

Dialogic Conflict and the Rhetoric of (De)Legitimation  
in Milton and His Contemporaries

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## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that this thesis is my original work.

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## Abstract

This thesis examines the configurations of dialogic conflict and the rhetorical modes of legitimation and delegitimation in the texts of Milton and his contemporaries. The English Revolution saw the development of major controversies over episcopacy, licensing, regicide and republicanism in the Cromwellian Protectorate, which were crucially represented in linguistic and semantic conflict encompassing distinctive rhetorical strategies of legitimation and delegitimation among contending factions or writers. This thesis traces how the writers' dissimilar criteria and choices of specific references in using evaluative words and signs promoted the conflict over language, sign and signification, and how the linguistic conflict was related to the rhetorical and ideological processes by which they tried to secure the legitimacy of their positions or to attack and expose their adversaries' political and religious interests as illegitimate. It argues that Milton's *Paradise Lost* is an epitome of the linguistic conflict and the rhetorical practice of legitimation and delegitimation at the level of theme and structure.

The introduction provides a theoretical framework for the analysis of the central themes by drawing on the model of dialogic conflict by Mikhail Bakhtin and V. N. Voloshinov and its relevance to Renaissance rhetorical theory. The thesis is divided into three parts. The first, chapters 1 and 2, outlines antagonistic rhetorical modes and strategies, appropriation of authoritative texts, and conflicts over words and meanings in the episcopacy and licensing controversies. It also traces the figurative and logical strategies in Milton's rhetoric of delegitimation, comparing his anti-prelatical tracts and *Areopagitica* with the various forms of writings by pro- and anti-Episcopalians and the Levellers. The second part of the thesis is more focused upon the question of legitimation, considering textual competition and semantic conflict regarding the regicide and republicanism in the Cromwellian Protectorate. Chapters 3 and 4 discuss the similarities and differences of legitimation strategies in regicide writings and republican pro-Protectoral prose and poetry, and the problems revealed in the republican legitimation of the Protectorate in particular. They continue to show the extent of dialogic conflict with respect to textual competition in the *Eikon* series, appropriation of figurative signs between Royalists and regicide apologists, and semantic conflict surrounding the concept of civil liberty between pro- and anti- Cromwellians. The final part, chapter 5, traces the intersection, both thematic and structural, between the principal concerns of Milton's prose writings and those of his epic, focusing on his legitimation of epic genre and Arian heterodoxy, and the ways of speaking and interpretation between his main characters.

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## Note on Text and Abbreviations

When quoting from early texts, original spelling and punctuation have been retained except i/j and u/v and quotations from editions where spelling has been modernized. Unless otherwise stated, the place of publication is London and months of publication are taken from George Thomason's dates of acquisition. Biblical references are to King James Version and the Geneva Bible.

- Corns, *UV* Thomas N. Corns. *Uncloistered Virtue: English Political Literature, 1640-1660* (Oxford, 1992)
- CPW* *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, ed. Don M. Wolfe *et al.*, 8 vols (New Haven and London, 1953-82)
- EB* *Eikon Basilike: The Portraiture of His Sacred Majesty in His Solitudes and Sufferings* (1649), ed. Philip Knachel (Ithaca, New York, 1966)
- ELH* *Journal of English Literary History*
- HLQ* *Huntington Library Quarterly*
- MR* David Armitage, Armand Himy and Quentin Skinner, eds. *Milton and Republicanism* (Cambridge, 1995)
- MS* *Milton Studies*
- Norbrook, *WER* David Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics, 1627-1660* (Cambridge, 1999)
- OED* *Oxford English Dictionary*
- PL* John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Alastair Fowler, second edition (London and New York, 1998)
- Sharpe, *REME* Kevin Sharpe, *Remapping Early Modern England: The Culture of Seventeenth-Century Politics* (Cambridge, 2000)
- Smith, *LR* Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640-1660* (New Haven and London, 1994)

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## Introduction

In his account of Milton's rhetoric, Thomas O. Sloane claims that 'in Milton's epistemology, there could be no rhetorical thinking; for rhetoric is merely a process of selecting styles or *conventional* verbal forms for truth'. He goes on to argue that 'There is little discernible controversial thinking in Milton because in much of his discourse the opposition vanishes early or is barely present throughout'. To the extent that Sloane confines the significance of rhetoric in Milton's thinking to the question of style, he disallows Milton's perceptions of 'Opposition, division, otherness' which are inseparable from and in a sense inherent in rhetorical controversy.<sup>1</sup> This negation of Milton's association with rhetorical controversy, above all, stems from Sloane's willingness to see Milton as an intuitive poet who was committed to the pursuit of immutable, firm truth, having no regard for his career as a revolutionary polemicist during the period 1641-60 and its indelible marks on his later poetry, especially on *Paradise Lost* called the great English epic.

My study, contesting this critical inclination to turn a blind eye to the polemical character of Milton's rhetoric, tries to show how Milton's rhetoric functioned as an ideological means of legitimation and delegitimation in the political, religious and cultural conflicts of the English Revolution, what specific rhetorical modes were used in performing ideological functions, and how the ideological functions and modes of rhetoric were influenced by changing political situations. Examination of these characteristics of Milton's rhetoric asks us to think about the similarity of structure between rhetoric and language in terms of their essential relational character and the exposure of dialogic conflict that results from that character. Investigation of their similarity further encourages us to trace how figurative elements in rhetoric and language are employed for specific political purposes, how text as the site of signifying practice is employed as an authority and in relation to authority, together with its

individual textual strategies. My study is generally concerned with the complex intersections of rhetoric (in its relation to language), ideology and text. That study considers Milton's texts as a principal axis, but its character in effect requires the wider context of a comparison with other texts of his contemporaries, specifically with the prose and poetry dealing with four major controversies in which Milton and his contemporaries engaged. The subsequent study attempts to analyze the configuration of dialogic conflict over the word and its meaning and the relation of the conflict to the ideological rhetoric of legitimation and delegitimation, with particular focus on the writings engaged in the major controversies. This exploration finally offers an interpretive perspective on Milton's *Paradise Lost*, specifically on the ways in which the central themes of dialogic conflict and legitimation (in relation to delegitimation) are incorporated in the poem.

