological values Milton employs in Eden itself. Milton’s Edenic garden opposes all other Protestant references from its initial depiction aside from the work ethic found in the humans residing there. In fact, Milton employs the polar opposite of a Protestant garden by surrounding Adam and Eve with a wild they cannot tame. He incorporates an image of ornament reminiscent of Catholic idolatry in Italian gardens: “Of porous Earth with kindly thirst up-drawn,/ Rose a fresh Fountain, and with many a rill/ Water’d the Garden; thence united fell.”⁴¹ Italian gardens often featured dynamic elevations, where fountains worked as the focal point on an elevated surface. While Milton certainly ensures Adam has devout Protestantism in his work ethic, “morning shines, and the fresh field/Calls us; we lose the prime, to mark how spring/Our tender plants,”⁴² the Eden Milton draws delivers pushback to these values in its Italianate complexity versus English organized simplicity.

Rather than associating with the organization of the seventeenth century English countryside, Milton’s garden provides rich evidence for the Italian Renaissance garden in its untamable, wild, and enticing elements.

³⁸ John R. Knott, “Milton’s Wild Garden” in *Studies in Philology* 102, no. 1 (University of Michigan, 2005), 66–82.

³⁹ Amy L. Tigner, *Literature and the Renaissance Garden From Elizabeth I to Charles II: England’s Paradise*, (England: Routledge, 2012), 195.

⁴⁰ Helen Louise Gardner, “A Reading of *Paradise Lost*,” *Alexander Lectures in the University of Toronto* (Clarendon Press, 1962).

⁴¹ *Paradise Lost*, 4.228-230.

⁴² *Paradise Lost*, 5.20-22.

Under a tuft of shade that on a green
 Stood whispering soft, by a fresh Fountain side
 They sat them down, and after no more toil
 Of thir sweet Gardning labour then suffic'd
 To recommend coole ZEPHYR⁴³

Adam and Eve's labor that day necessitated relaxation under the shade of a tree— the appreciation for the gentle zephyr wind emphasizes their fatigue. Soft voices and slow movements suggest the pair has spent a protracted day in the garden. Seeking solitude in the shade, however, does more than emphasize their lethargy. To stand on green and be by the direct side of a fountain illustrates an image such as the following:



Figure 5: Giusto Utens, *Villa Medici, Castello*, detail, 1599, Florence, Museo de Firenze com'era. The immediacy of green to water in the architecture shows that boundaries are less evident, here.

⁴³ *Paradise Lost*, 4.320-325.

The seemingly overcrowded lush plantings encapsulate the central fountain, providing aesthetics of wilderness or organic growth. In conjunction with the fountain's proximity to the trees, consider what this proximity does for the function of the space: with crowded tall structures comes shade and cool water. This was not a signature design to England. See Fig. 1 with its rigid lines and distinctly wider parterres for a direct comparison.

Lack of separation between nature and human constructions appear in close readings of the garden at Villa Medici. A less central area of the same garden in Italy would suffice as an example of the Italian quality of incorporating water into a seamless architectural design (see Fig. 6). Central to my argument, here, is the proximity of fountains and greenery; the walkway or pathway operated as a tool for separation in the English garden so routinely that having a fountain flush with natural green signals to the reader that the fountain is interlaid in the natural world.

