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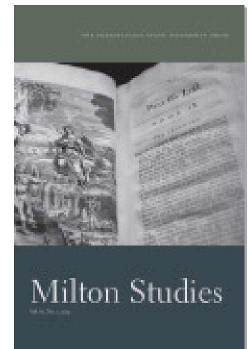

Saskia Cornes

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Milton's Manuring: *Paradise Lost*, Husbandry, and the Possibilities of Waste

SASKIA CORNES
Duke University

ABSTRACT Reading with a rich knowledge of agricultural praxis and the ways in which early modern readers understood the highly specific and uniquely Miltonic forms of labor that Adam and Eve perform in *Paradise Lost*, I argue that prelapsarian agrarian tasks, previously read as acts of diminution or (spiritual) discipline, are instead acts of material and spiritual increase. Adam and Eve knowingly and willingly set themselves an infinite, if pleasurable, task in their efforts to steward Eden through their lopping, pruning, and manuring. A closer examination of the material substance and the extent of Adam and Eve's efforts reveals new depth to their faith, a new form of georgic, and most importantly, a new vision of Milton's paradise as a place with the possibility, and the means, of expansion, change, and improvement. This more dynamic vision of prelapsarian life adds new poignancy to the Fall, and situates Milton's Eden within a constellation of experiments in rightful occupation without ownership, including those of Gerrard Winstanley, and countless writers of practical handbooks on agriculture.

KEYWORDS agriculture, Milton, husbandry, enclosure, *Paradise Lost*, georgic, Gerrard Winstanley

"Manuring" is a task seldom associated with paradise. Yet I am going to argue that manuring, as a praxis and as an ethos, is fundamental to the Eden of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. We may hardly believe that Adam and Eve might put their hands to such lowly, ordinary labor. Indeed, with the notable exception of Dartmouth's online annotated edition of *Paradise Lost*, "manuring" is consistently given a pastoral gloss via its Latinate origins,

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shifting Adam and Eve's manuring up from the lower bodily strata to the upper realms of "manus," the hand, "To work on with the hands; to handle; to work up; to prepare."[1] In its early modern instantiations, however, "to manure" involved a wide and rich array of meanings, from the lowly spreading of animal or, notably, vegetable waste, to the tilling or working of land (and thereby laying claim to it). Manuring could also refer to the cultivation of the mind and heart, and it is this more cleanly interpretation that draws most critics.[2] In contrast, I will show that Adam and Eve callous the lily-white hands of pastoral with their Edenic lopping, pruning, and manuring—unprecedented and uniquely Miltonic tasks that intimate an Eden potentially richer and more dynamic than has been previously recognized. The possibility of manuring as praxis, whether we chose to believe in Adam and Eve's literal dunging or in the more genteel spreading of another enriching material, is a possibility previously foreclosed by a fastidiousness either projected onto a priggish Milton or interiorized by our own squeamish pastoralism. The earthiness of early modern English life and the dominance of agricultural production as the ultimate source of its domestic wealth are perhaps difficult for twenty-first-century readers to imagine, given our current, and costly, detachment from the agrarian world. But seeing more clearly the labor demanded of Adam and Eve, and the waste and abundance this labor creates, opens up a radically more agential view of Adam and Eve's role in paradise, and a view of Eden as a place of eternity without stasis, a place upon which Adam and Eve might have left their godly mark.

Several critics have written powerfully about Milton's Edenic waste as a metaphor in conversation with debates around enclosure, or about Edenic labor as the metaphoric cultivation of the spirit.[3] But crucial and underexamined is the relationship between literal waste and labor in Eden. Recent discussions of Milton's relationship to monism or to the New Science and ecocritical approaches to Milton have also overlooked the kinds of vital matter that Adam and Eve find themselves working with and against, and what this matter might have meant to early modern readers.[4] By taking a closer look at pruning as an agricultural practice, and the waste that it creates, I offer a new understanding of the wholly original agrarian tasks of Milton's paradise. These tasks show Adam and Eve to be self-conscious actors working within an evolving landscape whose exigencies allow them not only the possibility of commingling with God's grace, but also the (lost) opportunity to create an Eden larger and richer than the one from which they were created. By opening up to the fullness of early modern meanings

of the extraordinary diction and praxis of manuring, I resituate Eden in a cultural economy of revolution, labor, waste, and emergent and competing ideas of property rights. These are not only specific types of labor, but words and tasks with strong cultural resonance that add new poignancy to their (and our) fall.

"Well may we labour still": Work in Milton's Eden

In the reader's initial view, Milton's paradise seems to hold out the tantalizing promise of pastoral, echoing the laborless environs of a well-appointed country house with its "enclosure green" (4.133) and "happy rural seat of various view" (4.247).[5] However, after over 80 lines of pastoral seduction, the pastoral mode is subtly but definitively undercut. While the diction of these passages might imply that the reader is at ground level, beneath the "mantling vine" that "gently creeps / Luxuriant" (4.258–60), the reader in fact looks out at Eden alongside Satan, "wide remote / From this Assyrian garden [Eden] where the fiend / Saw undelighted all delight" (4.284–86). We discover that Milton's pastoral vision has not been an uncomplicated, intimate description of paradise voiced by the narrator, but one filtered through a remote, shifty, and satanic optic. The panorama upon which the reader has been feasting is retrospectively reframed through corrupted eyes.

Paradise Lost is an epic rife with such temptation. As Stanley Fish insists, generations of fallen readers mistake "the creation for the creator," only to be corrected by the reversals of Milton's text.[6] However, what is most striking about Milton's use of Arcadian tropes in Eden is that, in regard to pastoral, the reader's moral misstep is not, or not only, the projection of a fallen world onto Eden (i.e., to imagine that Adam and Eve's labor is proto-fallen and therefore in some way unpleasant[7]). Rather, the reader, or critic's, more serious error is to mistake literary creation (pastoral) for God's blessed creation, to mistake the Arcadian idyll that was never more than a figment of our collective aesthetic imagination for the bona fide Eden of the Old Testament. For Milton, there was never an age of man in which work was not part of our existence, and our worship; work is for Milton a form of prayer. Just as *Paradise Lost* subverts our expectations of the epic genre by strategically deflating the heroism of armed conflict, so too does it subvert our expectations of pastoral through the tactical creation of an Eden overflowing with "pleasant labour" (4.625). Milton invites us to delve deep into metaphorical and literal soil and "there plant eyes" (3.53), to "be lowly wise" (8.173), and to humble ourselves in the rich muck of the earthly.