The last two or three decades have seen remarkable changes in Milton scholarship in terms of attention to the inseparability of author, text and context. During the period, in the wake of Christopher Hill's leading re-evaluation of Milton's work and the subsequent literary-sociological approach to it by Andrew Milner, literary critics not only rejected such critical leanings as Sloane's; they have attempted to read Milton's texts in the political, religious and cultural contexts of the Civil War and the English Revolution and in respect of the diverse body of texts produced in that period. To the extent that the mid-seventeenth century was characterized by political, religious and cultural conflicts and divisions unprecedented in English history and by the production of the vast body of literature that followed them, attempts to contextualize Milton's texts have yielded novel and diverse perspectives. From one perspective, critics such as Nigel Smith and David Norbrook, positioning Milton's texts within contemporary Civil War politics and poetics, have endeavoured to elucidate the republican values and language embodied in Milton's writings. From another angle, Thomas Corns and Sharon Achinstein have sought to read Milton's prose works with respect to the contemporary



reading public, albeit with the difference that whilst Corns was concerned with Milton's polemical strategies employed to manipulate 'an identifiable readership', Achinstein focuses on Milton's construction of 'his audience as a valuable participant in political discussion' in the creation of a new type of activist reader between 1640 and 1660. Most recently, David Loewenstein has attempted to analyze Milton's prose and poetry in the context of contemporary religious politics and his particular connection with radical Puritan politics.<sup>2</sup>

Whether focused on republicanism, or on the interactions between author, text and reader, or on the relationship with conservative or radical religious politics, a common characteristic of these approaches to Milton's writings is that they all attempt historical or cultural contextualization of Milton's texts in order to contest the previous critical assumptions that Milton as the author is the origin of meaning of his texts, that his poetic texts are to be presumed superior to his prose texts, and that separation of the author Milton and his texts from mundane politics is to be encouraged. This shift in critical direction is not irrelevant with the implicit impact of New Historicism and cultural materialism on Milton scholarship and its concomitant critical awareness of the need to conduct archival research and interdisciplinary studies with historians. The result is that the new critical approaches have made a significant contribution to blurring the traditionally rigorous borderlines between Milton's literary and non-literary texts and to inducing a comprehensive and balanced reassessment of Milton's work as a whole. My study shares in the changed critical currents in Milton studies in that it has the character of an interdisciplinary study benefiting from a wide range of historians' research on the English Revolution and that it bases its primary methodology on a comparative study of Milton's texts with contemporary major texts as well as anonymous pamphlets and poems. Apart from these generally shared points, my study focuses on the ways in which Milton employs 'language as a system of signs and signification'<sup>3</sup> for the ideological purposes of legitimation and delegitimation and in which specific signs and their

meanings are open to conflict between Milton and his adversaries. The ideological modes in which Milton and his contemporaries employ language have some bearings upon the rhetorical functions of language, and tend to be conditioned by rhetorical forms practised in classical and Renaissance rhetorical theory. I shall try to develop this focus of my study on the basis of a modern language theory concerning the intersections of language, the sign and ideology promoted by Mikhail Bakhtin and V. N. Voloshinov and of the relationship between this modern language theory and Renaissance rhetorical theory.

It is not that there has not been a prior attempt to connect modern language theories with Renaissance humanist rhetoric in seventeenth-century literary scholarship. In his study of the interplay between republican political culture and republican poetics in seventeenth-century England, *Writing the English Republic*, David Norbrook has recourse to 'speech-act theory' for a theoretical framework useful to providing an appropriate explication of the interaction. As Norbrook explains, 'speech-act theory', derived from the work of J. L. Austin, 'is concerned with the links between language and action, with the kinds of public intervention that speech, and writing, can make'; and it furnishes a methodology which J. G. A. Pocock and more especially Quentin Skinner used to account for the history of political thought in the light of speech and discourse.<sup>4</sup> In Norbrook's view, a contact point between speech-act theory and 'rhetoric, that central art of civic humanism' is found in the ways in which linguistic acts take part in the public sphere. Language, he suggests, is not something that exercises 'unconscious structuring influences on the individual 'subject'', but is an active performance by which the individual as a citizen, not as a subject, can intervene in public events and debates.<sup>5</sup> This perception of language as a performing or performed act with public implications goes well together with the idea of humanist rhetoric as a linguistic skill exercised to fulfil the *vita activa* and public virtue, emphasizing citizens' active participation in the public sphere which, Norbrook believes, constitutes an important part of republican

values. It should be no surprise that this framework of the intersection of speech-act theory, humanist rhetoric and republican values provides the foundation for his interpretation of Milton's writings: for Norbrook, Milton's texts are seen as Milton's speech-acts of public intervention devoted to embodying his republican values, attaching greater significance to public virtue than private interests.

It appears that Norbrook's framework is implicitly linked to his critical reflection on a post-structuralist view of language and ideology as constructs unconsciously imposed on subjects. This has its own considerable merit, for it offers a valuable insight into the active, social role of language and text as a means of intervening in the ideological, political culture in general and into the methods of Milton's linguistic and textual intervention in the public, political events of the 1640s and 1650s in particular. However, the problem is that this framework cannot provide a full account of certain characteristics of the period's wars of words and textual perceptions and practices on several counts. First, when Norbrook's adoption of speech-act theory places its emphasis on the 'performance of illocutionary acts'<sup>6</sup> by the author and his or her utterances, it tends to pay little attention to fierce conflicts over signs and their meanings which feature in the writings of Milton and his contemporaries. The speech-act theory Norbrook draws on as his theoretical framework is noticeably concerned 'to find a means of recovering what the agent may have been *doing* in saying what was said, and hence of understanding what the agent may have meant by issuing an utterance with just that sense and reference'.<sup>7</sup> This concentration upon the agent's illocutionary acts enables identification of the character and intentions of the agent's intervention in specific contextual and textual occasions. The general concern with the linguistic acts of the agent, however, is prone to neglect the particular cases of different uses of the same signs and corresponding semantic conflicts on both sides of any related disputes. It also tends to be less keen to delve deeply into the ideological mechanisms of signs and signification, into the ways in which the utilization of words and their specific meanings

is linked with the ideological purposes of legitimation and delegitimation. In a similar vein, ‘an approach through speech-acts’<sup>8</sup> uncovers the direct link between figuration and its political meaning in the concrete context, as analyzed in Norbrook; but his model does also have certain limitations in illuminating the period’s struggles over figurative signs, the relationship between the figurative signs and their ideological purposes, and the complex changes of their usages corresponding to changes of power relations.