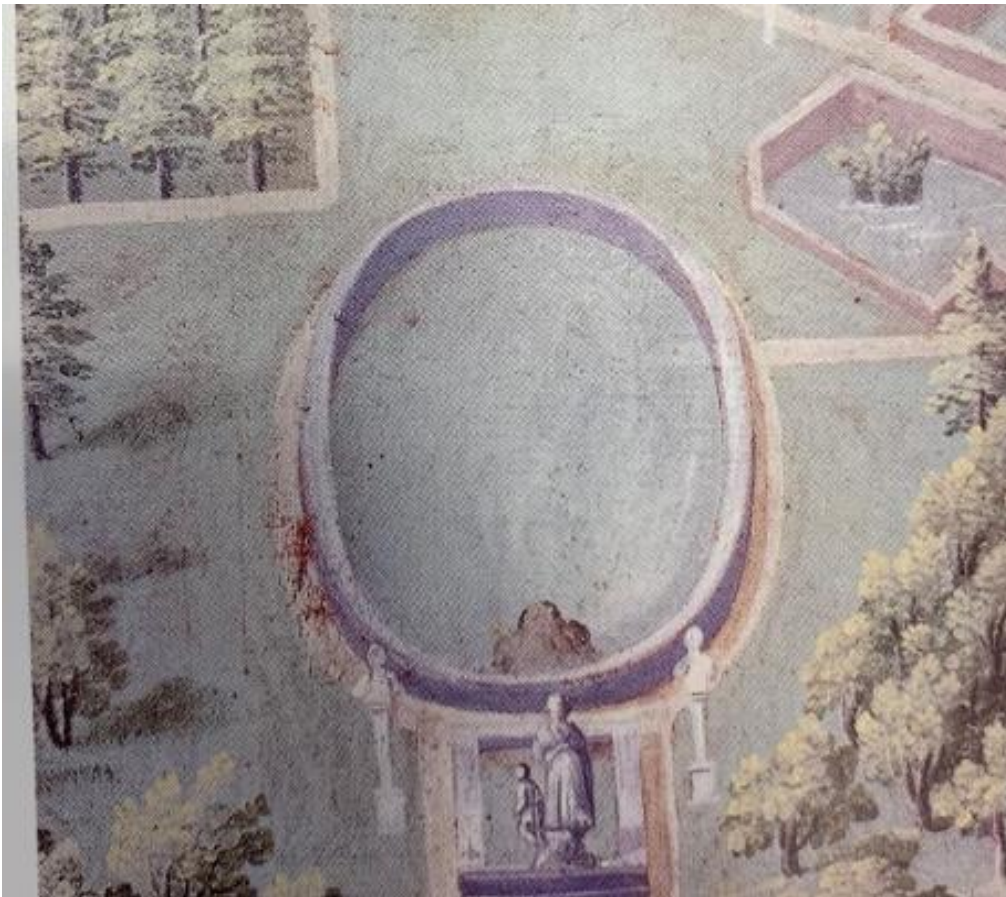


Figure 6: Pool with Laundress and Pissing Boy, from Giusto Utens, Villa Medici, Pratolino, detail, 1599. Florence, Museo de Firenze com'era. This close-up is in a different place in the same garden as Figure 5. This Italian garden values contiguity to water.

The focus on water strongly grounds the paralleled relationship between Milton's Eden and the Italian Renaissance garden. Eden's rivers leading to the lake, "And now divided into four main Streams, / Runs divers, wandring many a famous Realme / And Country whereof here needs no account,"⁴⁴ and the fountain's ability to "Ran Nectar, visiting each plant, and fed / Flours worthy of Paradise"⁴⁵ paints an image of running water visiting horticultural growth throughout the landscape. The construction of elaborate watering systems in the Italian gardens was a signature art form. Villa Medici (Fig. 7) features an exemplary illustration of the water systems dominating Italian gardens. They were long, needing to reach the wide span of plantings. For rivers and water systems like this to be in Eden further labels Eden as carefully planned and orchestrated with growth in mind; should there not have been rivers and waterways, Milton's Eden would not have been logical to the emerging English plantmen. In describing an Eden that resembles Earthly practices, Milton is able to inspire this retreat to Eden that so many scholars claim happened as a result of *Paradise Lost*.

The organic characterization of Eden is not lost on scholars: Attie, for example, recognizes Eden's lack of alignment with the tamed and cultivated qualities found in an English country estate. "In its own way, *Paradise Lost* reflects and reinforces this second loss of Eden by exposing the unnaturalness, even the impossibility, of a perfect botanical garden."⁴⁶ However, the implications of Eden's construction have another tier of symbolic intent. Milton uses the garden to guide readers toward reflecting on an Italian style where Italian codes for Catholic. Having primed readers with this Italian backdrop, the garden becomes soaked in a degree of human sin that cannot be shrouded.

One feature that consistently appears in both English and Italian gardens is the walled enclosure. Though the borders surrounding Milton's Eden are necessary for Satan to narratively invade this forbidden space—"Watching where Shepherds pen thir Flocks at eeve / In hurld Cotes amid the field secure, / Leaps o're the fence with ease into the Fould:"⁴⁷ beyond this understood mark of territory all other parallels between Milton's Eden and the English country garden are muddled. With such colossal space before them, "A whole dayes journey high, but wide remote From this ASSYRIAN Garden,"⁴⁸ the futility of Adam and Eve's incessant labor is anticipated and also apparent—"Then commune how that day they may best ply/ Thir growing work \: for much thir work outgrew/ The hands dispatch of two Gard'ning so wide."⁴⁹ Despite

⁴⁴ *Paradise Lost*, 4.233-235.

⁴⁵ *Paradise Lost*, 4.240-241.

⁴⁶ Attie, "Enclosure Polemics and the Garden in the 1650s," 151.

⁴⁷ *Paradise Lost*, 4.185.

