



John Milton's New World Contours¹

Os contornos do Novo Mundo de John Milton

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Abstract: Given the relative novelty of the Americas in the early modern world, the indirectness of transatlantic routes at the time, and the vastness of his own imagination, English poet John Milton's virtual travels to the Americas are marked by detours, circumnavigations, and chance encounters. Nevertheless, the challenge of this article is to delineate the contours of Milton's Americas, with attention to the specific and different historical, political, and generic contexts in which his few allusions and references to the New World appear. By doing so, one discovers that Milton approaches the Americas as a *mundus alter et idem* or as an exercise in othering as well as a self study.

Keywords: John Milton; Americas; *Paradise Lost*; alterity; travel literature.

Resumo: Dadas a relativa novidade das Américas no início do mundo moderno, a indireção das rotas transatlânticas na época e a vastidão de sua imaginação, as viagens virtuais do poeta inglês John Milton para as Américas são marcadas por desvios, circunavegações e encontros eventuais. No entanto, o desafio deste artigo é delinear os contornos das Américas de Milton, atentando aos específicos e diferentes contextos históricos, políticos e genéricos em que aparecem suas poucas alusões e referências ao Novo Mundo. Ao fazer isso, descobre-se que Milton interpreta as Américas como um *mundus alter et idem* ou como um exercício de alteridade e também como um autoestudo.

Palavras-chave: John Milton; Américas; *O paraíso perdido*; alteridade; literatura de viagem.

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In his *History of a Voyage* (1578) to Brazil, travel writer Jean de Léry recorded his experience of “this new land of America”: “everything to be seen [...] is so unlike what we have in Europe, Asia, and Africa that it may very well be called a ‘New World’ with respect to us”.² Annotating de Léry’s observations, Milton scholar J. Martin Evans explains that Europeans experienced the New World as “another sphere, quite literally another globe, *orbis alter* [...] The discovery of America was tantamount to the discovery of another planet”.³ Historian and sociologist Tzvetan Todorov characterized the early modern Europeans’ first reports of the alterity of the Americas as “the most astonishing encounter of our history”. Over the centuries European writings registered an awareness of Africa, India, and China; “some memory of these places was always there already – from the beginning”, Todorov explains.⁴ As for the Americas, given the belated public record of European contact, this alien, captivating place still required comprehension and invited possession. Literary works enabled and instantiated some of these efforts – intellectual and territorial.

“Of late / Columbus found the American”, declares the English poet-polemicist John Milton in recounting the immediate aftermath of human disobedience in his national epic, *Paradise Lost*.⁵ Two books later, in a long, globe-consuming epic catalogue,⁶ Milton’s prophetic narrator, Michael, directs Adam’s gaze slowly westward, while mapping and naming capitals and historic rulers of Asia, Africa, and Europe, which, until the late fifteenth century, were the known continents. By Milton’s day, the Americas were, as the geographer and antiquarian Peter Heylyn states in his massive chorographical project *Cosmographie*, “lately known”.⁷ In Milton’s encyclopedic epic, the Americas still lie beyond Adam’s view, beyond the horizon and the ecliptic, the path of the earth with respect to the sun. Essentially, Adam needs to be hoisted on the shoulders of Atlas, Hercules, and Milton’s Michael to experience “in spirit perhaps”⁸ the Americas, which extend, if not geographically then conceptually, into the

² LÉRY. *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil, Otherwise Called America*, p. lx-lxi.

³ EVANS. *Milton’s Imperial Epic*, p. 124.

⁴ TODOROV. *The Conquest of America*, p. 4-5.

⁵ MILTON. *Paradise Lost*, 9:1115-1116.

⁶ MILTON. *Paradise Lost*, 11:383-411.

⁷ HEYLYN. *Cosmographie in Four Bookes*, 1:32.

⁸ MILTON. *Paradise Lost*, 11:406.

unknown Southern Hemisphere. Still in Milton's day, the Americas were an otherworldly place, occupying a liminal space between the known and the unknown, and thus inviting delineation and reclamation.