Secondly, Norbrook’s association of speech-act theory with humanist rhetoric in terms of ‘the public implications of all speech’<sup>9</sup> does not offer sufficient account of specific questions. For instance, what rhetorical modes and strategies did Milton and his contemporaries take up to legitimate or rationalize their political and religious stances, and conversely to discredit or delegitimize those of their adversaries? What was the impact of political circumstances after Charles’s execution in 1649 on the changing ideological functions and modes of Milton’s rhetoric? The questions about the intimate connection between rhetoric and ideology in view of its operations, functions and modes, it appears to me, cannot elicit satisfactory answers in Norbrook’s terms. Thirdly, although Norbrook’s notion of texts as illocutionary acts does have the merit of showing that many of the works produced in the 1640s and 1650s were polemical responses to other texts in the specific political, cultural context, such a notion cannot provide a close scrutiny of how texts of authority, for instance, the Bible and classical texts, were used on both sides of disputes and what kinds of textual strategy were employed when each text was answering others.

I would suggest the linguistic model by Bakhtin and Voloshinov as a theoretical groundwork for discussing all those issues which are integral to the main themes of the present study, and which I think Norbrook’s frame cannot address properly. The characteristic of the model is that it does not simply deal with linguistic issues but enables us to consider the wider issues such as the relation between language – signs and signification in language – and ideology, and its relevance to rhetoric and textuality. The

speech-act theory Norbrook has adopted also opens up the possibility of considering the broader issues extending beyond a concentration upon language. Nevertheless, whereas the presuppositions of Norbrook's speech-act theory are founded upon the power and role of language as an action intervening in contextual and textual events, the model by Bakhtin and Voloshinov I am using is more focused upon the mechanism of the intersection of language, signification and ideology and its intimate links with certain aspects of rhetorical and textual practice. More specifically, the model provides a methodological perspective on how language and the sign emerge as a medium of dialogic conflict and how signification is implicated in the ideological and rhetorical operation of legitimation and delegitimation. I believe that the use of this model will throw a new light on something that Norbrook's framework could not but overlook in examining the work of Milton and his contemporaries.

As is well known, dialogism is a key concept in Bakhtin and Voloshinov's account of language as a social phenomenon of verbal exchange between the subject and the other. Bakhtin says: 'Language lives only in the dialogic interaction of those who make use of it. Dialogic interaction is indeed the authentic sphere where language *lives*'.<sup>10</sup> For them, the dialogical nature of language does not simply belong to the realm of two speaking subjects' consciousnesses or to a textual and intertextual space, but is open to the wider socio-political world; for, as Bakhtin states, it lies in 'a struggle among socio-linguistic points of view, not an intra-language struggle between individual wills or logical contradictions',<sup>11</sup> and, as Voloshinov puts it, in a conflict caused by 'an intersecting of differently oriented social interests'.<sup>12</sup> Here, it is significant to note that Bakhtin and Voloshinov do not look upon the relationship between language and the socio-political world as a purely external one, that is, language as a mere reflection of the socio-political reality. Rather, for Bakhtin and Voloshinov the relationship is internal, since language is seen as the very site where different values, beliefs and interests about the socio-political states of affairs intersect and collide. In spite of this common ground

in their perceptions of language, it is also true that there are certain differences between the two in concern and emphasis.<sup>13</sup> In the case of Bakhtin, his conception of language as a dialogic struggle is oriented towards the complex process in which the word is appropriated and expropriated:

As a living, socio-ideological concrete thing, as heteroglot opinion, language, for the individual consciousness, lies on the borderline between oneself and the other. The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes "one's own" only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language ... but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions: it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own. And not all words for just anyone submit equally easily to this appropriation, to this seizure and transformation into private property ... Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is populated – overpopulated – with the intentions of others. Expropriating it, forcing it to submit to one's own intentions and accents, is a difficult and complicated process.<sup>14</sup>

According to Bakhtin, the word appropriated from the other and forced to adapt to one's own context is faced with a transformation of meaning different from what is intended in the other's context; and, if necessary, a sly polemicist strives to shift meanings in his opponent's context to his advantage, even to the extent of distorting them: 'the speech of another, once enclosed in a context, is – no matter how accurately transmitted – always subject to certain semantic changes. ... Any sly and ill-disposed polemicist knows very well which dialogizing backdrop he should bring to bear on the accurately quoted words of his opponent, in order to distort their sense'.<sup>15</sup>

Bakhtin's statements were made on the assumption of spoken language and two speaking subjects, but they also apply to written and 'authorizing languages' used by antagonistic groups, as the polemical writings of the seventeenth-century Civil War and English Revolution attest. As Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker note, 'After the



outbreak of war contending factions strive to appropriate the shared languages of authority for their own particular cause': that is, 'the languages of Scripture and the classics, of history and precedent, of custom and law'.<sup>16</sup> Bakhtin's exemplary account of language and signification enables us to analyze the ways in which the languages of authority are implicated in fierce struggles of appropriation of their meanings and, in the process, in the transformation and even distortion of the meanings. Besides this set of authorizing languages, the period also witnessed the appropriation of specific political languages, for instance, the languages of popular sovereignty and its related liberty. The language of popular sovereignty was actively proposed by Henry Parker in 1642 so as to assert parliamentary sovereignty in opposition to King Charles's royal supremacy and personal rule. The language was reapplied by the Levellers in their arguments for the actual freedom and rights of the people, and once again by the republican government as a rationale for the king's execution and the establishment of the republic. Needless to say, it underwent certain semantic changes suited to its users' political intentions. As far as the language of liberty, 'a complex and controversial term in the seventeenth century',<sup>17</sup> is concerned, even King Charles went so far as to appropriate it in order to denote his subjects' conformity to the given laws of episcopal church and monarchy. Also, the term and concept of civil liberty in particular were at the heart of semantic conflict between pro- and anti-Cromwellians in the republican controversy over the Cromwellian Protectorate during the period 1653-56.