⁴⁸ *Paradise Lost*, 4.285.

⁴⁹ *Paradise Lost*, 9.201-203.

their efforts, the lush environment is overwhelming rather than governable by just two humans. A yielding environment with dense foliage represents a garden Italianate in nature, as seen in Figs. 5, 6, and 7.

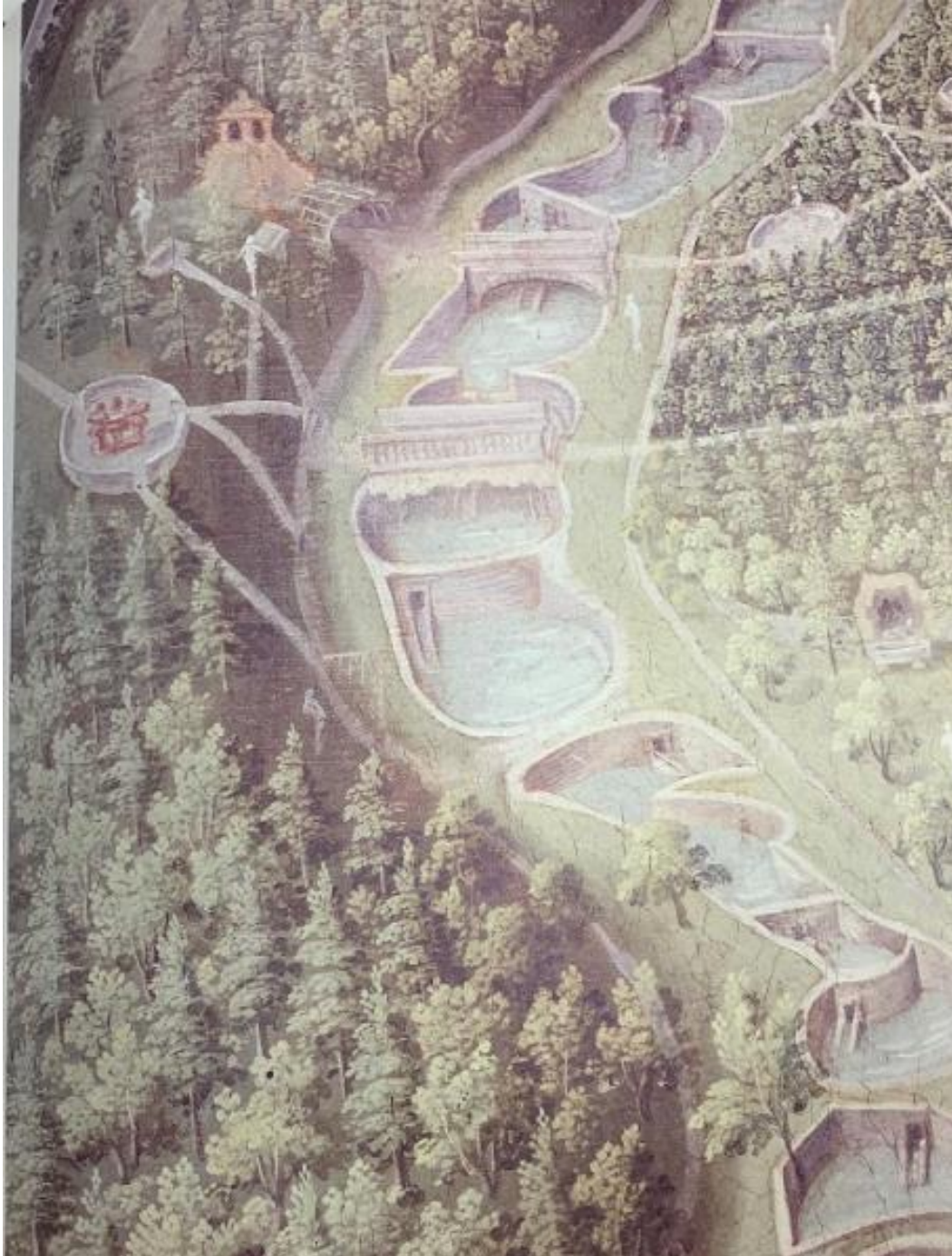


Figure 7: Giusto Utens, Villa Medici, Pratolino, detail, 1599, Florence, Museo de Firenze, com'era This image is another close-up of the full Villa Medici. Dense tree lines, interwoven waterworks, and irregular pathways characterize the tamed wilderness of Italian gardens .