In *Paradise Lost*, Eden is pastoral just long enough to underscore the contrast between the autarky of pastoral and the interdependence of the paradisal ecology that follows. For five days, before the creation of man, Eden needs no human intervention for its maintenance or fertility (7.331–35). Following the creation of Adam and Eve, however, Eden is self-regulating only in the eyes of Satan; God immediately sets the first parents to work. Edenic labor is, as Barbara Lewalski attests, "not merely the expected ritual gesture, but a necessary and immense task."[8] Having affirmed his identity to Adam, God's first words—"This paradise I give thee, count it thine / To till and keep" (8.319–20)—emphasize the relationship between work and a provisional form of ownership. The garden belongs to Adam (and Eve), but only through their labor; it is not theirs, as the enjambment might suggest, but theirs to till and keep. Work therefore becomes an integral part of Adam and Eve's proprietorship in Eden, a dramatic shift in emphasis from the more otiose views of paradise that is marked also at the level of diction.

As Karen Edwards observes, Milton notably substitutes the industrious "till" over the more dainty and far more common "dress" of the King James Bible. This choice emphasizes labor and stewardship over more preparatory, disciplinary functions. In comparison to the contemporary definitions of "dress"—"to make straight or right; to bring into proper order; to array, make ready, prepare, tend," the substitution of the more workmanlike "till"—"to bestow labor and attention, such as ploughing, harrowing, manuring, etc. upon land so as to fit it for raising crops; to cultivate"—complicates the reading of Lewalski and others who view the presence of work in Eden as primarily symbolic of spiritual self-discipline.[9]

When God first speaks to Adam it is of work, and when we first see Adam and Eve, it is just after they have completed their daily work; the relationship between work and leisure is immediately explained—we are explicitly told that they deserve their ease and enjoy it in virtue because of their labor. Their "sweet gardening labour . . . recommend[s] cool Zephyr, and made ease / More easy, wholesome thirst and appetite / More grateful" (4.327–31). Their work "recommend[s]" them to the rewards of Eden, meaning it makes acceptable, presents as desirable, and, undergirding this, commits to God's keeping the fruits of their labor.[10] Eden's ecology amply provides the couple with "choice / Unlimited of manifold delights" (4.434–35); they nevertheless rise before dawn (4.623–24), "haste" to the fields (5.211), and work hard enough to sauce their meals and their rest (4.327–28). The couple is extremely diligent in their harvest and curing of

fruit (5.324–25), the removal of superfluous branches, the disburdening of an overly heavy fruit set, the staking of fruiting vines, and the training of arbors and edging of pathways. In contradistinction to animals, who "Rove idle unemployed," and "of [whose] doings God takes no account" (4.617, 622), Adam asserts that for himself and Eve, "God hath set / Labour and rest, as day and night, to men / Successive" (4.612–14). That is to say, however much they enjoy their "pleasant labour," they must work and rest in roughly equal measure—as "day and night"—and constantly—"successive" to completely obey God's command. The affirmation of their obedience is therefore positive (tilling and keeping) as well as negative (not eating the forbidden fruit). Pastoral readings that emphasize sanctioned leisure in Eden tend to overlook that *otium* is literally only half the picture.

Milton's Eden is not pastoral. However, it is not georgic in the traditional sense either.[11] While God himself does not see Adam and Eve's work as an obstacle to their "Uninterrupted joy" (3.68), and humble labor is valorized in a georgic strain, the obstacles that must be overcome through human effort are fundamentally different in paradise than on earth. In a georgic universe, humans are pitted against a stinting landscape, and they labor nobly in full acceptance of the caprices of nature, of importunity, and dearth. In Milton's Eden, it is plenty, not scarcity, that is the spur to heroic effort. Despite their dedication and exertion, paradisal ecology is one that Adam and Eve struggle to "reform" (4.625). Their work is insufficient to restrain the riotous fecundity of a garden "Wild above rule or art" (5.297). Eve states this most memorably in book 9:

> Adam, well may we labour still to dress
> This garden, still to tend plant, herb and flower,
> Our pleasant task enjoined, but till more hands
> Aid us, the work under our labour grows
> Luxurious by restraint; what we by day
> Lop overgrown, or prune or prop or bind,
> One night or two with wanton growth derides
> Tending to wild. (205–12)

Notwithstanding their best and consistent attentions ("well may we labour still to dress . . . still to tend"), their tasks already surpass the capacities of their labor. "[N]ot to irksome toil, but to delight / [God] made us," Adam responds, and He has "not so strictly . . . imposed / Labour as to debar us when we need / Refreshment" (9.242–43, 235–37). Together they are

sufficient, Adam argues, to maintain their own freedom of movement in the short term: "These paths and bowers doubt not but our joint hands / Will keep from wilderness with ease, as wide / As we need walk, till younger hands ere long / Assist us" (9.244–47). They can do just enough, he implies, to stave off the encroachment of wilderness that might otherwise impinge on their freedom of movement.

This exchange, appearing as it does almost directly before Eve eats the fatal fruit, has lent itself to proleptic readings in which the somewhat alarming increase in Eden, and the work this excess will create, is framed as a misprision of Eve's, as if she has misunderstood the nature or extent of godly labor, and that this mistake, whether through pride or naiveté, leads directly to the Fall.[12] This concern, however, privileges Adam's momentary and somewhat oblique reply to Eve, a native of Eden who embodies a pathetic fallacy unreflected in Adam. Eve's understanding of the work required is not subordinate to that of her male counterpart.[13] Indeed far from being proto-fallen, Eve's speech reflects the more godly concern; if the garden, "tending to wild," renders their work intangible, she implies, they are failing to "till and keep" as God commanded, failing to steward paradise as they have promised. Eve here takes the whole of Eden's ecology as their responsibility, while Adam's response is purely anthropocentric, as if God's injunction was merely to maintain their own comfort and right-of-way.

Eve's expressed concern about their mounting workload is not hers alone, but affirmed by Adam, and perhaps more important, by the narrator. For Adam, what is overgrown "require[s] / More hands than ours to lop their wanton growth" (4.628–29), and the narrator confirms "*much* their work outgrew / The hands' dispatch of two gardening so wide" (9.202–3, emphasis supplied). These statements reinforce God's promise—help will arrive—but also underscore the fact that help is very much required to maintain the orderly and productive landscape that honors heavenly decree. Within the present framework, Adam and Eve's labor cannot keep pace with their task.