Bakhtin's account, which enables us to scrutinize dialogic conflicts surrounding these languages and their significations, is also useful in offering an in-depth analysis of particular modes in the polemical confrontations between Milton and his opponents. Milton's riposte in *An Apology against a Pamphlet* to the writer of *A Modest Confutation* in the episcopacy controversy of 1641-42 is a typical example of verbal clashes between the two polemicists. They in their writings enact the dynamic process of appropriation and reapplication of specific words and reinterpretation of the meanings

with their own unique or similar strategies. Another example is Milton's response in *Eikonoklastes* to *Eikon Basilike* in the regicide controversy of 1649. Milton in this tract also shows his outstanding polemical ability to convert meanings in the king's context into different meanings in his context. This polemical structure shown in Milton's tracts in the face of differences of context, appropriated words and rhetorical strategies, finally re-emerges in the literary form of verbal exchange between Satan and Abdiel in *Paradise Lost*.

If Bakhtin's reference is an adequate guide to disclosing the verbal and semantic conflicts exemplified in the writings of Milton and his contemporaries, Voloshinov's becomes a valuable model in explicating the relationship between language, specifically the sign, and ideology. For Voloshinov, the sign is inherently ideological, as he says that 'Every sign is subject to the criteria of ideological evaluation ... The domain of ideology coincides with the domain of signs', and it is also the site in which 'differently oriented social interests' intersect and collide.<sup>18</sup> Given these statements, it appears that the concept of ideology to Voloshinov denotes the process of signification, 'the process of the production of meaning through signs'<sup>19</sup> and of its related conflicts caused by the collision of differently oriented social interests. Voloshinov's coupling of the sign and signification with the ideological clash of interests furnishes the more explicit account of the ideological configuration of dialogical conflict between two speaking subjects or contending groups. In addition to this, Voloshinov highlights the ways that ideology operates at the level of the sign and signification:

This *inner dialectic quality* of the sign comes out fully in the open in times of social crises or revolutionary changes. In the ordinary conditions of life, the contradiction embedded in every ideological sign cannot emerge fully because the ideological sign in an established, dominant ideology is always somewhat reactionary and tries, as it were, to stabilize the preceding factor in the dialectical flux of the social generative process, so accentuating yesterday's truth as to make it appear today's. And that is what is responsible for the refracting and distorting peculiarity of the ideological sign within the dominant ideology.<sup>20</sup>



According to Voloshinov, the ruling class always strives to erase traces of social conflict by fixing the multi-accented sense of the ideological sign and by imparting 'a supraclass, eternal character'<sup>21</sup> to the sign. From this perspective, ideology is to do with the matter of fixing meaning, the effects of its 'closure' aiming at legitimating domination and concealing social contradiction.<sup>22</sup> If this is the ordinary way ideology relates to the sign and signification, times of revolutionary crises witness an extensive unfolding of the 'inner dialectic quality' of the sign, in no small part due to the inability of the ruling class to control the signification of signs occasioned by the ineffective operation of censoring apparatuses, and to the dominated class's attempt to endow the signs with new meanings properly expressive of their political hopes and demands. As with other revolutionary circumstances, the seventeenth-century English Revolution saw something of this Marxist concept of class struggle over the sign and signification.<sup>23</sup> My study, however, is not concerned with the dichotomous and determinate view of class division and its concomitant contrasting use of the sign. Rather, it is more concerned with the struggle over the sign and signification among various groups.

The seventeenth-century English Revolution witnessed a massive explosion of printed material such as pamphlets, newsbooks, printed speeches and sermons, and broadside ballads.<sup>24</sup> With the drastic increase of printed material during the period, we observe diverse cases of fierce conflict over the sign and its meaning among various contending forces, from Episcopalians and anti-Episcopalians at the earlier stage of the Revolution, to radical writers and Presbyterians in the licensing controversy, to Royalists and regicide apologists in the regicide controversy, and to pro-and anti-Cromwellians in the republican controversy. The struggle over the sign in the controversies principally arose from the different criteria for applying a specific evaluative sign and the particular use of a diverse range of its reference among contending groups.<sup>25</sup> For example, though the groups used the same evaluative sign in the same sign community, their application of different criteria of the sign and their intentional adoption of its specific reference

generated the consequences of its contrasting and so conflicting signification. In fact, the conflict over the sign and signification remarkably conspicuous in the controversial issues was not simply confined to a linguistic disagreement but was further bound up with the wider struggle of legitimation and delegitimation. By associating an evaluative sign with its specific reference in the differently directed evaluation of the sign, the contending groups were keen to promote their social actions or interests as acceptable or their adversaries' arguments or interests as illegitimate and unjust. I use the terms 'legitimation' and 'delegitimation' here to clarify the ideological implications related to linguistic disputes noticeable in the writings of Milton and his contemporaries. However, I use them in a more general sense at times, for legitimation and delegitimation can simply refer to the processes by which an agent establishes the authority of his (or her) own actions, words and interpretations, challenging traditional authority, customs, precedents, authoritative law and interpretations.

The model of dialogic conflict implicit in the interwoven relations of language, signification and ideology has its equivalent in classical and Renaissance rhetorical theory, and there are a few reasons for drawing an analogy between the two. In the first place, like the model of Bakhtin and Voloshinov, the rhetorical theory attends to the dialogic and relational nature of rhetoric. The skill of *ultramque partem* (disputation on either side of a question), which was 'one of a wide range of rhetorical skills that grammar school pupils were expected to acquire',<sup>26</sup> testifies to the fact that rhetoric has as its constitutive feature a dialogic structure of relational character. In that regard, it is worth noting that Bakhtin, despite the fact that he does not specify classical and Renaissance rhetorical theory, pinpoints this characteristic of rhetoric exactly:

All rhetorical forms, monologue in their constitutional structure, are oriented toward the listener and his answer. This orientation toward the listener is usually considered the basic constitutive feature of rhetorical discourse. It is highly significant for rhetoric that this relationship toward the concrete listener, taking

him into account, is a relationship that enters into the very internal construction of rhetorical discourse. This orientation toward an answer is open, blatant and concrete.<sup>27</sup>