The allusion to the Italian Renaissance isn't exclusive to Eden, either. Milton is deliberate in describing Hell's garden with paralleled features and landmarks. To most clearly demonstrate this point, compare Hell's flowing water to Eden's. Book II and Book IV present the landscapes as reflections of one another:

That dismal world, if any Clime perhaps
Might yeild them easier habitation,
bend
Four ways thir flying March, along the
Banks
Of four infernal Rivers that disgorge
Into the burning Lake thir baleful
streams;
(2.573-577)

And now divided into four main
Streams,
Runs divers, wandring many a famous
Realme
And Country whereof here needs no
account,
But rather to tell how, if Art could tell,
How from that Saphire Fount the
crisped Brooks,
Rowling on Orient Pearl and sands of
Gold,
With mazie error under pendant shades
Ran Nectar,
(4.235)

The "four infernal Rivers," and "four main Streams" both lead to a lake of some kind, thus populating Eden and Hell with winding waterways that signal growth or a degree of health. Both places represent a combination of naturally occurring landmarks and the cultivated environment of a tailored garden. Not to mention, Hell's inclusion of, "Rocks, Caves, Lakes, Fens, Bogs, Dens, and shades of death," (2.617-621) is direct nod to the grottos Italian Renaissance constructed in both highly organized gardens and more natural ones. Some grottos blended into a seemingly natural crevasse while others were more statuesque.

In 1638, Milton returned to England after spending part of a year in Italy and France, both of which were at the forefront of rich culture and architecture.⁵⁰ In Italy, though, it is likely Milton heard about or perhaps visited the dilapidated Phlegraean Fields. The super volcano area

⁵⁰ Dennis Danielson, *The Cambridge Companion to Milton (Cambridge Companions to Literature)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). 242.

has massive calderas with hot lakes, which became signature of the landscape; the volcano had its last eruption in 1538, making it a novelty visit a century later. The likelihood that Milton visited this place is high due to its seaside location and popularity among visitors at the time.

Marjorie Nicolson speculates on the possibility of his visit to Italy's Hellenic place,

Milton does not himself mention a visit to the Phlegraean Fields; yet it would seem incredible that he should not have made this easy journey.

Apart from the remarkable natural scenery, and the legendary and literary associations, which continue to attract so many less sensitive travellers, the seacoast and the Pausilypon were, in the seventeenth century, as in the time of Vergil and Cicero, a favourite location for the villas of Neapolitans.⁵¹

Milton's Hell mimics these Phlegraean Fields in its topographic descriptions of fire "burning Lake"s. Nicolson's analysis of the Phlegraean Fields puts the expanses of volcanic land under scrutiny in her notes on its place in oral history. Legend for centuries has associated the Phlegraean Fields with the early battle "between the gods and the giants," and is remembered as "the dwelling place of those 'sunless Cimmerians' who lived in darkness... whose great crater was the entrance to the infernal regions, through which others ... descended to the land of the dead."⁵² Additionally, Athanasius Kircher's 1638 observation journal of the area reads the landscape as "send[ing] forth perpetual fires; and beget[ting] much Sulphur and combustible matter."⁵³ He adds, "Little Hills are beheld there to burn and flame in the very bottom; for they always exhale forth great smokes everywhere, with a sulphurous stench through many holes."⁵⁴ The similarities between Milton's landscape in Hell and the real Phlegraean fields strengthen this notion of his familiarity with the place in Italy and thus his reference to the place.

This understanding of Hell's Italian basis allows the conjecture that Hell has a garden of its own. Littered with statues and remnants of deteriorating life, the characterization of Hell's topography and components are by no means independent from prelapsarian Eden. In connecting the two primary settings in *Paradise Lost*, Milton successfully draws a mirroring relationship between Eden and Hell. What arises, though, is the question of humanity's predestination and the preconceived notion that Eve caused a fall. How could she be solely responsible, though, if Eve herself and her environment have an ontological stand-in in Hell?

⁵¹ Marjorie Nicolson, "Milton's Hell and the Phlegraean Fields," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 7, no. 4 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1938): 503.

⁵² Nicolson, "Milton's Hell and the Phlegraean Fields," 503.

⁵³ Athanasius Kircher, "Subterraneous World," *The Vulcanos: or, Burning and Fire-Vomiting Mountains, Famous in the World, with Their Remarkables*. (London: J. Darby for John Allen, etc, 1669), 507.

⁵⁴ Kircher, "Subterraneous World," 507.