Awareness of the existence of the Americas may have predated Columbus's arrival by many centuries. In the first century BCE, Greek geographer Diodorus of Sicily (Siculus) wrote of the islands beyond "the Pillars of Hercules" or the Straits of Gibraltar, "[T]here lies out in the deep off Libya an island of considerable size [...] Its land is fruitful, much of it being mountainous and not a little being a level plain of surpassing beauty [...] the island contains many parks planted with trees of every variety and gardens in great multitudes". Siculus speculates about a possible encounter of a western land by the Phoenicians and Carthaginians from Northern Africa.⁹ The land mass in question was known as "India Occident" (*India Occidentalis*), "occident" meaning "going down" or, in some cases, "setting" like the sun. In the early modern era, the first terrestrial globe, produced by the German cartographer and navigator Martin Behaim in 1492, may contain some traces of the latterly identified South America, but offers no clear indications of the continent's existence. In the same year, Columbus's voyage would result in the early modern "discovery" of the Caribbean islands, and in 1498 he would land on the South American mainland.

Given the relative novelty of the Americas, the indirectness of transatlantic routes, and the vastness of his own imagination, Milton's virtual travels to the Americas are marked by detours, circumnavigations, and chance encounters. Investigating how the New World – as a whole and as a precursor to the latterly defined North, Central, and South America – figures in Milton's works can be an arduous exercise. Scholars venturing into the territory of Milton in the Americas readily discover that there is no conspicuous New World orientation in Milton, J. Martin Evans's influential argument in *Milton's Imperial Epic* notwithstanding. Literary evidence confirms Milton's familiarity with Walter Raleigh's *Discoverie of the Large, Rich and Beautiful Empyre of Guiana* (1596), Samuel Purchas's *Hakluytus Posthumus or Purchas His Pilgrimes* (1625), and Peter Heylyn's *Cosmographie* (1652). Yet America itself "occupied no significant place in Milton's mental geography", William Spengemann

⁹ SICULUS. *The Library of History (Bibliotheca historica)*, book 5, chap. 19, p. 145-147; book 5, chap. 20, p. 149-151.

concedes in his study of *Paradise Lost* as an American poem.¹⁰ In the few allusions to the New World in Milton's prose and verse, the Americas appear as degenerate or inferior. Nevertheless, the challenge of this article is to delineate the contours of Milton's Americas, with attention to the specific and different historical, political, and generic contexts in which his allusions and references appear. By doing so, one discovers in part that Milton reads the Americas in terms of a *mundus alter et idem* or as an exercise in othering as well as a commentary on the self.

Mundus alter et idem

In Milton's *Animadversions upon the Remonstrants Defence against Smectymnuus* (1641), the Remonstrant, Bishop Joseph Hall, is compelled to eat his words about the age-long duration of the episcopacy as a form of church government. The Remonstrant retorts, "we could tell you of *China, Japan, Peru, Brasil, New England, Virginia*, and a thousand others that never had any Bishops to this day",¹¹ but the office of the episcopate is not thereby deligitimized. Such was Hall's claim in *A Defence of the Humble Remonstrance*, in which he maintained that the institution of the prelacy originated in the time of the apostles. The respondent or answerer in *Animadversions* dismisses the history and geography lesson (*à la* Ortelius) and offers the correction that the episcopacy is alive and well in "*Mundus alter & idem*, in the spacious, and rich Countries of *Crapulia, Pamphagonia, Yvronia*, and in the Dukedome of *Orgilia*", and so on.¹² These place names appear in the dystopian Menippean satire *Mundus Alter et Idem sive Terra Australis antehac semper incognita* (1605) – liberally translated and embellished by John Healey as "The Discovery of a New World; or, A Description of the South Indies" (1609). In his 1642 *Apology against a Pamphlet*, Milton decries the anonymous, though hardly unknown, author of *Mundus Alter et Idem* as a "petty prevaricator of America".¹³

The large Antarctic continent called *Terra Australis Incognita*, which was outlined in maps of Milton's day, is the site of Hall's *Mundus*

¹⁰ SPENGMANN. *A New World of Words*, p. 97.