The humanist education of rhetoric was a process of teaching students the skills of disputation in an educational sense, but Renaissance humanists knew that rhetoric was a skill of speaking essentially derived from an awareness of conflict in time. As Nancy S. Struever shows in her study, rhetoric for humanists ‘necessarily underscores a grasp of conflict in time’ and ‘Rhetoric presupposes a dialogue or debate which is a continuity’.<sup>28</sup> Secondly, there is a certain parallel between the model and rhetorical theory in the light of the ideological functions of rhetoric. Just as signs and signification in language are involved in the ideological functions of legitimation and delegitimation, rhetoric in its functional dimension serves both as a means of establishing particular interests or authority as legitimate and as an instrument for criticizing or expressing disapproval of attempts at strengthening such interests or authority. As Victoria Kahn points out, Renaissance writers conceived of rhetoric as a means of persuasion in a neutral sense and as an instrument of fraud and deception in a pejorative sense, but they were also aware of its political, ideological functions. In other words, rhetoric to them was looked upon not only as ‘an expression of particular interests’, but also as the power ‘to subvert established authority’.<sup>29</sup>

When we investigate Milton’s texts in view of the relational aspect of rhetoric and its functions, we observe at once the intersection of the two factors in his texts and at the same time a more complex picture than that. For one thing, the relational nature of rhetoric enables us to see that Milton’s rhetoric has a consistent, dual structure in terms of its ideological functions: on the one hand, it is used to attack or criticize arguments for the legitimation of competing positions supporting an illegitimate institution or a policy, and on the other it serves to uphold the legitimacy of his or his factions’ positions or interests. This dual rhetorical structure of legitimation and delegitimation applies to

his political tracts most of the time, but it also holds good for examining the patterns of Milton's and his main characters' dialogic conflict in *Paradise Lost*.

For another, when we confine the ideological functions of Milton's rhetoric to his political tracts, we find another picture alongside the dual structure. The characteristic of this is that whereas Milton's rhetoric in anti-prelatical tracts and *Areopagitica* before the year 1649 focuses on undermining arguments for legitimating the status quo, his rhetoric in the tracts of 1649 and after, for instance, tracts such as *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, *Eikonoklastes* and *The First and Second Defences of the English People*, is devoted to establishing the legitimacy of the regicide, the new republican government and the Cromwellian regime after Cromwell's coup d'état in 1653. This crucial change of Milton's rhetoric after 1649 raises the need to examine how changes in political circumstances made such a significant impact on the ideological functions of his rhetoric. I shall try to show this in the following chapters.

In the case of university-educated men including Milton, or men from grammar school, the contrasting ideological functions of rhetoric were achieved chiefly through the use of the genres and skills of classical and humanist rhetorical theory. This rhetorical theory, which was derived from Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilian, and which was practised in the humanist educational system, has three kinds of rhetorical genre (deliberative, forensic and epideictic), corresponding to three kinds of audience (Parliament, court and important persons or public works), and to three kinds of rhetorical function (to persuade or dissuade, to defend or accuse and to praise or censure). It also lays down the five parts – *inventio*, *dispositio*, *elocutio*, *pronuntiatio*, and *memoria* – as the faculties of successful rhetoricians.<sup>30</sup> The common educational practice of these rhetorical techniques enabled people of different persuasions to use the same rhetorical genres.<sup>31</sup> And at times one writer employed the same genre for the contrasting, ideological functions of rhetoric in his tracts, and at other times one tract displayed a mixture of two genres.

As far as the relationship between the ideological functions of rhetoric and the abilities of successful rhetoricians is concerned, we need to pay attention to the significance of *elocutio* in rhetoric. *Inventio* (the capacity of finding out arguments) and *dispositio* (the capacity of arranging the arguments) are ‘parts of classical rhetoric nearest related to the art of reasoning called dialectic or logic’;<sup>32</sup> and in particular the six parts of *dispositio* – *exordium*, *narratio*, *divisio*, *confirmatio*, *refutatio*, and *peroratio* – are crucial elements in the logical organization and arrangement of written and spoken discourse. When we take into account the fact that Peter Ramus, the French Reformer of classical and Renaissance rhetorical theory, assigned *inventio* and *dispositio* from the sphere of rhetoric to that of logic, and that *pronuntiatio* (the capacity of delivery) and *memoria* (the capacity of remembering) were the arts of rhetoric peculiar to oral address,<sup>33</sup> it is needless to say that *elocutio* had crucial significance as a means of persuasion through emotional appeal to readers in written discourse. *Elocutio* (the capacity of ornamenting words and thoughts) is what we call style in modern usage. According to Quintilian, it has tropes and figures as its sub-categories: tropes – the figurative pattern of speech – include simile, metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, irony, allegory, hyperbole and so on, and figures – the unconventional pattern of speech – include paradox, parody, personification, comparison, antithesis, repetition, climax and so forth.<sup>34</sup> Quentin Skinner points out that these tropes and figures are ‘the most important means of attaining the ultimate goal of oratory: that of persuading our listeners not merely, or even primarily, by the force of argument, but rather by exploiting the persuasive resources inherent in language itself’;<sup>35</sup> but his comments are also true of written discourse.

The rhetorical devices of tropes and figures were not only a means of persuasion in the writings of Milton and his contemporaries, but were closely bound up with their ideological moves to attack effectively the political and religious stances which their opponents attempted to legitimate, instead defending the legitimacy of their own

positions. In other words, tropes and figures were not used as mere ornaments or conventions for embellishing words and thoughts in their writings, but served to perform the specific ideological functions of legitimation and delegitimation. Also, some metaphors of political import were a significant indicator of antagonistic conflict between contending groups at the level of signification. This concern with the functions of figurative signs and their relationship with semantic conflict might help us 'to historicize and particularize the timeless general trope', tracing 'the dialectic between the conventional trope and the moment'.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, the concern in effect enables us to see 'the possibility that language contains factors or functions that cannot be reduced to intuition',<sup>37</sup> or more precisely, that figurative language functions as a rhetorical apparatus for political and ideological purposes.