III: Eve's Surrogate, Medusa

*Astonied stood and Blank, while horror chill
Ran through his veins, and all his joints relaxed;
From his slack hand the Garland wreath'd for Eve
Down dropp'd*

Book IX, 891-4

Living in Hell are garden ornaments and structures eerily reflective of those seen in Italian gardens; this relationship thus necessitates Hell's connection and reflexivity with Eden's landscape structures. Examining Hell's garden points us to Book II, where "Squadrons and gross Bands, / On bold adventure to discover wide / That dismal world,"⁵⁵ . Among the "four infernal Rivers that disgorge/ Into the burning Lake thir baleful streams;/"⁵⁶ is "*Lethe* the River of Oblivion rolls/ Her wat'ry Labrynth."⁵⁷ The reference to whom the pronoun "Her" refers gets answered 26 lines later when:

But Fate withstands, and to oppose th'attempt
Medusa with Gorgonian terror guards
The Ford⁵⁸, and of itself the water flies
All taste of living wight, as once it fled
The lip of Tantalus.⁵⁹

Medusa's purpose here spreads beyond allusion. The saturation of Classical Greek characters in Hell's landscape certainly constructs the realm as otherworldly, however, in recognizing Medusa's origin story and ontological impacts, her presence becomes signature to Hell's garden. Medusa's Ovidian story includes her cursed ability to petrify her aggressors into stone—those who stare into her eyes, or the eyes of the snakes growing from her scalp, become statues. And, in garden history, "Garden sculptures included dragons, harpies, and at least one huge Medusa head, guarding the portal of the Vigna Carpi in Rome."⁶⁰ William Drummond's 1656 poem, "The Statue of Medusa" provides a further demonstration of her characterization as

⁵⁵ *Paradise Lost*, 2.570-2.

⁵⁶ *Paradise Lost*, 2.575-6.

⁵⁷ *Paradise Lost*, 2. 583-4.

⁵⁸ A shallow point in a stream which can be crossed by foot. A reference to Achilles' battle in *The Iliad* in Book 21 is being made here; the stream connotes battle or violence.

⁵⁹ *Paradise Lost*, 2.610-14.

⁶⁰ James Dougal Fleming, "Meanwhile, Medusa in *Paradise Lost*" (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 1018.

grounded in physiology. The composition of Medusa as a figure is saturated with physical detail. Her curled hair, her thirst, and her ability to transform serve as her defining qualities.

Of that Medusa strange,
 Who those that did her see in Rockes did change, None Image caru'd is this;
 MEDVSAS self it is,
 For while at Heat of Day,
 To quench her Thirst Shee by this Spring did stay, Her curling Snakes beholding
 in this Glasse,
 Life did her leaue, and thus transform'd Shee was.⁶¹

This connection I am drawing between statuary, specifically Medusa's, and Italian gardens is not breaking into uncharted territory; as aforementioned, James Dougal Fleming provides what seems to be the only scholarship directly addressing Medusa's presence as a functional character in the narrative. He claims that Hell is a new place; an empty place, that is, until characters rebel and are thus considered fallen. But Medusa has neither been rebellious toward God nor has she been explicitly created by him. If she had been, Fleming claims that this "seems to make God guilty of creating evil beings, a creation that would contradict all other statements in *Paradise Lost* about the coming to be of evil."⁶² Fleming notices Medusa is the primary signal and bookmark of classical Greek symbols of evil in Hell in this section, which raises the following questions: God cannot or should not create inherently "evil" beings, so why is Medusa in Hell at all? She can't be *good*, per say, either. In reaction to Fleming's interpretation, I suggest the reading that Medusa's existence spans wider than the physical location in which she is placed in Book II alone. Though her physical form resides in Hell at the moment, her form has duality. She is both reflective of and predestining Eve in Eden. While God isn't supposed to create inherently Evil beings, he did create Eve knowing she would fall. My reading complicates this understanding of God creating only sinless creatures. Instead of the Fall's blame immediately resting on Eve, perhaps we should consider the Creator's plan prior to Eve committing the Original Sin. After all, Medusa's life in Hell predestines Eve's location there before Satan even approached Eden.

⁶¹ Alexander Chalmers, "Poems of Drummond" in *The Works of the English Poets, from Chaucer to Cowper: Shakspeare, Davies, Donne, Hall, Stirling, Jonson, Corbet, Carew, Drummond*. (J. Johnson, 1810).

⁶² Fleming, "Meanwhile, Medusa in *Paradise Lost*", 1011.

Medusa's statuesque presence reflects the Italian garden's water automata, "blurring of the line between art and nature or art and life that was so prized in Renaissance garden theory and general aesthetic."⁶³ Medusa has been replicated specifically in the Oval Fountain at the Villa d'Este at Tivoli (Fig. 8) which tightens the correlation between Medusa and water sources. In the Oval Fountain's construction, Medusa stands as the façade's figure controlling the waterworks.