¹¹ MILTON. *Animadversions upon the Remonstrants Defence*, in *The Complete Prose Works*, v. 1, p. 697.

¹² MILTON. *The Complete Prose Works*, v. 1, p. 697.

¹³ MILTON. *The Complete Prose Works*, v. 1, p. 881.

Alter et Idem. The theory that a great continent constituted much of the Southern Hemisphere had been passed down from Ptolemy's second century *Geographia* through to Ortelius's 1570 atlas. *Terra Australis* ("Southern land") presented the prospect of the further exploitation of a world whose boundaries awaited precise demarcation, although Sir Francis Drake's passage southwest of the Strait of Magellan already had challenged assumptions about the extensiveness of *Terra Australis*. Heylyn refers to *Terra Australis Incognita* as the Southern Continent and, "without troubling the Vice-Roys of *Peru* and *Mexico*, or taking out Commission for a new Discovery", he proposes to "search into this *Terra Australis* for some other Regions, which must be found either here or no-where". His list also includes *Mundus Alter et Idem*, *Utopia*, *New Atlantis*, and "The New World in the Moon".¹⁴ In Joseph Hall's *Mundus Alter et Idem*, which Heylyn commends as an artistically ingenious literary work, the route to the uncharted southern land is plotted by the imagination, navigated by the ship *Phantasia*, and charted by evasion, transgression, prevarication, and wandering. In the end, the main discovery about *Terra Australis* is that it represents an other world and the same, "mundus alter & idem".

In Milton's aforementioned *An Apology against a Pamphlet*, the apologist compares several utopian works, those of Plato, More, and Bacon, to Hall's *Mundus Alter et Idem*. Whereas the philosophers displayed their virtuosity through their art of mimesis "by teaching this our world better and exacter things, then were yet known, or us'd", Hall, whom Milton characterizes as "the zanie of *Columbus*, (for so he must be till his worlds end)", is reduced to a fool.¹⁵ In accompanying Columbus or following his lead "till his [Hall's] worlds end", the Remonstrant travels from East to West, that is, from "*China* [to], *Japan*, *Peru*, *Brasil*, *New England*, *Virginia*", where episcopacy is unknown. By implication and extension, episcopacy is but a phantasm at home.

Still the prelacy constitutes a tyrannical force that drives the defenders of conscience across the Atlantic. In a couple early allusions to the New World, Milton identifies New England as the destination

¹⁴ HEYLYN. An Appendix to the Former Work, Endeavouring a Discovery of the Unknown Parts of the World, in *Cosmographie in Four Bookes*, 4:191. Later editions include a subtitle for the appendix: "Especially of Terra Australis Incognita, or the Southern Continent". See, for example, *Cosmographie in Foure Books* (1677), 4:155.

¹⁵ MILTON. *The Complete Prose Works*, v. 1, p. 881.

of the exiled English. Just over a decade after the Puritan landing in Massachusetts, Milton writes, “what numbers of faithfull, and freeborn Englishmen, and good Christians have bin constrain’d to forsake their dearest home, their friends, and kindred, whom nothing but the wide Ocean, and the savage deserts of *America* could hide and shelter from the fury of the Bishops”.¹⁶ Arguably, Milton’s reflections focus less on the Americas than on repressive church policies at home. In another anti-episcopal tract published in the same year, Milton laments the persecution of the pilgrims, “our poore expulsed Brethren of *New-England*”,¹⁷ who sought refuge in the wilderness, in regions associated with England’s newly expanded western borders. In Milton’s imperial epic, which is the subject of the following section, the savage desert would reappear as the “wild woods forlorn” and as the “wild desert, not the readiest way”.¹⁸

“In India east or west”

The character and properties of the New World are defined by a moral, mental, and psychological landscape, which Milton maps in *Paradise Lost*. The postlapsarian frame of reference of Milton’s blind poet-narrator results in an overlaying of perspectives and a heavy reliance on metaphors, anachronisms, and negative comparisons, notably in the description of Eden and its prelapsarian inhabitants.¹⁹ Like the travel writers of his time, Milton would use geographic specificity as a marker of national identity, foreign relations, and literary achievement. There was nothing innocent or neutral about Milton’s geographical references or topographical descriptions: his invocations and recitations of place names involve cognitive, philosophical, and literary reflections, as well as cultural commentary and critique.