The miraculous abundance of paradise is both the marker of God's care and the excess that mandates a constant and escalating labor. On the one hand, Adam and Eve remark on the insufficiency of their work (the scantness of their manuring [*PL* 4.628], the hour of supper that arrives unearned [*PL* 9.225]) as a potential defect in the full expression of their obeisance to God, and praise the Creator of a landscape that rewards them with abundance despite their insufficient efforts. On the other, in obeying

His injunction to careful stewardship, in tilling, dressing, and manuring, they recognize that they in fact increase the richness of an already overly productive ground, one that outstrips their current capacities and is likely to continue to do so. They praise the work He has ordained, and the helpmeets they have in each other, while they nevertheless pray in unison for help:

> Thou also mad'st the night,
> Maker omnipotent, and thou the day,
> Which we in our appointed work employed
> Have finished happy in our mutual help
> And mutual love, the crown of all our bliss
> Ordained by thee, and this delicious place
> For us too large, where thy abundance wants
> Partakers, and uncropped falls to the ground.
> But thou has promised from us two a race
> To fill the earth, who shall with us extol
> Thy goodness infinite. (4.724–34)

In describing their garden as "too large," the couple express their frailty as well as their faith. That the size and the fecundity of the garden is a mixed blessing is hinted at by the enjambment after "thy abundance wants." It is not, as the line might initially and heretically read, that heavenly generosity is somehow deficient, but that God's munificence stints in sharers of the plenty, who are nonetheless needed to praise His abundance, and perhaps more important, to steward it. In the meantime, the couple cannot help but leave certain tasks undone. What is unharvested "falls to the ground" (4.731) inherently, if not yet sinfully, away from the "Godlike erect" (4.289) state of an Edenic ecology reflective of man. Satan seems to understand that this excess is troubling, later taunting Eve with what goes "uncropped." To leave the tree of knowledge "with fruit surcharged" is a sign of unwillingness to humble oneself to the appointed work, Satan asserts in asking coyly, "Deigns none to ease [its] load[?]" (5.57–59). It is, I believe, the very enjoyment and pride that Adam and Eve take in their work, the sense of obligation that they feel toward their garden, which allows Satan this avenue of attack.

In effect, the super-abundance of Eden and Adam and Eve's diligence in addressing it sets in motion an ever-expanding task that cannot be completely addressed by these two alone. While they intimate that they

have been set a pleasant, but impossible undertaking, they are fully prepared nonetheless to continue to apply themselves in work and in faith, until such time as God sees fit to send them the succor of "more hands," an event they have been given no timeframe for, and no more understand than sin or death. Nevertheless, the glorious abundance of Eden, and the delicate balance between work and rest, cornucopia and glut, risks tipping over into something less seemly in a garden "wild above rule or art" (5.297). Excess, in other words, threatens to become waste. Milton shows a remarkable interest in remnants and excess through an array of waste within Eden's borders: the surplus of the garden's luxuriance "uncropped . . . falls to the ground" (4.731); sap, however sweet smelling, gets underfoot, and downed blossoms marr the "level downs" of Eden (4.252).[14] The parings of Adam and Eve's daily lopping and pruning, one imagines, festoon the paths and bowers they clear and shape in what Joanna Picciotto memorably describes as "an unfinished, fermenting space."[15] This paradisal waste gives us a paradise distinctly messier and more demanding than its non-Miltonic homologues.

Sophie Gee and Denise Gigante have masterfully explored waste in Eden but, seemingly uneasy with such a cluttered version of paradise, address this surplus only to whisk it away and restore the pastoral landscape.[16] Truly, even the most grotesque moments in *Paradise Lost* (angelic comingling, celestial scatology) are in exquisite taste. However, these hotly contested and frankly bizarre elements of Milton's cosmology cannot be fully reabsorbed by strictly aesthetic concerns. As Milton carefully avers, with all that "transubstantiate[s]," something still "redounds" (5.438). Milton's waste is simply too extraordinary to be merely incidental or symbolic, a presence evoked only to be immediately absented.[17] By naming manuring in paradise, and the excess it both demands and creates, Milton not only fashions an extraordinary vision of the paradise, but allows Adam and Eve this transformative capacity: the opportunity to admix their labor into the landscape of Eden and in doing so, to dwell there.[18]

The commitment demanded by the Garden comes even more sharply into focus when we see that Adam and Eve's work in Eden—the lopping, pruning, and binding so often assumed to be acts of (self)-discipline and diminution—are in fact further acts of increase. Crucially, the practical and symbolic understandings of horticulture of the period, as seen through the manuals that directed it, affirm what Eve (and Adam) intimate—their work does indeed grow "Luxurious by restraint" (9.209).

"PEACEABLE FRUITS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS": THE POLITICS OF ARBORICULTURE IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

In expanding the three words of the King James Bible—"dress and keep"—into rich and wholly original descriptions of paradisal husbandry, Milton also puts his Eden into conversation with a growing number of practical handbooks in agriculture, or what early modern readers would call "husbandry." These manuals, more grounded in their subject matter but no less lofty in their ambitions, literally promised their readership new Edens via their instruction in horticultural, spiritual, and even political disciplines of agriculture. From the straightforward analogy of Plat's *Garden of Eden or an accurate description of all the fruits and flowers growing in England* (1652),[19] whose title tacitly, if hyperbolically attests that England is already such a paradise, or Parkinson's *Paradisi in sole paradisus terrestris* (1629),[20] which teaches readers how to grow their own heaven-on-earth, agricultural manuals concerned themselves with figurative as well as literal forms of fructification. They participated directly in a much broader conversation around land use, property rights, the waning commons, and the political and spiritual aftermath of the British civil wars.[21] This was a conversation to which Milton contributed much, in both poetry and prose.

The agrarian works of classical authors were well known to Milton; by his nephew's account, "four grand authors": Cato, Varro, Columella, and Palladius were the foundational texts of Milton's tutelage.[22] These were the very authors whose works were enjoying newfound popularity in England, works rapidly being adapted by English authors eager to supply an emerging class of landowners with knowledge necessary to manage their estates.[23] If Milton availed himself of the library of his friend and physician Nathan Paget, he would have found many works on husbandry alongside those on philosophy that Stephen Fallon connects to Milton's work, including the handbooks of several authors whom I address directly here: Ralph Austen, Hugh Plat, Nicolas de Bonnefons, Arthur Standish, and several anonymous tracts specifically on the improvement of wasteland.[24]

If the sole aim of Edenic labor were the avoidance of idleness or the provision of a pleasant task, any undertaking could have filled Adam and Eve's days in paradise. However, in choosing lopping and pruning as key tasks in Eden, Milton draws on a specific set of early modern cultural references regarding trees and deploys these references simultaneously in several registers. First, within Milton's epic framework, the work of pruning and

lopping concretizes the manuring that articulates Adam and Eve's good stewardship and selfless husbandry. Second, drawing on the cultivation of fruit trees, Milton selects an agricultural task associated with intellect and discernment. Third, the tasks of lopping and pruning evoke a lively, sometimes even violent debate over trees as vital resources and national symbols, particularly during the period of the English Revolution.[25] Perhaps most painfully, this task both connotes and enacts a long-term investment in the landscape that Eve's later act fatally undermines. Most important for this argument, this task creates much more waste in Eden than has been previously recognized, an abundance that suggests, I argue, a fundamentally new kind of Eden.