Figure 8: The Fontana dell'Ovato ("Oval Fountain") at the Villa d'Este at Tivoli, 1572. Located near Rome, the villa was a popular attraction due to the lush gardens surrounding the fountain/terrace.

My intervention in this Medusian perspective is that Hell's garden relates to the one above, the one holding Eve. While Fleming is able to articulate this relationship between Medusa in Book II and her correlation with Italian statue forms, Hell's garden is not connected to the one above in his reading. Fleming references a lack of statuary in Eden, certainly, but I argue that we must consider the plethora of other evidence for an Italianate environment in Eden, namely the water structures and wild tendencies.

⁶³ Fleming, "Meanwhile, Medusa in *Paradise Lost*", pp. 1016.

Fleming treats Medusa as such: The Gorgonian guard who stands watch, managing entrance beyond the river Lethe. However, doesn't Eve operate in the same way, as the "portress" into Hell? And doesn't Sin operate as the gatekeeper from Hell to Earth? The connections among Milton's women as gatekeepers can be seen in Medusa's position in 2.610-14, Sin's in 2.745 & 880, and Eve's in 9.890 where Adam stands very clearly "On th' other side," after "The fatal Trespass done by Eve," occurred. With such clear catalysts of sin present, these women by water become episodic signifiers of Milton's predestined fate for Eve.

Medusa and her accompanying statues, fountains, and figures function as a replication of Eve's experience in Eden. In Medusa's Ovidian origin, a component of Perseus's quest was to kill the Gorgon. Perseus avoided being turned into statuary by using mirrors and reflection to his advantage—Milton does not dismiss this tradition. Both characters are equally representative of mirrors as they are sex and sin. In fact, Eve's creation in Book IV raises questions about her position relative to Hell and Medusa. Eve's most immediate action connects her with mirrors, which, mechanics considered, necessitates darkness to successfully reflect an image. Mirrors operate based on one side of the glass panel being opaque and dark, connoting impurity. For Eve's image to reflect in the "Smooth lake"⁶⁴ there must, then, be an element of darkness at the core of Paradise. Eve exhibits several means of reflection, the first occurring moments after Adam's request for a partner, "and laid me down/ on the green bank, to look into the clear/ Smooth Lake, that to me seem'd another Sky./ As I bent down to look, just opposite,/ A Shape within the wat'ry gleam appear'd" (4.457-461). Eve's downward look at her own reflection in the lake serves as a demonstration of her Satan-similar qualities, for example, her self-interest and tendency to be lured downward. In a creation characterized by aquatic attraction, Eve exists in tandem with Medusa.

She mirrors Adam literally in her physical formulation, "And from whom I was formed of thy flesh," (4.441) as well as in how she perceives herself in the company of Adam: "How beauty is excelled by manly grace" (4.490). By reading Eve as a functioning mirror, not only does she then represent vanity or an attraction to Hell, but this also signals a particularly noteworthy correlation between Eve and Medusa.

Nature, in particular, serves as a foundational lens through which to view Eve's creation: prior to her physical description, readers— through the eyes of Satan— receive an image of Paradise. Stephen Dobranski suggests there is an "alliance" between Raphael's plant metaphor in Book V and the "wanton," "disshvelled," and vined "tendrils" of Eve's physical description.

⁶⁴ *Paradise Lost*, 4.460.

Between Eve's untamed locks and Medusa's petrifying snake hair, the triad of Satan, Eve, and Medusa grounds the connection of Eve appearing in both gardens. These connections suggest Medusa represents Eve's stagnant yet predestined position in Hell while she resides in Paradise for the course of Genesis.

Eden emits a quality of wantonness in its amount of growth, becoming sexualized along with Eve. Semiotics play a critical role in understanding the connotations of Eve, Eden, and both together. As Heather James notes, the "eroticized ambiguities" inherent in Milton's etymology lend itself to Eve's affiliation with sin due to Eve's shared aspects of "fertility" and "sensual appeal" with Eden, emitting "luxury" and "mazy error" wherein both "mesmerize the viewer" and have artistic qualities.⁶⁵ This tie between Eve and Eden allow the untamable and intricate vines to reinforce labeling Eden as Italian and *not* English. Eve's interaction with the Italian garden develop her character as, one, a tie to Milton's critical view of Catholicism as well as, two, her viney quality as it relates to Medusa. Eve's characterization solidifies both of these relationships, establishing her position in Eden and Hell. Even the reader experiences Eve under a sinful gaze, as Satan is responsible for providing readership with the first look at Adam and Eve in Paradise.

