

ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION: The Tree for the Forest: Eco-typology and the Tree of Life in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*

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This study presents the Tree of Life as the focal tree in Eden and throughout the poetic narrative of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, rather than the Tree of Knowledge. This reading develops a theoretical methodology called "eco-typology," which combines contemporary literary theory from ecocriticism with the seventeenth-century Reformation hermeneutics of biblical typology. Milton's eco-typology shows the Tree of Life to be intimately connected to the forest ecology of the Eden he describes in *Paradise Lost*. A secondary aspect of this study demonstrates how iconography of the Tree of Life printed in Bibles from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries relates to Milton's presentation of the Tree of Life in the poem. Visual iconography printed in well-circulated Bibles from the English Reformation is shown to be a particularly important link to the Tree of Life portrayed in *Paradise Lost*, particularly due to Milton's blindness in 1652.