Early modern husbandry manuals (and indeed twenty-first-century ones) attest that the types of labor we see in Eden, in particular the pruning of trees and shrubs, redirects growth toward the remaining branches, generating more growth and more fruit—in short, more work. Tree habits are in this sense counterintuitive: uncut, a tree tends to a greater number of lanky branches that produce a lesser set of lower-quality fruit; properly pruned, a tree responds with more vigorous growth.[26] "Cutting away suckers, and side boughs, make trees grow high," attests Ralph Austen, an eventual member of the Royal Society and one of the most prominent authors of seventeenth-century fruit tree manuals. Austen adds, significantly: "nothing procureth the lasting of trees, bushes, and herbs, so much as often cutting."[27] In his published correspondence with Samuel Hartlib, lawyer and agricultural writer John Beale agrees: "in a natural [ungrafted] plant," boughs should be "taken off close to the trunk; that the root . . . be not engaged to maintain too many suckers . . . for the natural plant is apt to grow spiry, & thereby fails of fruitfulness."[28] For the Yorkshire clergyman and manual author William Lawson, allowing overly exuberant spring growth, "even as wealth to wealth, and much to more" diffuses a tree's sap: "by that means in time [the trees] die. These so long as they bear, they bear less, worse, and fewer fruit, and waterish."[29] Nicolas de Bonnefons puts it most succinctly: "The more you prune a Tree, the more it will shoot."[30] The ripeness Eve so aptly gauges in harvesting fruit for the meal with Raphael and the work she and Adam perform so diligently, "where any row / Of fruit-trees over-woody reached too far" (5.212–13), ultimately attests to the fact that "nature multiplies / Her fertile growth, and by disburdening grows / More fruitful" (5.317–20), increasing "Their growing work" (9.202). Pruning then, the remnants it leaves and the further growth it stimulates, is a task particularly suited to Milton's manuring. Adam and Eve wrestle, literally and

figuratively, with superabundance, laboring in full acceptance of a paradox in God's grace: the more they labor within a world already overgenerous, the more abundance they generate, and yet this increasing excess must be continually overcome in order to fulfill their covenant to "till and keep."

Unlike most food crops, whose lives span a matter of weeks or months, the productive life of a fruit tree (30–40 years) is comparable to the life of a human (even more so in the early modern period). Trees respond visibly, in form, health, and yield, to the skillful (or unskillful) attentions of the arborist. Long-term investment, as well as discernment, is needed therefore to properly "keep" a tree. Pruning and lopping underscore the open-endedness of Adam and Eve's prelapsarian stint in Eden; they work as if they will be inhabiting the garden for the rest of their lives, making their eventual ejection from paradise (and the reader's own foreknowledge of this exile) that much more poignant.

Over time, the action of pruning can become a kind of conversation in slow motion. In a manual such as Ralph Austen's extraordinary *Dialogue between the Husbandman and his Fruit Trees* (1676), this talk is literalized through a dramatic dialogue between "Husbandman" and "Fruit Tree." Recuperating an Adamic language, "Husbandman" communes directly with his trees. Its own unfallen state, the tree attests, gives it authority to direct the Husbandman in matters of physical and spiritual discipline: "then [in Eden] did thou break the command of God, which we never did, nor ever shall; though we are much inferior of mankind."[31] The fruit tree explains to the husbandman that the wayward tree is as the wayward man, and its human counterpart agrees:

> As these things [pruning and cutting] are to be observed for our temporal profit among fruit trees, so also they serve as a very apposite similitude of shadow to a spiritual truth by way of analogy, and resemblance of God's dealing with his people, his mystical fruit trees who, as a most wise, and careful husbandman, seeing his fruit trees bear good fruits, he prunes and orders them . . . that they may bring forth more fruits, and better than before.[32]

A relationship with a tree, on Austen's earth as in Milton's heaven, becomes "occasion for [God's] praise and admiration and more cheerful service."[33] Increasingly for Austen, work with fruit trees is about spiritual practice and repair, both of the fallen state of man, and of the Commonwealth.[34] In the "outward troubles" that "come upon them in their bodies, names,

estates, relations, soul and body, all that concerns them; are overwhelmed, overturned, broken and destroyed," we hear the Fruit Tree lamenting its experience in winter, the ruination of the Good Old Cause, an echo of Milton's experience of defeat, and the will both to work and to wait for renewal and resurrection.[35] The spiritual symbolism of pruning and manuring are in this way intertwined—the moral disciplining of the cutting away of excess through lopping or pruning generates excess "waste," which in turn provides the substance for the acts of integration that increase the productive potential of the godly soul, and of the godly soil of Eden.

"A COMMON TREASURIE FOR ALL": MANURING AS PRAXIS

In its early modern usage, the verb "manure" meant "to till or cultivate" as well as "to enrich with manure." This merging of agricultural labor with soil-building embodies a very different relationship to the landscape during the period. Manuring implies a reciprocal taking and giving; the act of cultivation becomes inseparable from the act of feeding the soil and building it through time as well as space. This commitment to the land is echoed in secondary meanings of "manure"—"to dwell, to have one's home," "to inhabit," or in more legalistic terms, "to hold, occupy, charge or take possession of; to have the tenure of, to administer, control, or manage."[36] It is in this sense of manuring as salvific praxis, of sinking in order to rise, that Adam and Eve's project mirrors the postlapsarian work of Gerrard Winstanley, the radical leader of the Diggers, and his movement, which began with the occupation and cultivation of common lands on St. George's Hill during the heady days of the English Revolution.[37] While Winstanley's prodigious writings are keenly aware of the fallenness of the world, he seizes the apocalyptic opportunities of the Revolution to restore the earth as a "common treasurie for all" through the hard and careful work of manuring, since for the Diggers, "true freedom lies where a man receives his nourishment and preservation, and that is in the use of the earth."[38]