Comparisons between East and West, for example, had cultural and ethical implications that could be activated to convey dominance or depravity. In a prelapsarian world, the differences between the East and West Indies, the geographic regions that span the world, converge in the descriptions of the natural world. Evans maintains that many native fruits

¹⁶ MILTON. Of Reformation, in *The Complete Prose Works*, v. 1, p. 585.

¹⁷ MILTON. Animadversions, in *The Complete Prose Works*, v. 1, p. 668.

¹⁸ MILTON. *Paradise Lost*, 9:910; 12:216.

¹⁹ E.g. MILTON. *Paradise Lost*, 4:736-747, 765-770.

and vegetables in the New World were unknown to the Old in the early modern era.²⁰ But Karen Edwards's ground-breaking discovery that every plant identified in Milton's paradise and all the animals frolicking about Adam and Eve possess an Eastern and Western as well as a classical and early modern counterpart presents a different perspective, and a distinctive way of gauging Milton's East-West encounters.²¹

In recalling her own nativity, Eve describes her attraction to a watery image until she spies Adam "fair indeed and tall, / Under a platan".²² The platan or plane tree in *Paradise Lost* lacks geographical specificity: the genus includes an oriental and occidental species, and the West Indian variety was introduced into England.²³ The image connects the furthest reaches of the world, now contained in Eden, to Eve, represented by the shaded fair and tall Adam, with whom she becomes joined. Eve herself contributes to the bridging of East and West as she prepares a repast fit for angelic consumption by using foods from across the globe "Whatever earth all-bearing mother yields / In India east or west, or middle shore / In Pontus or Punic Coast".²⁴ The dinner of "savory fruits"²⁵ offers a geographical conspectus, with Eden, earth, and Eve as its center and tableau.

Satan arrives uninvited in the garden to which he gains ready access. The poem's descriptions of this "foreign land"²⁶ under Satan's gaze could evoke the Americas, and much of the received tradition of *Paradise Lost* is predicated on a reading of Eden as the New World, newly violated.²⁷ Satan's voyage to the earth is primarily figured as an Eastern rather than a Western design. The geographical references that demarcate Satan's voyage to Eden also map the spice trades to the Orient. Even more ambitiously, Satan's globe-consuming designs involve surveillance of the entire "orb":

²⁰ EVANS. *Milton's Imperial Epic*, p. 124.

²¹ EDWARDS. *Milton and the Natural World*, p. 78.

²² MILTON. *Paradise Lost*, 4:477-478.

²³ These observations are indebted to Edwards's *Milton and the Natural World*, p. 144.

²⁴ MILTON. *Paradise Lost*, 5:338-340.

²⁵ MILTON. *Paradise Lost*, 5:304.

²⁶ MILTON. *Paradise Lost*, 3:548.

²⁷ See, for example, EVANS. *Milton's Imperial Epic*; STAVELY. *Puritan Legacies*; STEVENS. *Milton and the New World*. p. 90-111.

rom Eden over Pontus, and the pool
 Maeotis, up beyond the river Ob;
 Downward as far Antarctic; and in length
 West from Orontes to the ocean barred
 At Darien, thence to the land where flows
 Ganges and Indus.²⁸

Paradoxically, we can best understand Milton's Americas by following his gaze eastward and back to Europe, where he was always more intent on looking.

