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Thomas Hallock, Ivo Kamps, and Karen L. Raber, editors, *Early Modern Ecostudies. From the Florentine Codex to Shakespeare* (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), xii+298 pp.

Early modern English writers addressed ecological issues such as mining, hunting, air pollution, urban plague, forest depletion, land enclosure, and wetland drainage. Distinctive and compelling early modern representations of nature as well as records of New World exploration, conquest, pillage, and settlement may foster ecological understanding and constructive perspectives on current crises. In any case, the prospect of anthropogenic ecological disaster if not apocalypse now invites historical scholars of all disciplines and periods to reconsider and rewrite human history in the shadow of its possible unraveling.

Renaissance England is comparatively well represented in historical ecocriticism, thanks partly to contributors of the volume under review. Karen L. Raber's 2007 annotated bibliography surveyed well over a hundred titles. Gabriel Egan's book on Shakespeare is five years old; Simon Estok's is scheduled for April 2011, with an anthology edited by Lynne Bruckner and Dan Brayton forthcoming later. Studies by Bruce Boehrer and Robert N. Watson include many authors besides the Bard, the former focusing on animals and the latter on a fundamental cultural anxiety traced in Dutch painting as well as in a range of English writing. Other authors of ecocritical books on early modern English literature include Sylvia Bowerbank, Diane McColley, Ken Hiltner (writer of one book and editor of another on Milton), and, most recently, Todd Borlik. Boehrer's second animal studies book now joins those of Erica Fudge as well as that of Jeffrey Theis and of Raber and Treva J. Tucker in ranging well beyond literature. For the colonial American experience I rely on the list provided by the editors: Susan Scott Parrish, Thomas Hallock, Timothy Sweet, and Michael P. Branch.

The first essay in *Early Modern Ecostudies: From the Florentine Codex to Shakespeare* concerns the experience of doing ecocriticism itself, and as with the books listed above, most of the fifteen essays here also address the process of fashioning appropriate methods and addressing relevant issues for work in this still-developing field. But compared to titles that have so far appeared, *Early Modern Ecostudies* is the most wide-ranging geographically, with seven of its fourteen historical contributions moving beyond England to the New World and, in two-and-a-half essays, to Spanish or Nahuatl language sources. Published in Palgrave's Early Modern Cultural Studies series, the book well demonstrates that ecocriticism can offer an encompassing horizon for cultural studies. Four contributions foreground drama or fiction in English (three on

Shakespeare, one on Philip Sidney); another concerns Thomas More's *Utopia*. Four others include some discussion of established authors while focusing mainly on cultural matrices: the domestication of cats, the Little Gidding religious community, the traditional practice of meditation on the creatures, and the cultivation of apples in New England. Two essays concern primarily Spanish exploration of Southeast North America, one promotion of Barbados colonization, one the ways colonization stimulated thinking about sustainability, and one, of course, that tremendously significant multilingual compilation, the Florentine Codex (*Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*), Fray Bernardino de Sahagún's huge ethnography preserving remnants of the ravaged Valley of Mexico.

Such a richly diverse book offers a sense of the range and promise of ecocriticism. In a more developed field it would seem miscellaneous, and organizing the essays was probably difficult. Three parts follow its introduction: "Ecocriticism and Early Modern Europe: New Approaches, Maturing Disciplines," "The Spirit and the Flesh: The Implications of Religion for Early Modern Nature," and "Nature and Empire." Before introducing each essay, the introduction offers a very brief history of ecocriticism featuring its eventual progress into earlier historical periods.