On the title page of the first Digger manifesto, "The True Leveller's Standard Advanced" (1649), Winstanley implicitly negates enclosers and tragedians of the commons who would frame commoners as pillaging vagrants by emphasizing the Diggers' intention both to improve "waste" ground, and their intention to dwell, to "manure," to uplift themselves and the land they work. Rather than emphasize the revolutionary boldness of a program that sought to found a communist utopia, abolish absolute property ownership, and dismantle a nascent proto-capitalist economy of

wage labor, the tract opens by emphasizing the Diggers' spiritual modesty. They are "shewing much Humility and Meekness of spirit," as evidenced by the humility of their work: "labouring to Manure the waste places of the Earth, it is an action full of Justice and Righteousness, full of Love and Charity to their fellow Creatures; nothing of the god of this world, Pride and Covetousness, seen in it, no self seeking, or glorying in the Flesh."[39]

Manuring becomes the equivalent of washing Christ's feet, an act of humility that is as spiritually uplifting as it is corporeally humbling. Manuring is part of an agrarian praxis, an economic as well as a spiritual and environmental platform for social transformation, a positive assertion of the will to rightful occupation that uses resources at hand to both engage and refute a political ecology that grafted "improvement" onto "enclosure," and made enclosure part of an increasingly absolute claim to private property.

If all is enlivened by God's presence, then disciplined and productive work with the materiality of that world puts the worker in a more direct contact with the divinity that inheres in His creation. Hence Winstanley attests that, through digging, "preaching shall cease and verbal worship shall cease . . . men shall not talk of righteousness, but act righteousness."[40] It is not only that men (and women) will act righteously, but that they will literally enact the work of paradise on earth, a mirror to the work that Milton sets for Adam and Eve in Eden. Similarly, it is not enough for Adam and Eve simply to inhabit the Garden, or to "till and keep" as an idle pastime; they must work with Eden and within it, and the contact between their own human physicality and the resistance of the material world becomes a form of prayer. It is no coincidence that one follows the other in the daily rhythms of prelapsarian Eden. Negating both Satan's belief that man has unfairly ascended into God's graces, and the reader (or critic) who fully expects Adam and Eve to be at their pastoral ease, to merit paradise by grace alone, the couple inscribe and reinscribe the justness of their place in the prelapsarian universe through their daily work. Though they do not, and indeed cannot, assert their right to Eden itself, which belongs wholly to God, their manuring demonstrates for these audiences the humility of their obedience and the correctness of God's favor.[41]

Fish is the most prominent of several critics who somewhat peevishly complain that "nothing happens" in Eden, "if we think of a 'happening' as something that alters basic conditions and sets in motion energies that

either lead to the establishment of a new order or become reabsorbed into an old one." I contend that Fish and so many others misrecognize what "happens" in Eden either because they foreclose the possibility that either Adam or Eve are doing any "real" work in Eden, or, alternately, that this work is of no actual use.[42] On the contrary, what happens in Eden is the daily establishment of an evolving spiritual and material order. Manuring as praxis provides the real possibility of harnessing the regenerative power of Eden's excess fertility, of creating precisely that "new order" to "become reabsorbed into an old one" that Fish denies.

Of course once Eve eats the Forbidden Fruit, waste falls with the rest of creation, becoming unbeatified. But it is not until after the Fall that Milton's waste takes on its postlapsarian meanings: "offscourings, dregs," "useless expenditure or consumption," "destruction or devastation caused by war, gradual loss or diminution from use, wear and tear, decay or natural process."[43] The prelapsarian propagation of holy from holy is underscored by Adam and Eve's postlapsarian paralysis and their fears that what will spring from them after the Fall is not the substance to amplify God's glory, but putrefaction and sin. "All that I eat or drink, or shall beget, / Is propagated curse" (10.728–30), laments Adam, adding: "oh were I able / To waste it all myself, and leave ye none!" (10.819–20). The glorious excess that was the vehicle for salvation has now become the marker of their estrangement from God.

As God withdraws from the world and mars His own creation, humankind can no longer perfectly sense God's presence in nature through contact and admixture with it. The spiritual elevation that Adam and Eve enacted through the very human means of manuring in Eden cannot happen now without the intercession of the Son. Instead of their own dialectic engagement with an Edenic soil drenched in the divine, the postlapsarian Adam and Eve are raised instead from the Son's strength. They live in him "transplanted" (3.293), drawing not on the power of a blessed earth and their own union with it, but rather on the power of the Son's sturdy rootstock, "engraft[ed]" onto him (11.35).

Adam expresses his intention to do what he can to continue to obey God's injunction after the Fall ("My labour will sustain me" [10.1056]), but without the reward or "delight" of contact with the divine so manifest in Eden. In form then, postlapsarian work closely resembles labor before the Fall, and Adam seems to find comfort in this correspondence ("with labour I must earn / My bread; what harm? Idleness had been worse" [10.1054–55]). Adam is well aware, however, that although the form of the

work is the same, the content of this work is forever altered; he continues to obey God's injunction but he can no longer expect to experience divine presence through his efforts. The "fitter soil" (11.98) of the postlapsarian world may be imbued still with God's immanence in an absolute sense (11.336–38), but the infinite and infinitely pleasurable work of Eden descends into mere labor, and manuring takes on the more malodorous connotations that it retains still.

As it did for Winstanley, manuring signifies Adam and Eve's righteous occupation of Eden, an occupation that implies moral ownership and mutual belonging, propriety without—notably—claim to property. Adam and Eve affirm their right to Eden, and to its aspiring counterpart on George's Hill, through the regenerative attentions of their daily work. These are two visions of a kind of georgic avant-gardism, a move away from a heroism that stems from stoic courage in the face of cyclical and unceasing events, into an optimistic ethos predicated on the real possibilities of land's improvement and of an evolving but deeply rooted sense of place.

In some sense, Adam and Eve's labor foreshadows aspects of John Locke's conception of property, where the admixture of labor with the state of nature creates a particular relationship between laborer and world that accrues for the laborer a natural right.[44] It was this concept that early modern critics of Winstanley, looking backwards to feudal conceptions of dwelling, could not yet accept. For Locke, this is a right to "inclose" Nature or commons from others, to make them your "property," a right that those with Edenic aspirations had to forego in favor of ethical stewardship and mutuality, a worship of (God through) the land. As property is slowly wrenched away from propriety, Adam, Eve, and Winstanley find themselves righteous, but dispossessed.