In this initial account in Book IV, Adam and Eve's descriptions are hyper-focused on hair. It is helpful to recognize that the cultural value of hairstyles and written depictions of hair in Early Modern England were fairly more "acute"⁶⁶ than contemporary understandings of hairstyles. "Hair was thought to have a sacred, almost talismanic quality," which served as a name tag in terms of quickly signaling someone's alignments or characteristics. Stephen Dobranski elaborates on the notion that Eve's hair has "raised doubts about her virtue," making Eve's direct characterization as subservient and sinful strong.⁶⁷ Within eleven lines of Adam and Eve's hair descriptions, seven of them are dedicated to Eve's hair features.

[His] Hyacinthine Locks
 Round from his parted forelock manly hung
 Clust'ring, but not beneath his shoulders broad
 Shee as a veil down to the slender waist
 Her unadorned golden tresses wore
 Dishevell'd, but in wanton ringlets wav'd
 As the Vine curls her tendrils, which impli'd

⁶⁵ James, "Milton's Eve, the Romance Genre, and Ovid," 125.

⁶⁶ Stephen B. Dobranski, "Clustering and Curling Locks: The Matter of Hair in *Paradise Lost*" in *PMLA* 125, no. 2 (Modern Language Association, 2010) 338.

⁶⁷ Dobranski, "Clustering and Curling Locks..." 124.

Subjection, but required with gentle sway,
 And by her yielded, by him best receiv'd,
 Yielded with coy submission, modest pride,
 And sweet reluctant amorous delay.⁶⁸

While Adam's "clustr'ing" "forelock" is contained above his shoulders, Eve's "golden tresses" are "dishevell'd" in "wanton ringlets" and resemble "vine curls." Adam's shorter, more contained fringe contrasts Eve's entangled locks in a way that represents their differences in physical composition. Though it's important to acknowledge that our view of "Adam and Eve is accordingly colored by our alliance with Satan's voyeuristic perspective,"⁶⁹ Eve still repeats these qualities later when she awakens from her dream with "Tresses discompos'd"⁷⁰ Eve's hair takes serpent-like form in its "vine curls", is golden in color, and her "slender waist" and "coy submission" associate her with sinful sexuality— these three defining characteristics are strikingly similar to those of her mirroring character, Medusa.

The viney intricacies that connect Eve's physical descriptions to her garden surroundings establish her as a Medusa-related character due to the snake/vine bodies. If Eve's hair looks like curling vines, she physically takes on the image of Medusa's head of serpent hair. Eve's interactions with Satan in serpent form only strengthen this bond between the two women. With the two women manifesting serpents into their physical guise, they become synonymous with sin and replicant of one another in their respective spaces.

In union with Eve's parallel to Medusa on a physical level, she may have "golden tresses," due to the conception that golden was particularly related to spiritual or "beyond human" qualities as seen in classical Greek myth.⁷¹ In this instance, Eve connects to a higher level of existence, just as Medusa does. Julius Heuscher asserts that hair of gold more accurately represents "a live gold" that "radiat[ed] from the human spirit" rather than simply meaning blonde.⁷² Eve's pre-lapsarian association with golden hair results in an automatic association with her beyond-humanness. Not to mention, after Perseus kills Medusa, he gifts her head to Athena with a gold-lined shield. Athena herself was adorned with "golden tresses" and represents wisdom as her defining attribute, an interesting facet to her character as Eve explores what it means to have knowledge in *Paradise Lost*.

⁶⁸ *Paradise Lost*, 4.299-309.

⁶⁹ Dobranski, "Clustering and Curling Locks..." 342.

⁷⁰ *Paradise Lost*, 5.10.

⁷¹ Dobranski, "Clustering and Curling Locks..." 343.

⁷² Julius Heuscher, "The 'Golden Hair' in the Fairy Tale," in *Journal of Existentialism* 4 (1963): 159–66.

Milton does not exploit “gold” singularly or in isolation, as the word appears 68 times throughout the twelve books. Satan often connects with gold as Milton’s denouncement of Catholicism, integrating Eve into this concept of degradation as a tool to connect her to sin and Hell. Satan wears “Neck of Verdant Gold”⁷³ in the garden of Eden to lure Eve. His palace in Hell adopts Catholic gold embellishment in most descriptions, as well: “Show’rs on her Kings *Barbaric Pearl and Gold*”⁷⁴, “A thousand demi-gods on golden seats”⁷⁵, and “The roof was fretted gold”⁷⁶ provide a glimpse into the aggrandizement that gold represents in Hell. Eve’s connection to Hell through gold further solidifies her position there and inherent corruption upon her creation, which subtly but surely aligns with Medusa’s in interesting ways.