The consequences of Satan's successful temptation of Eve are represented in book 9 in terms of the elision of East and West, demarcating the fall from grace. Milton reserves his most extensive description of the New World for the occasion of Adam and Eve's guilt and girding following their consumption of the bitter fruit of disobedience:

those leaves
 They gathered, broad as Amazonian targe,
 And with what skill they had, together sewed,
 To gird their waist, vain covering if to hide
 Their guilt and dreaded shame; how unlike
 To that first naked glory. Such of late
 Columbus found the American so girt
 With feathered cincture, naked else and wild
 Among the trees on isles and woody shores.
 Thus fenced, and as they thought, their shame in part
 Covered, but not at rest or ease of mind,
 They sat them down to weep, nor only tears
 Rained at their eyes, but high winds worse within
 Began to rise, high passions, anger, hate,
 Mistrust, suspicion, discord, and shook sore
 Their inward state of mind.²⁹

Inserting into the account of the aftermath of the first human transgression a passage on the first published New World encounter, the poet emphasizes the internal subjection, estrangement, and barbarism of the fallen natives. Adam and Eve are metamorphosed and in fact "Americanized" in their postlapsarian condition. Milton distances the unfallen biblical first

²⁸ MILTON. *Paradise Lost*, 9:77-82.

²⁹ MILTON. *Paradise Lost*, 9:1110-1125.

parents from the West and East Indian descendants of the lapsed couple as represented in the above-quoted passage.

The newly fallen humans are thus geographically and historically dislocated, as conveyed by images of corruption imported from the feminized East and the New World. Milton is again making a claim to origins, overwriting Columbus's own observations about the inhabitants of the West Indies. Returning from America, Columbus describes his voyage to "the Islands found in the Indies." The inhabitants, he explains, "go as naked as they were born, with the exception of some of the women cover one part only with a single leaf of grass or with a piece of cotton, made for that purpose."³⁰ Here we find not a featured cincture, as Milton suggests, but rather an identification of feathers with foliage; feathers could refer to fringes or small side branches on a tree, as in the case of the "daughters grow[ing] / About the mother tree".³¹ Milton may be thinking of Theodor de Bry's famous engravings to Thomas Hariot's *Briefe and True Report on the New Found Land of Virginia*, dedicated to Raleigh and contained in Milton's library.³² As one of the most rabid critics of Spanish colonialization, de Bry characterizes the natives as victims. Milton does not. He had cast Amerindians as sun worshippers,³³ and later as idolizers of malevolent demons they cannot exorcize.³⁴ In general, Milton associates the Amerindians with naïveté and postlapsarian primitivism at best and savagery most often.

In *Paradise Lost*, the depictions of the now fallen antiheroes combine features identified with both the West and East Indies. The couple conceals their private parts with leaves from the (feminized) Indian fig tree or banyan tree "as at this day to Indians known / In Malabar or Decan".³⁵ Though small in nature, the leaves are enlarged to forge a comparison with the shields of the Amazons from Greek mythology.³⁶

³⁰ COLUMBUS. A Letter sent by Columbus to [Luis de Santangel] Chancellor of the Exchequer [of Aragon] (1493), p. 5-6.

³¹ MILTON. *Paradise Lost*, 9:1105-1106.

³² Theodore de Bry's "The True Pictures and Fashions of the People in that Parte of America now Called Virginia, Discovred by Englismen" [*sic*] (1585) is printed as an appendix to HARIOT, *Briefe and true report on ... Virginia*, sig. A-F4v.

³³ MILTON. *The Complete Prose Works*, v. 1, p. 228.

³⁴ MILTON. *The Complete Prose Works*, v. 4, p. 551.

³⁵ MILTON. *Paradise Lost*, 9:1102-1103.

³⁶ MILTON. *Paradise Lost*, 9:1110-1111.

Images of the “pillared shade” in which the Indian herdsman shelters himself and of the banyan leaves covering the nether regions of the couple, in conjunction with the comparison to the “American so girt / With feathered cincture”, bridge and bind the worlds of the Indian and the Amerindian. Again, the East and West Indies meet.³⁷ Karen Edwards discerns that the tree shelter and the cincture, rather than exposing the “difference between natives and Europeans”, reveal “their common ancestry”.³⁸ I would suggest, however, that because Milton reaffirms the primacy of Genesis and the superiority, innocence, and majesty of the first humans over their fallen distant descendants, Adam and Eve are not grafted onto the natives’ family tree until they themselves go native (and American) through their act of disobedience.