In a fallen world, there is no rightful occupation without ownership. Tellingly, we now "farm," with its etymological roots in an extractive cleansing and purging, rather than "manure," with its etymological fusion of taking and giving, of feeding the soil that in turn feeds us. "To farm" is from its beginnings the diction of capital; "to farm" meant to engage with a cash economy over land or any other asset—"to take hold of [land] for a fixed payment, to rent" but equally "to take the fees on payment of a fixed sum," for example, to farm tithes or taxes, or "to let the labor of (cattle, persons) for hire."[45] As our stance toward our farming practices and the land have changed, the dwelling connotations of manuring have devolved into the more straightforward and less noble spreading of shit.

There are signs, however, that the magnitude of our current environmental problems and our capacity to do harm on a global scale through what is our property may once again resurrect the spirit of the commons. The primitive or "tragic" imbrication of rights that the commons represent have been shown in many cases to be more viable and more effective in maintaining resources over the long term than their privatized, absolute counterparts, as shown by the Nobel Prize–winning work of Elinor Ostrom.[46] Shifting political ecologies may yet wend us back in the direction of Winstanley, with "wandering steps and slow" (12.648) to build through the labors of our own manuring a renewed relationship to ground beneath our feet.

NOTES

I am grateful to Julie Crawford, Molly Murray, Jean Howard, Bill McAllister, Cole Rizki, and the Columbia Early Modern Seminar for their comments on an earlier version on this essay, for the thoughtful feedback from my anonymous readers, and to Nick Hoff, for the inquiries regarding Austen's *Dialogue* that began a new chapter for us both.

1. To "manure" could mean simply "to till or cultivate" as well as "to enrich with manure," or more symbolically "to dwell, to have one's home," "to train or rear," or "to hold, occupy, take charge or possession of (land or property); to have the tenure of; to administer, control, or manage." See the *Oxford English Dictionary* (hereafter *OED*). Even in criticism that does its utmost to claim a place for the georgic in *Paradise Lost*, such as Anthony Low, *The Georgic Revolution* (Princeton, N.J., 1985), manuring is specifically excised. While Low notes that Virgil indexes the spread of manure on exhausted fields in his *Georgics* (1.80–81) as playing "a necessary part in the husbandman's work . . . no action is too trivial or shameful to be included, he believes that "Milton would agree with that view in spirit, but does not attempt to imitate it in his literal poetic practice" (325). The same is true of more recent work such as David Goldstein, "Manuring Eden: Biological Conversions in *Paradise Lost*," in *Ground-Work: English Renaissance Literature and Soil Science*, ed. Hillary Eklund (Pittsburgh, 2017), 171–93. Goldstein explores the fecundity and growth of postlapsarian manuring as a vehicle for grace, while viewing prelapsarian manuring as restraining growth.

2. See *OED*. Milton employs the word this way in *Animadversions* (1641), arguing that it is "the inward calling of God that makes a minister, and his own painful study and diligence that manures and improves his ministerial gifts," rather than the Popish ritual of ordination. John Milton, *Animadversions*, in *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, 8 vols., ed. Don M. Wolfe et al. (New Haven, Conn., 1953–82), 1:715, hereafter cited as YP.

3. For discussions of enclosure, see especially Sophie Gee, *Making Waste: Leftovers and the Eighteenth-Century Imagination* (Princeton, N.J., 2010), chap. 4; Denise Gigante,

Taste: A Literary History (New Haven, Conn., 2005), chap. 2; Karen Edwards, "Eden Raised: Waste in Milton's Garden," in *Renaissance Ecology: Imagining Eden in Milton's England*, ed. Ken Hiltner (Pittsburgh, 2008), 259–71, notes 324–27; and Emily Cockayne, *Hubbub: Filth, Noise, and Stench in England 1600–1770* (New Haven, Conn., 2007); Vittoria Di Palma, *Wasteland: A History* (New Haven, Conn., 2014), chaps. 1-2. On cultivation of the spirit, see Katherine Bootle Attie, "Enclosure Polemics and the Garden in the 1650s," *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 51, no. 1 (2011): 135–57, and Rebecca Bushnell, *Green Desire: Imagining Early Modern English Gardens* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2003).

4. Diane Kelsey McColley and Ken Hiltner have authored several seminal works and edited collections of others that offer ecological readings of Milton. See, for example, Hiltner, *Milton and Ecology* (Cambridge, 2003); McColley, *Poetry and Ecology in the Age of Milton and Marvell* (Burlington, Vt., 2007); and Hiltner, ed., *Renaissance Ecology*. Richard J. DuRocher, "The Wounded Earth in *Paradise Lost*," *Studies in Philology* 93, no. 1 (1996): 93–115, is also considered foundational. For more recent work, see Leah Marcus, "Ecocriticism and Vitalism in *Paradise Lost*," *Milton Quarterly* 49, no. 2 (2015): 96–111; Mary C. Fenton, "'Th'Earth's Great Altar': Teaching Milton's Spiritual Ecology," in *Ecological Approaches to Early Modern English Texts: A Field Guide to Reading and Teaching* (Burlington, Vt., 2015); Jennifer Munroe, "First 'Mother of Science': Milton's Eve, Knowledge and Nature," in *Ecofeminist Approaches to Early Modernity*, ed. Jennifer Munroe and Rebecca Laroche (New York, 2011); and Sarah Smith, "The Ecology of Chaos in *Paradise Lost*," *Milton Studies*, vol. 59, ed. Laura L. Knoppers (Pittsburgh, 2017), 31–55. For Milton, monism, and the Milton's connections to the period's natural philosophers, see, for example, Angelica Duran, *The Age of Milton and the Scientific Revolution* (Pittsburgh, 2007); William Poole, "Milton and Science: A Caveat," *Milton Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (2004): 18–34; N. K. Sugimura, *Matter of Glorious Trial: Spiritual and Material Substance in "Paradise Lost"* (New Haven, Conn., 2009); and Harinder Singh Marjara, *Contemplation of Created Things: Science in "Paradise Lost"* (Toronto, 1992).

5. All quotations from *Paradise Lost* are taken from Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Alastair Fowler, rev. 2nd ed. (Harlow, 2007).

6. Stanley Fish, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in "Paradise Lost,"* 2nd ed. (Cambridge, Mass., 1998), xvii.

7. There is also a long and illustrious critical tradition that elides labor to frame Milton's Eden as a version of pastoral. See for example, Susan Snyder, *Pastoral Process: Spenser, Marvell, Milton* (Stanford, Calif., 1998); D. M. Rosenberg, *Oaten Reeds and Trumpets: Pastoral and Epic in Virgil, Spenser, and Milton* (Lewisburg, Pa., 1981); and John R. Knott Jr., *Milton's Pastoral Vision: An Approach to "Paradise Lost"* (Chicago, 1971).