Some readings of Eve’s alliance with nature have suggested her relationship with the environment further demonstrates her piety or devotion to learning. Kat Lecky⁷⁷, for example, in attempt to support the idea of Milton’s “fortunate Fall” makes a strong and hopeful reading/treatment of Eve. Lecky claims Eve’s actions in Genesis could not change, so Milton represents her as a mother of healing—this perspective more appropriately emphasizes a post-lapsarian reading. In Lecky’s article, she provides evidence that Milton’s garden is English, as it contains roses, ivy, honeysuckle, myrtle berries, all plants signature to an English household’s apothecary stash⁷⁸. She claims Eve is investigating and discovering the art of botanical medicine while Adam and Raphael discuss world matters; while Eve may gain familiarity with the garden during this time, the results of this alone time emphasize her unison with the garden atmosphere rather than her expertise in herbal-medicinal healing. Instead, I suggest Milton naturalizes her subjacent position with this choice.

Working in tandem with proximity to water is the reaction Adam has to Eve when she eats the fruit. Adam responds in a pseudo-statuesque way after seeing this transformed Eve (i.e. from pure to not). “Astonied stood and Blank,”⁷⁹ inherently associates his response to being in proximity with the one who petrifies. Interestingly, Sharon Achinstein claims Adam’s paralytic moment “is an Ovidian metamorphosis, indeed, but not simply human into statuary, organic into inorganic matter, but a recalibration of the human into something other—something much, much weaker.”⁸⁰ I contest this dismissal of a statuary position, as his response is in direct

⁷³ *Paradise Lost*, 9.501.

⁷⁴ *Paradise Lost*, 2.4.

⁷⁵ *Paradise Lost*, 1.798.

⁷⁶ *Paradise Lost*, 1.718.

⁷⁷ Lecky, 453–74.

⁷⁸ Amy Tigner and Allison Carruth, *Literature and Food Studies*, (Taylor & Francis, 2017).

⁷⁹ *Paradise Lost*, 9.889-890.

⁸⁰ Sharon Achinstein, “Milton’s Political Ontology of the Human,” in *ELH* 84 no. 3, (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017), 592.

correlation with his environment; one that is all too iniquitous for the act of congealing to be overlooked. If Adam's involuntary bodily reaction is to stand "Astonied" with a "Blank" expression, he reeks of statuary. Should he not have seen Eve, this transformational state could not have happened. To suggest this reaction is in reference to his sinking position as a human is suitable. But to consider him in relationship to a Medusian Eve is to read Eve as a character of dual nature. In seeking something beyond the confines of their space, Eve opens the portal between Eden and Hell, allowing the Fall. In this moment, Medusa and Eve become united rather than existing as placeholders for one another. This scene between Eve and Adam is really a scene between Eve and Medusa, who place holds for humanity in Hell. Do they stay there? And for how long? This is a question open for further inquiry in considering the Christian doctrine.

Eve's naturalized sinful and wanton characterization catalyzes her function as a unifier of Hell and Eden, a pair of opposites that disrupts the more natural tendency of a Heaven and Hell comparison. Through Milton's specific employment of Italian Renaissance garden culture in the two places, Eve becomes present in both Eden and Hell, further foreshadowing her Fall and strengthening her connection to Satan. The initial mentioning of Medusa at Hell's gate connects the triad of the gardens of Eden and Hell with Eve together more forcefully, providing opportunity for Italian (Catholic) and English (Protestant) juxtaposition to reinforce this balanced unity. While Eve's character repeatedly suggests she maintains parallels with Satan, Sin, and the Fall, understandings of Italian garden architecture allow the connection between Medusa and Eve to be made, revealing that the Fall was predestined before readers even met Adam and Eve. With additions of theological perspective, gardening's cultural relevance, and the value of Greek mythological references, Eve's character becomes difficult to place. If this relationship between Hell and Eve has been made, what can be investigated about Milton's conflicting ideas about predestination, then? If Medusa place holds for Eve in Hell, then how does this concept relate to predestination versus God's foreknowledge? These are questions to explore under the notion that Medusa and Eve exist in parallel garden spaces as mirrors of one another's human sin. Whether or not Eve actually stays in Hell remains unresolved. But we can speculate under these impressions of predestination that she does, in fact, make it there to some degree. Whether it be spiritually or physically is up for investigation. What are the implications of this destination? And, most importantly, what happens next if she does end up there? Eve's gardens propel this discussion about the nuanced Original Sin as it applies to predestination in both Milton's and his readers' worlds.

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