“Such of late / Columbus found the American”, announces the poet-narrator. The belatedness of that discovery locates the Spanish explorer and the Americans in a postlapsarian historical timeframe. As noted at the outset of this article, Heylyn uses the term “lately” to describe the discovery of the Americas. The world is subdivided, explains Heylyn: the “*Unknown*, or not fully discovered” is composed of the “*Borealis* and *Australis*.” As for the “Known” world, it is “*Known* either Antiently”, as is the case with Europe, Asia, and Africa, or “Lately, as *America*”.³⁹ The geographic dislocations and the conflation of Western and Eastern place names – Columbus named the “West Indies” on the assumption he had reached the coast of India – register the disruptions in the stanza and in the plot. Supplementing the conditions of colonization and reflecting the disturbances in the macrocosm of nature are the tempests in the microcosm: “high passions, anger, hate, / Mistrust, suspicion, discord, and shook sore / Their inward state of mind”.⁴⁰ The tempestuousness conveys self-division and the self’s entanglement with the alien other it repudiates.

Variouly figured as exiled Israelites and primitive Indians (who were cast as distant cousins by lost tribe theorists!),⁴¹ Milton’s postlapsarian Adam and Eve shed tears that mirror their guilt and shame.

³⁷ FOWLER. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, p. 535n1117. Milton’s source for “the arched Indian Fig tree” is GERARD’s *The Herball or Generall Historie of Plantes*, p. 1330-1331.

³⁸ EDWARDS. *Milton and the Natural World*, p. 153.

³⁹ HEYLYN. *Cosmographie in Four Bookes*, 1.32.

⁴⁰ MILTON. *Paradise Lost*, 9:1123-125.

⁴¹ See COGLEY. *The Ancestry of the American Indians*, p. 304-330.

Fallen Adam becomes “estranged in look and altered [in] style” or tone,⁴² the narrator reports, meaning Adam is rendered alien or othered in appearance and speech. This alteration is also expressed by variations in metrical patterns. Adam’s estrangement elicits self-recrimination as he complains of the couple’s despoilment and debasement: “Of all our good, shamed, naked, miserable”.⁴³ Impassioned and accusatory, the couple’s speeches in the passages that bring book 9 to a close reinforce their incivility. “American” speech or “Red Indian dialect” is particularly barbarous, Milton declares earlier in reproving the vulgar native English tongue, and specifically the convoluted “lingo” of jurisprudence.⁴⁴

The remainder of the epic frequently cites misguided or failed travels to the furthest reaches of the world. Columbus of course had ventured westward in search of Cathay and the Far East. His chance encounter with the large obstructive landmass to be known as the American continent mainly encouraged attempts to map out alternate routes. At the very best, the New World is merely en route to – and gets in the way of – the desired location. Henry Hudson failed in an attempt to discover a northeast route to Cathay in 1608 when the passage was ice-blocked. Milton’s characters Sin and Death are compared to Arctic winds that drive “Mountains of ice, that stop the imagined way / Beyond Petsora [Siberian river] eastward to the rich / Cathaian coast”.⁴⁵ In 1610 Hudson undertook a search for a Northwest passage and decided to winter in what would be called Hudson Bay. He never returned home. Milton tells us that the effects of the original fall into sin include the tilting of the earth:

At that tasted fruit
The sun [...] turned
His course intended; else how had the world
Inhabited, though sinless, more than now,
Avoided pinching cold and scorching heat?⁴⁶

Sin sends forth destructive winds, the by-products of which, snow and climate change, are postlapsarian phenomena.

⁴² MILTON. *Paradise Lost*, 9:1132.

⁴³ MILTON. *Paradise Lost*, 9:1139.

⁴⁴ MILTON. *The Complete Prose Works*, v. 1, p. 301.