8. Barbara Lewalski, "Innocence and Experience in Milton's Eden," in *New Essays on "Paradise Lost,"* ed. Thomas Kranidas (Berkeley, 1970), 90.

9. See *OED* and Edwards, "Eden Raised," 263. Barbara Lewalski and Diane McColley both were groundbreaking in their suggestion that Edenic labor had not been properly valued. However, they both see this work generically as "gardening" and do not explore the valences of these highly specific agricultural tasks. Adam and Eve's work is therefore primarily significant for the ways in which it stands in for spiritual discipline. See especially Lewalski, "Innocence and Experience in Milton's

Eden," and McColley, *Milton's Eve* (Urbana, Ill., 1983). For more recent work see Attie, "Enclosure Polemics." John R. Knott remarks on Eden's wild exuberance and Adam and Eve's sincere but seemingly ineffectual efforts, noting that Milton "does not seem interested in showing [Adam and Eve] subduing the rampant vegetation of the garden" (Knott, "Milton's Wild Garden," *Studies in Philology* 102, no. 1 [2005]: 66–82, at 76). But he does not acknowledge that their very efforts contribute to the garden's excess, an excess that might itself have a larger purpose.

10. See *OED*. This same relationship between labor and rest is echoed in Milton's views of education—see Low, *Georgic Revolution*, 306.

11. For an alternate perspective on *Paradise Lost* as georgic see especially Low, *Georgic Revolution*, and Seth Lobis, "Milton's Tended Garden and the Georgic Fall," in *Milton Studies*, vol. 55, ed. Laura L. Knoppers (Pittsburgh, 2015), 89–111.

12. See, for example, Low, *Georgic Revolution*; Kevis Goodman, *Georgic Modernity and British Romanticism: Poetry and the Mediation of History* (Cambridge, 2004); and Gee, *Making Waste*. It cannot be Eve's solitary work Adam objects to per se; as McColley (*Milton's Eve*, 114) notes, despite Eve's relation of her disturbing dream, Adam has no objection to her solitary harvest in preparation for Raphael's arrival, or to her tending of the garden while he discourses privately with the angel, even while Raphael has just warned them of enemies in their midst.

13. The narrator describes a garden that "at her coming sprung / And touched by her fair tendance gladlier grew" (8.46–47). Upon her ejection from Eden, Eve notably addresses not Michael, but the garden itself: "Must I thus leave thee Paradise?" (11.273).

14. "Those blossoms also, and those dropping gums, / That lie bestrewn unsightly and unsmooth, / Ask[ing] riddance if we mean to tread with ease" (4.630–32).

15. Joanna Picciotto, *Labors of Innocence in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, Mass., 2010), 465. Picciotto astutely recognizes how, rather than divorced from our own world, Milton's Adam and Eve "work on a world in urgent need of 'reform,'" arguing that it is "to the innocent labor of reformation that Milton seeks to restore us" (403). While I focus on the paradox that labor in Milton's Eden necessitates even more labor, Picciotto, in her magisterial mapping of an experimentalist early modern culture, shows the centrality of the Adamic laborer as generating collective knowledge that gives rise to an early public sphere.

16. See Gigante, *Taste: A Literary History*, 23. Gee, *Making Waste*, marks the presence of human geographies of wasteland within the sphere of Milton's paradise. Gee brilliantly situates Milton's excess and purgation within the turmoil of early modern agrarian debate, but sees surplus—vegetative, topographical, or symbolic—in Eden as part of a godly paradox: excess that is not waste.

17. However disgusted he claims to be, Milton does not hesitate to imagine the postlapsarian equivalent in lampooning the concept of transubstantiation in *De doctrina Christiana*: "to speak candidly . . . when [Christ's body] has been driven through all the stomach's filthy channels it shoots it out—one shudders even to mention it—into the latrine" (YP 6:560).

18. In this sense, manuring offers a concrete praxis for the more abstract "positive engagement" that John Gillies begins to describe in "Space and Place in *Paradise Lost*," *ELH* 74, no. 1 (2007): 27–57, at 42.

19. Sir Hugh Plat, gentleman, manual author, and inventor, kept a garden in St. Martin's Lane and an estate in Essex, where he was able to experiment with various types of soil amendments, including various types of manure, mineral salts, and marl. For more on Milton's relationship to soils, see Goldstein, "Manuring Eden." The original 1608 title for Plat's *Floraes Paradise Beautified* was changed to *The Garden of Eden* when it was reissued in 1652, and this new title was retained through six subsequent editions. See the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (hereafter *DNB*).

20. This book by apothecary, herbalist, and gardener John Parkinson was one of the first to focus its primary attention on English plants, describing almost 1,000 plants, an effort superceded later by his *Theatrum botanicum* (London, 1640), which attempted, with over 3,000 entries, to describe the known botanical world. There are two extant copies of each of these massive works. See *DNB*.

21. See, for example, Joan Thirsk's chapters in *The Agrarian History of England and Wales* (New York, 1990); or, for a concise history, her chapter "Making a Fresh Start," in *Culture and Cultivation in Early Modern England: Writing and the Land*, ed. Michael Leslie and Timothy Raylor (New York, 1992), and Andrew McRae, *God Speed the Plough: The Representation of Agrarian England, 1500–1660* (New York, 1996).

22. William Goodwin, *The Lives of Edward and John Philips, Nephews and Pupils of Milton* (London, 1815), 314.

23. See especially Joan Thirsk, *The Rural Economy of England: Collected Essays* s(London, 1984); and Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects: The Development of a Consumer Society in Early Modern England* (London, 1978); R. H. Tawney, *The Agrarian Problem in the Sixteenth Century* (New York, 1967); and, more recently, McRae, *God Speed the Plough*; and Garrett Sullivan, *The Drama of Landscape: Land, Property, and Social Relations on the Early Modern Stage* (Stanford, Calif., 1998).