The combination of the model by Bakhtin and Voloshinov and rhetorical theory is not only confined to enabling us to examine how language and the sign (including the figurative sign) were the site of ideological contestation and semantic competition in Milton and his contemporaries, and how signification served to legitimate their social, political and religious interests, values and beliefs or to delegitimize those of their ideological opponents. It also helps us to conduct an in-depth analysis of the rhetorical genres, forms and devices Milton and his contemporaries employed in their linguistic and semantic competition and for their ideological purposes of legitimation and delegitimation. By incorporating the Bakhtinian and Voloshinovian model into Renaissance rhetorical theory, I hope to achieve two purposes in this thesis: to present the picture of dialogic conflict at the level of language, sign and signification revealed in the diverse body of texts of Milton and his contemporaries; and to analyze their rhetorical modes and strategies deployed for the ideological functions of legitimation and delegitimation. For these purposes, I choose four major controversies in which Milton was deeply engaged during the English Revolution: the controversies over episcopacy, licensing, regicide and republicanism in the Cromwellian regime. I single



out these controversies mainly because they are seen as a significant phase of religious, cultural and political conflict during the period 1640-60, but also partly because Milton made in them active intervention as a polemicist. Milton's experience of dialogic conflict and his rhetorical modes of legitimation and delegitimation in the controversies reveal a certain structural and thematic similarity in *Paradise Lost*, particularly with respect to Milton's treatment of the epic genre, his presentation of Arian heterodoxy and his main characters' ways of speaking and interpretation. This study finally examines the crucial aspects of structural and thematic similarity played out in Milton's literary and non-literary texts.

My five chapters are devoted to a discussion of the two central subjects, but its focus gradually moves from the question of delegitimation towards that of legitimation, keeping in step with the changing ideological functions and modes of Milton's rhetoric. The first part, chapters 1 and 2, looks at antagonistic rhetorical modes and verbal disputes in the episcopacy controversy of 1640-42 and in the licensing controversy of 1643-45. Chapter 1 contrasts the rhetorical modes of logical reasoning of Episcopalians – notably bishops such as Joseph Hall and Jeremy Taylor – to legitimate episcopacy by divine authority with anti-Episcopalians' rhetorical modes and strategies of delegitimation as diverse as Henry Parker's and Lord Brooke's dependence on argumentation and Milton's effective use of figuration in his anti-prelatical tracts. In addition, this chapter explores both parties' appropriation of the Bible, the text of authority, and its concomitant semantic conflict over the divine Word. It also traces a particular moment in the struggle over words and meanings between Milton and the confuter of *A Modest Confutation* and in their competing appropriation of Francis Bacon's text, *A Wise and Moderate Discourse*. Chapter 2 discusses Milton's *Areopagitica* and three Leveller tracts for freedom of the press and speech, focusing on their rhetorical and polemical modes aiming at criticizing the legitimacy of Parliament's reintroduction of licensing ordinances and their practice of 'heretical discourse' implicit

in their redefinition of the relationship between a ruling power and the private subject's right. Milton's orchestration of deliberative rhetoric and logical and figurative rhetorical forms in *Areopagitica* derives from his complicated strategies of negotiation with, and indirect resistance to, the Parliament which played a leading role in bringing back the conservative licensing system in its alliance with the Stationers' Company. By contrast, the Levellers' rhetoric of delegitimation is more direct, characterized by various polemical forms in William Walwyn's *The Compassionate Samaritane*, John Lilburne's *A Copie of a Letter ... To Mr. William Prinne Esq.* and Richard Overton's *The Araignment of Mr. Persecution*. Despite the distinctive difference in rhetorical and polemical modes, Milton's *Areopagitica* and the Leveller writings exemplify a type of 'heretical discourse' in their enunciation of the private subject's right to freedom of the press and speech to be independent of Parliament's illegitimate censorship. This chapter also examines one particular case of antagonistic dialogic played out between the Levellers' fierce attacks on the Presbyterians' monopolization of the press and the counter-attacks by William Prynne and the Presbyterians.

Chapters 3 and 4, on the regicide controversy of 1649 and the republican controversy in the Protectorate between 1653 and 1656, attend to the rhetorical modes and problems of legitimation in regicide writings and pro-Protectoral prose and poetry and to the individual features of dialogic and semantic conflict in the controversies. Chapter 3 investigates three regicide writings in terms of their rhetorical similarities and differences: Milton's dependence on the mode of 'proving' for legitimating the regicide in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* which signals the changing ideological function and mode of Milton's rhetoric departed from his substantial devotion to figurative apparatuses in his former tracts; John Cook's adoption of forensic rhetoric accompanied by the effective use of figuration in *King Charls his Case*; John Canne's section-by-section objections and arguments against royalist arguments for *jure divino* kingship in *The Golden Rule, or Justice Advanced*, and their common idea of popular sovereignty as



a means of legitimation. This chapter also discusses the *Eikon* series – *Eikon Basilike*, *The Princely Pellican*, *Eikon Alethine*, *Eikon E Piste*, and Milton's *Eikonoklastes* – with particular focus on their semantic confrontation over the king's name and words and their individual textual strategies. Finally, chapter 3 traces the competition for appropriating the meanings of figurative signs such as the king as the father of the people, the sun and the body politic between Royalists and regicide apologists. Chapter 4 examines Milton's *A Second Defence of the English People* and Nedham's *A True State of the Case of Commonwealth*, focusing on the rhetorical modes and strategies for their republican legitimation of the Cromwellian Protectorate; it also traces the legitimation modes at work in poetic representations of Cromwell and his status in Marvell's *The First Anniversary* and Wither's *The Protector*. In the process, chapter 4 shows how the pro-Cromwellian republicans faced a common dilemma by failing to anchor the meaning of Cromwell in republican terms and by revealing a vacillation between republican and monarchical languages. Together with the modes and problems of legitimation in republican pro-Protectoral prose and poetry, this chapter discusses how the concept of civil liberty was implicated in a conflict of signification between Cromwellian monarchists and anti-Cromwellian republicans, and how the concept was subject to varying degrees of semantic ramifications even among pro-Cromwellian republicans.