Sharon O'Dair's entertaining, anecdotal, and comprehensively annotated "Slow Shakespeare: An Eco-Critique of 'Method' in Early Modern Literary Studies" kicks off the first, markedly heterogeneous section, exploring contradictions of ecocritical study stemming from the unsustainable energy consumption and pollution typical of jet-setting professional life and the marginal impact of literary scholarship on public opinion. The very growth of the field promises more of the same, while overproductive careerism blunts the activist edge. O'Dair's recommendations are to travel less, fight academic elitism, increase the quality and lower the quantity of one's work, and live more sustainably through productive horticultural labor. The next essay is pure interpretive practice. Todd Borlik's "Mute Timber?: Fiscal Forestry and Environmental Stichomythia in *The Old Arcadia*" rehabilitates Renaissance pastoral and especially Sidney's use of prosopopeia, a figure later demeaned as the "pathetic fallacy." Despite its feudal overtones, this trope actually contributes to a "nascent environmental ethic" (46) that includes opposition to the contemporary commercial exploitation of forests. Aristotle's attribution of souls to plants and pre-Cartesian notions of the embodied mind figure here.

Part 1 also contains three very different essays on Shakespeare. Georgia Brown's "Defining Nature through Monstrosity in *Othello* and *Macbeth*" brings to bear Ambrose Paré's popular *Des monstres et prodiges* (1573). Paré's opposition of the natural and the monstrous reflects a way of understanding nature and humanity that obsessed the period. Yet Paré recognizes its inadequacy, and that inadequacy becomes a resource for Shakespeare in presenting protagonists who seem both human and monstrous, estranging our

senses of humanity and morality. Simon Estok's "Doing Ecocriticism with Shakespeare" calls for commitment to explicitly activist goals. If the civil rights movement aimed to quell racism, ecocriticism should target "ecophobia," which flourished in the early modern period although it was also called into question. Not only should ecocriticism avoid lapsing into traditional nature-theme study, it also needs to link with other liberation struggles, with the ultimate aim of changing industrial capitalism. Despite his admiration for them in other respects, Estok criticizes the books by Egan and Watson along these lines. In brief case studies he finds *Titus Andronicus* questioning meat-eating and *Coriolanus*'s title character trapped in an environment resistant to queer sexuality. Robert Markley's "Summer's Lease: Shakespeare in the Little Ice Age" reads the weather and seasonal tropes of the *Sonnets* with insightful sensitivity to the impact which the extreme weather of the 1590s had on an agrarian society. Referencing larger issues in climatological history, the essay shows how humans have projected order and purpose on to climate, while the *Sonnets* also exemplify lingering anxiety over nature's unpredictability.

Part 1 contains two more essays, Karen Raber's "How to Do Things with Animals: Thoughts on/with the Early Modern Cat" and Ivo Kamps and Melissa L. Smith's "Utopian Ecocriticism: Naturalizing Nature in Thomas More's *Utopia*." Cats were "liminal creatures" (102) to early moderns, Raber finds, partly because they were perceived, for instance, as wild and cruel and yet as placidly domestic. Raber's essay engages several current issues in animal studies, contains a wealth of insightful observations on the human-animal divide, and catalogues and reflects on particular feline roles featured in early modern writings and pictures—cats figure as hunters, companions, spies, benefactors, familiars, and melancholics. In an exploratory and somewhat difficult piece, Kamps and Smith respond to Julian Yates's work on *Utopia*, which invokes Bruno Latour's network theory to address More's nature-culture dualism. Kamps and Smith question whether this classic humanist text really repays such distinctively ecocritical analysis. After an illuminating exposition of the text, they conclude there is no route to a genuinely non-anthropocentric perspective, but that this conclusion may actually enable ecocritical study of utopian writing.

Part 2's exploration of religion and nature begins with "Anima-ation in Little Gidding: Thoughtful Inconsistency as Ecological Ethos in an Early Modern Bible Harmony" by Nicholas Johnson. The essay concerns the illustrations in the *Royal Harmony* produced for Charles I by the community that included the poet George Herbert. This project involved pasting the gospel accounts into a single narrative with original illustrations. Johnson brings to bear a range of critical approaches, from Hiram Haydn's history of ideas to Carolyn Merchant's feminist critique of Baconian science, and shows how many illustrations affirm ecological attitudes and chime with some of Herbert's own poetry of "ecological justness" (147). From a Bakhtinian perspective, Millie