24. On Milton's relationship to Paget, see Stephen Fallon, *Milton Among the Philosophers: Poetry and Materialism in Seventeenth-Century England* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1991), 9. Though I argue Milton drew upon the manual genre to a hitherto unrecognized degree, I am less interested in whether Milton paid close attention to these particular manuals and more in the points of contact within a broader cultural conversation that was happening across "high" and "low" genres. The catalogue of sale for Paget's considerable library contained 28 books on farming and husbandry, including Gervase Markham, *Way to Get Wealth*; Hugh Plat, *Garden of Eden*; Ralph Austen, *Treatise of Fruit Trees*; Nicolas Bonnefons, *The French Gardiner*; Thomas Tusser, *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry*; and pamphlets such as *The Art of Enriching Barren and Sterile Grounds*; *The Commons Complaint against the Waste of Woods and the Dearth of Victuals*; and *Directions for the Improvement of Barren and Healthy Lands in England and Wales*, as listed in *Bibliotheca medica viri clarissimi Nathanis Paget*. There is direct textual evidence that Milton was familiar with the contents of John Gerard's *Herball* (1597). As David Scott Kastan notes, the description of the Indian fig that Adam and Eve reach for to cover their nakedness comes directly from Gerard (see Kastan, ed., Milton, *Paradise Lost* [Indianapolis, 2005], 302, nn. 1101–6). Husbandry manuals were some of the most frequently printed books of the period, likely second only to the Bible.

25. For more on trees as both necessary military resources and as political symbols for both sides of the English Revolution, see especially Hiltner, *Milton and Ecology*,

and Jeffrey Theis, *Writing the Forest in Early Modern England: A Sylvan Pastoral Nation* (Pittsburgh, 2009).

26. Seasons in Milton's Eden are, as in other Edens, conjoined (e.g., flowers and fruit appearing simultaneously), but because the garden work Adam and Eve perform results in more vigorous plant growth, I am assuming these cuts are made before budbreak.

27. Austen, *Treatise of Fruit Trees*, 8, 36. Austen, a self-taught Oxfordshire horticulturalist, wrote three books on fruit trees, the most famous of which, *Treatise of Fruit Trees*, went through three editions between 1653 and 1665. See *DNB*. Paget owned a copy of this book.

28. John Beale, *Herefordshire Orchards, a Pattern for all England* (London, 1657). This pamphlet was considered important enough to be republished twice in the eighteenth century, as part of Richard Bradley's *New Improvement of Planting and Gardening* in 1724 and 1739. Beale was an English clergyman, a member of the Royal Society, and a weekly correspondent with Hartlib. His *Treatise on Fruit Trees* (London, 1653) went through one more edition, published in 1657. See *DNB*.

29. Lawson, *A New Orchard and Garden, or, The Best Way for Planting, Grafting, and to Make any Ground Good for a Rich Orchard* (London, 1631), 52. Little is known about Lawson, a Yorkshire clergyman. *A New Orchard*, his only book, was reissued a dozen times between 1618 and 1676, and the book's second half, *The Country Housewife's Garden*, was absorbed by the insatiable Gervase Markham, who integrated Lawson's work into his own *Way to Get Wealth* (also owned by Paget). See *DNB*.

30. Nicolas Bonnefons, *The French Gardiner Instructing how to Cultivate all Sorts of Fruit-Trees and Herbs for the Garden* (London, 1658), 32.

31. Austen's "Fruit tree" reminds his interlocutor of his presence in the Garden of Eden, merging the man before him with the father of all men: "For we [fruit trees] were present and stood by when thou, and thy wife, did both of you transgress the command of our creator in the Garden of Eden, in that ye did eat of the forbidden fruit." Austen, *Dialogue*, 2–3.

32. Ibid., 11.

33. Ibid., 85.

34. Austen moves from the popular *Treatise of Fruit Trees* (London, 1653), to *the Spiritual Use of an Orchard* (London, 1657) and *Observations upon some Part of Francis Bacon's Natural History Concerning Fruit Trees* (London, 1658), through the prelapsarian communion of the *Dialogue* (London, 1676) and ultimately to a purely religious tract, *The Strong Man Cast Out* (London, 1676), which warns of the dangers posed by Quakers.

35. Austen, *Dialogue*, 39.

36. See *OED*.

37. For a concise introduction to Winstanley's extraordinary life and work, see the introduction to Thomas N. Corns, Ann Hughes and David Loewenstein, eds., *Complete Works of Gerrard Winstanley*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 2010). The Digger movement, while short-lived, was made up of "projects so remarkable that their defeats trump our victories" in the words of literary historian James Holstun (*Ehud's Dagger: Class Struggle in the English Revolution* [London, 2000], xi). Christopher Hill's account in *The World Turned Upside Down* (New York, 1991) may still be the best known. Karen Edwards,

"Eden Raised," discusses the glancing presence of Winstanley and the Diggers' failed collective in *Paradise Lost* in the "waste" through which Satan passes in Eden. Joanna Picciotto, *Labors of Innocence*, connects both Milton and Winstanley through experimentalism.

38. Winstanley, *Complete Works*, 2:295.

39. Ibid., 2.

40. "The New Law of Righteousness," in Winstanley, *Complete Works*, 1:508.

41. Exceptionally, Adam and Eve do have the right to their own erotic intimacy, seemingly apart from God. The narrator modestly describes "the rites / Mysterious of connubial love" (4.742–43) as "the sole propriety" (4.751) of the first couple. Michael corrects the fallen Eve when she attempts in book 11 to claim the work she performs in Eden as making the Garden in some sense hers.

42. Fish, *Surprised by Sin*. In a somewhat dated, but unmissable instance, E. M. Tillyard disparages "Adam and Eve are in the hopeless position of Old Age pensioners enjoying perpetual youth. . . . Any genuine activity would be better than utter stagnation" (*Studies in Milton* [London, 1951], 282–83). To Fish's "nothing happens," it is tempting to counter, "shit happens."

43. "Cursèd is the ground for thy sake" (10.201), says God to Adam, indicating that all that springs from the earth is now diminished and wasted.

44. See Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*: "As much Land as a Man Tills, Plants, Improves, Cultivates, and can use the Product of, so much is his Property. He by his Labour does, as it were, inclose it from the Common" (London, 1690), 5.27, 5.32.

45. In its earliest instantiations, "to farm" meant "to cleanse, empty, or purge," for example, to "farm" a ditch or a latrine. While "farmer" existed as a noun in early modern usage as one who leased land in order to cultivate it, as a verb, "to farm" did not accrue its more familiar meaning until the nineteenth century. In other words, seventeenth-century farmers "manured"; they did not "farm." See *OED*.

46. For a concise overview of the commons debate and of Ostrom's work, see Elinor Ostrom et al., *The Drama of the Commons* (Washington, D.C., 2002); and Daniel Bromley et.al., *Making the Commons Work: Theory, Practice and Policy* (San Francisco, 1992).