Chapter 5, on *Paradise Lost*, analyzes a certain connection in subject and structure between Milton's prose and his epic with respect to Milton's legitimation of his epic genre, Arian heresy and his characters' modes of verbal practices and interpretation. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton decisively modifies two epic genres handed down from the past, classical and hexameral epic genres, into a Christian epic of inner values. The process by which he legitimates the poetic project is realized through his appropriation of, negotiation with, and challenge to classical epic genre as a hegemonic form and through his criticism of contemporary appropriations of the Virgilian tradition. This chapter also

investigates the ways in which Milton legitimates his Arian heresy in the delegitimation of the authority of the Trinitarian orthodoxy, and in which his heterodox belief brings about the division in meaning of God's unity and sovereignty and, as a result, Satan's challenge to semantic division. In particular, the different definitions of sovereignty offered by God and Satan – God's real and Satan's nominal definitions of it – are seen as Milton's literary representation of the semantic division over the issue of sovereignty during the revolutionary period. The remaining parts of the chapter focus on the struggle and conflict over signs and their meanings: the features of the dialogic struggle between Satan and Abdiel in Books 5 and 6 and their distinctive rhetorical strategies, and the changing and conflicting interpretations of the forbidden fruit, the sign of divine law, by Adam and Eve. These sections also address the question of legitimation and delegitimation in my discussion of Satan's and Abdiel's effort to establish their words as legitimate and authoritative, and of Adam's and Eve's attempt to secure their interpretive legitimacy against the authority of God's law.

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 Notes

1. Thomas O. Sloane, *Donne, Milton and the End of Humanist Rhetoric* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1985), pp. 233, 234.
2. Christopher Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution* (London, 1977); Andrew Milner, *John Milton and the English Revolution* (London and Basingstoke, 1981); Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640-1660* (New Haven and London, 1994); David Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics, 1627-1660* (Cambridge, 1999); Thomas N. Corns, *Uncloistered Virtue: English Political Literature, 1640-1660* (Oxford, 1992), p. 3; Sharon Achinstein, *Milton and the Revolutionary Reader* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1994), p. 16; David Loewenstein, *Representing Revolution in Milton and His Contemporaries: Religion, Politics, and Polemics in Radical Puritanism* (Cambridge, 2001).
3. Paul de Man, 'The Resistance to Theory', *Yale French Studies* 63 (1982), 9.
4. Norbrook, *WER*, p. 10; J. G. A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1985), chap. 1, and 'Texts as Events: Reflections on the History of Political Thought', in Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker, eds. *Politics of Discourse: The Literature and History of Seventeenth-Century England* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1987), pp. 21-34; Quentin Skinner, 'A reply to my critics', in James Tully, ed. *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and his Critics* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 231-88 and his essays collected in the book, pp. 29-132.
5. Norbrook, *WER*, pp. 11, 10. On Norbrook's account of his theoretical framework, see 'Introduction', especially, pp. 9-14.
6. Skinner, 'A reply to my critics', p. 270.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 260.
8. Norbrook, *WER*, p. 11.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Mikhail Bakhtin, 'Discourse in Dostoevsky', in Caryl Emerson, ed. and trans. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (Minneapolis, 1987), p. 183.
11. Mikhail Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel', in Michael Holquist, ed. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin, 1981), p. 273; Bakhtin's concept of dialogism has induced different interpretations in accordance with scholars' standpoints. Ken Hirschkop, for instance, acknowledges the social and historical orientation of the concept, but he is alert to the possibility that it might represent the intersection of two consciousnesses. See Ken Hirschkop, 'Bakhtin, Discourse and Democracy', *New Left Review* 160 (1986), 97. On the other hand, for Julia Kristeva, the concept is seen as indicating a textual or intertextual phenomenon. Julia Kristeva, 'Word, Dialogue, and Novel', in Leon S. Roudiez, ed. *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine, and Leon S. Roudiez (Oxford, 1981), esp. p. 16.
12. V. N. Voloshinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, trans. Ladislav Matejka and I. R. Titunik (London and New York, 1973), p. 23.
13. Caryl Emerson in her review essay on Michael Gardiner's *The Dialogics of Critique: M. M. Bakhtin and the Theory of Ideology* argues that the clear-cut distinction between Bakhtin and Voloshinov should be drawn, since Voloshinov follows the Marxist line in his emphasis upon 'production relation' and 'class struggle' but Bakhtin does not show such a Marxist view. Emerson's distinction between the two is basically right, but what is problematic in her argument is that she dismisses their similarities in viewing language as a dialogic struggle and allows no possibility of the politics of resistance in Bakhtin's ideas. Michael Gardiner in his book does make a distinction between the two, but Emerson's point is that she seeks to separate Bakhtin from radical cultural politics. See Caryl Emerson, 'Getting Bakhtin, Right and Left', *Comparative Literature* 3 (1994), 288-303; see also, Michael Gardiner, *The Dialogics of Critique: M. M. Bakhtin and the Theory of Ideology* (London and New York, 1992).

14. Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel', pp. 293-94.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 340.
16. Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker, 'Politics and Discourse: Introduction', *idem*, eds. *Politics of Discourse: The Literature and History of Seventeenth-Century England* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1987), p. 8.
17. Warren Chernaik and Martin Dzelzainis, 'Introduction', in *idem*, eds. *Marvell and Liberty* (Basingstoke and New York, 1999), p. 5.
18. Voloshinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, pp. 10, 23.
19. Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford, 1977), p. 70.
20. Voloshinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, pp. 23-4.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
22. On this point, Terry Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (London and New York, 1991), p. 194.
23. For a recent analysis of the English Revolution and its discursive products from the Marxist perspective of a class struggle, see James Holstun, *Ehud's Dagger: Class Struggle in the English Revolution* (London and New York, 2000).
24. For a recent comprehensive account of the increase of printed material and the role of the press during the period 1640-60, see Sharon Achinstein, 'Texts in conflict: the press and the Civil War', in N. H. Keeble, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Writing of the English Revolution* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 50-68.
25. This idea is taken from Skinner's essays, particularly chaps. 5 and 6 in *Meaning and Context*.
26. Quentin Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 30.
27. Bakhtin, 'Discourse in the Novel', p. 280.
28. Nancy S. Struever, *The Language of History in the Renaissance: Rhetoric and Historical Consciousness in Florentine Humanism* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1970), p. 184.
29. Victoria Kahn, *Machiavellian Rhetoric: From the Counter-Reformation to Milton* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1994), p. 238. For a detailed account of the perceptions of rhetoric by Renaissance writers, see 'Introduction' of the same book.
30. Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric*, pp. 40-51.
31. Elizabeth Skerpan claims that the writer's ideology and his perceptions of the audience had an influence on his choice of rhetorical genres during the English Revolution, for example, as monarchists used the epideictic genre in order to provide readers with an integrative vision of the future along with an emotional narration and regicides had recourse to forensic rhetoric, focusing on the legitimacy of past actions. As a counter-argument, Smith underlines 'the importance of common practices in rhetorical expression and exchange' (p. 41) during the period. See Elizabeth Skerpan, *The Rhetoric of Politics in the English Revolution, 1642-1660* (Columbia and London, 1992); and Smith, *LR*, pp. 40-2.
32. Donald Lemen Clark, *John Milton at St. Paul's School: A Study of Ancient Rhetoric in English Renaissance Education* (New York, 1948), p. 11.
33. For a detailed account of Peter Ramus's reform of rhetorical theory, see Wilbur Samuel Howell, *Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500-1700* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1956), chap. 4. See also Skerpan, *The Rhetoric of Politics in the English Revolution*, pp. 17-8; on the relation of *pronuntiatio* and *memoria* to spoken oratory, see Clark, *John Milton at St. Paul's School*, p. 12.
34. Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric*, pp. 50-1; Howell, *Logic and Rhetoric in England*, pp. 166-70; Clark, *John Milton at St. Paul's School*, pp. 11-2.
35. Skinner, *Reason and Rhetoric*, p. 51.
36. Sharpe, *REME*, p. 46.
37. De Man, 'The Resistance to Theory', 13.