Gimmel's "An Ecocritical Evaluation of Book XI of the Florentine Codex" suggests the potential for ecocritical study of this uniquely dialogical resource, which often focuses on nature and landscape in recording indigenous beliefs and customs as well as voices from many other sides during the early period of Mexican conquest and colonization. Gimmel focuses on the polyphonic and sometimes contradictory writing of its compiler, friar Sahagún, during his long experience in this extraordinary and shocking environment. The subjects of John Gatta's "Meditation on the Creatures: Ecoliterary Uses of an Ancient Tradition" are disciplines of meditation that approach God through his creatures. Gatta finds them to involve "the restoration of harmony between human and nonhuman spheres of being" (182). He briefly references a number of medieval examples before focusing on Thomas Traherne's *Centuries of Meditation* (written ca. 1670), in which nature ravishes with spiritual power and "holy materialism" (185). He also comments on Bishop Joseph Hall's earlier books of meditation and on Izaak Walton's *Compleat Angler*, connecting both to seventeenth-century English poets and to American writers extending from Anne Bradstreet and Edward Taylor in colonial times to Denise Levertov. Michael G. Ziser's "The Pomology of Eden: Apple Culture and Early New England Poetry" begins with an account of apple cultivation in early colonial New England. It focuses on Bradstreet's poem *Contemplation* and Edwards's *Preparatory Meditations*, which express ambivalent Puritan attitudes about the edible apple as emblem of both sin and salvation.

Part 3, "Nature and Empire," begins with Anthony Lioi's "Delight is a Slave to Dominion: Awakening to Empire with Richard Ligon's *History*." Lioi calls for ecocritical study to expand and include cosmography and "the texts of colonization" (221). He warns against valorizing an "ethics of affect" (222) that takes empathy with nature as a sufficient marker of the potential for progressive environmental practice. Ligon's promotional account of his trip to the Barbados plantations (1657) often exhibits just such affect sorting comfortably with gusto for the determined exploitation of beast, field, and fellow human. Ligon's case does prompt us to reconsider what we are looking for when we search for positive ecocentric examples in the past. My own study of Ligon, however, who won what turned out to be only temporary release from prison to make his voyage, suggests that the emotions very deliberately represented in accounts like his must be read cautiously and contextually.

Two studies follow that consider the differences between landscapes of the American Southeast as described in early European accounts and as they exist today: Thomas Hallock, "The Archeologists Made Observations That Conjured Up Interesting Mental Pictures': De Soto, Narrative Scholarship, and Place," and E. Thomson Shields, Jr., "Imagining the Forest: Longleaf Pine Ecosystems in Spanish and English Writings of the Southeast, 1542-1709." Hallock attempts to find an important Florida archaeological site described in historical accounts, envisioning his ecocritical task as combining the two kinds

of de Soto scholarship: that driven by archeology and locality, and that by the interpretation of early narrative accounts. He considers four accounts, especially *La Florida del Inca* of Garcilaso de la Vega. Hallock's own wilderness narrative and crafted anecdotes conjure a sense of place that he finds he cannot match up with those narratives. A related disconnect drives Shields's discerning survey of early accounts of American forests, which actually suggest Spanish and English landscapes.

The final, far-reaching essay introduces essential dimensions of ecocritical study in the era of globalized capitalism: economics and Michel Foucault's notion of bio-power. Timothy Sweet's "Would Thomas More Have Wanted to Go to Mars? Colonial Promotion and Bio-Power" shows how colonial promotional literature (as well as fictions like *Utopia*) addressed problems of overpopulation and sustainability by envisioning either strategies of growth through colonization or through "technological intensification" (294) as in Bacon's *New Atlantis*. These writings offered "a systems-theory perspective" (295) centering on populations, that is, on the biosphere. The argument is developed through discussion of Thomas Hariot, Richard Hakluyt, Giovanni Botero (*Delle cause della grandezza delle città*, 1588), Bacon, Kim Stanley Robinson's science fiction Mars trilogy, and ecological economist Herman Daly. Sweet's essay may be the most valuable among many valuable contributions here, as it apprehends the larger importance of ecocriticism as an historical study.