⁴⁵ MILTON. *Paradise Lost*, 10:291-293.

⁴⁶ MILTON. *Paradise Lost*, 10:687-691.

When Adam nears the end of his world tour, courtesy of his guide Michael in the penultimate book of the epic, his gaze is directed west, to lands lying beyond the ecliptic, beyond the horizon and the sun's annual journey. Adam experiences the Americas "in spirit perhaps", given that the extreme reaches of the Western Hemisphere were out of sight.⁴⁷ The mental traveller then learns about "Rich Mexico the seat of Motezume".⁴⁸ References to the last ruler, Mexican Emperor "Motezume" and the Incan Atabalipa⁴⁹ thereafter suggest Milton's indebtedness to Raleigh's aforementioned *Discoverie of the Large, Rich and Beautiful Empyre of Guiana* (1596).⁵⁰ *Paradise Lost* restores "Motezume's" kingdom and name, the former having been seized and the latter corrupted by the Spaniards into "Montezuma" along with Hernán Cortés's reduction of the Aztec empire.

Moving further south, the final leg of the tour ends in the latterly named South America, identified in Milton's day with Peru. Michael reveals to Adam Cuzco, capital of the Inca empire and its emperor Atabalipa before the Spanish conquest under Francisco Pizarro: "And Cusco in Peru, the richer seat / Of Atabalipa".⁵¹ The South American vista extends to Guiana as Milton's dream of a "yet unspoiled / Guiana" conjures up Raleigh's description of "a Countrey that hath yet her Maydenhead, never sackt, turned, nor wrought [...] never been entred by any armie of strength, and never conquered or possessed by anie Christian Prince".⁵² The Americas are invested with a moral character or identity, usually negatively defined; if not, then marked by litotes: a "yet unspoiled / Guiana". Imperial Spain is specifically implicated in the description of Guiana, "whose great city Geryon's Sons / Call El Dorado".⁵³ The reference to the fabulous city El Dorado, literally, "the Golden City", completes the survey, thus linking the worldly empires of the far reaches of the East with those of the West.⁵⁴

⁴⁷ MILTON. *Paradise Lost*, 11:406.

⁴⁸ MILTON. *Paradise Lost*, 11:407.

⁴⁹ MILTON. *Paradise Lost*, 11:409.

⁵⁰ RALEGH. *Discoverie of the Large, Rich and Beautiful Empyre of Guiana*, p. 9.

⁵¹ MILTON. *Paradise Lost*, 11:408-409.

⁵² RALEGH. *Discoverie of the Large, Rich and Beautiful Empyre of Guiana*, p. 96.

⁵³ MILTON. *Paradise Lost*, 11:410-411.

⁵⁴ HEYLYN. *Cosmographie in Four Bookes*, 4:170 – 71; RALEGH. *Discoverie of the Large, Rich and Beautiful Empyre of Guiana*, p. 10.

What Mercurius Britanicus (Joseph Hall) reveals about the Antipodean world, which is actually heavily anglicized, is not that it opens the door to new knowledge but that it shares the moral complexion and character of the Old World. In *Cosmographie*, Peter Heylyn interprets Hall's *Mundus Alter et Idem*, which he admires, as a journey within, a mirror reflecting a microcosm: Hall, explains Heylyn, anatomizes "the *Vices, Passions, Humours* and ill *Affections* most commonly incident to mankind, into several Provinces, gives us the *Character* of each, as in the description of a Country, People, and chief Cities of it; and sets forth to the Eye in such lively colours, that the vicious man may see therein his own Deformities".⁵⁵ Milton's prose and verse representations of the Americas are likewise exercises in self-examination, in anthropology, in bridge-building, in the conflation of East and West, and in colonialism and the reclamation of empire. Most of all, the study of Milton's Americas as a *mundus alter et idem* reveals how literature facilitates the conversion of geographic places and place names into "practiced" spaces, that is, places put to use to register the "astonishing", "intense", "extreme", and alien nature of the other that characterizes the self.

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⁵⁵ HEYLYN. Appendix, 4:195.

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