## Chapter One: The Episcopacy Controversy, 1640-1642

### *Jure Divino* Episcopacy Controversy and Antagonistic Rhetorics

Although Joseph Hall, Bishop of Exeter, registered *Episcopacie by Divine Right* for publication in February 1640, some time before the Long Parliament assembled on 3 November 1640, it is evident that the idea of *jure divino* episcopacy put forward in the tract was a contentious issue during the period 1640-42. Henry Parker in the Epistle Dedicatory of his tract, *The Question concerning the Divine Right of Episcopacie* (1641), points out how problematic the idea was in his time, giving his oppositional voice to the idea: ‘*In a discourse lately written concerning Puritans, I had occasion offered [sic] me to declare my opinion against the Divine right of Episcopacie. Those reasons which I then urged, seemed weak to your Grace, as I have heard, which was a great discouragement to me ... Certainly the matter of it self is of great difficulty, and of great moment in these times*’.<sup>1</sup> In his tract *A Compendious Discourse* (May 1641), a pseudonymous pamphleteer, Pelsoni Almoni, conversely announces the urgent need to defend episcopacy in the time when the validity of the idea was questioned: ‘*If ever there were a season to write, or speake, in defence of Episcopacy, it is now, or never; wherein men travaile in birth to bring forth their severall concepts: some doubting whether it be of divine, or humane institution: some affirming the one, some the other*’.<sup>2</sup>

As Pelsoni Almoni’s statement hints, the central dissension of the controversy was about the issue of whether episcopacy was of divine or of human origin; and the issue was not indeed something new in the history of antagonistic interpretation between Anglicans and Puritans, specifically between Episcopalians and Presbyterians. The interpretive conflict between two sides is traced back to the later Elizabethan period when Presbyterian Calvinist Thomas Cartwright and his associates embarked on vehement attacks on episcopacy. The Presbyterian ringleaders of what was called ‘the

Cambridge Movement' at the time insisted on the replacement of the episcopal order in the Church of England with the Presbyterian order and demanded equality among ministers and the elders' participation in church government.<sup>3</sup> Confronted with the formidable challenge of Presbyterians, there is no doubt that proponents of episcopacy in the 1580s and 1590s – Richard Bancroft, Hadrian Saravia, Thomas Bilson, Richard Hooker and so on – felt the strong need to demonstrate that episcopacy was an institution guaranteed by divine right.<sup>4</sup> According to Robert Ashton, some bishops especially seem to have felt the need to insist on 'the *jure divino* nature of their authority' chiefly for two reasons: one was that 'divine-right episcopacy was in some measure a necessary counter to the divine-right Presbyterianism of Cartwright and Travers in the 1570s and 1580s'; and the other was the need to claim their independent power separate from royal power in their doubts about the threat to the episcopal church government which might have been caused by the unknown Scottish King James VI's accession to the English throne.<sup>5</sup>

Contrary to the bishops' suspicions, King James I helped to consolidate bishops' power by condoning their *jure divino* claims, and furthermore built up an interdependent power structure between the king and bishops by proclaiming 'No Bishop, No King' in the Hampton Court Conference in 1604. Charles I's church policy followed his father's general principle, even though, unlike his father's flexible operation of it, Charles's attempt at strict religious uniformity brought about the isolation of moderate Puritans and Calvinists from the established Church at home and strong opposition to the king's church policy in Scotland.<sup>6</sup> Charles I's endorsement of the theory of *jure divino* episcopacy met especially strong objections from 'mainstream Puritan adherents' such as William Prynne at home in the 1630s.<sup>7</sup> The central point of the Presbyterian opponents was that bishops' *jure divino* claim might have resulted in infringement of Royal Supremacy, precisely because of its incompatibility with the notion of *jure divino* kingship. In spite of this oppositional thrust, it is difficult to find any evidence of the two



kings' serious considerations of bishops' *jure divino* claims. As J. P. Sommerville rightly points out, 'the first two Stuarts endorsed the theory of *jure divino* episcopacy not because they were misled by the rhetoric of such men as Bancroft, Barlow and Laud, but because they correctly perceived that these divines were vigorous supporters of the king's Supremacy in ecclesiasticals'.<sup>8</sup>

If the *jure divino* episcopacy theory was a provocative issue at the end of the Elizabethan period and during Charles's reign, what is the novelty of the theory in the episcopacy controversy of 1640-1642? In fact, we cannot find any development of the theory itself in the Episcopalians' *jure divino* claims. The *jure divino* theory that Episcopalians brought forward during the period 1640-42 is almost analogous with that of proponents of the earlier periods on four counts: firstly, episcopacy is a divine institution commanded by Christ and his authority; secondly, Christ's authority was given to the apostles and the apostles' office was committed to bishops, their direct successors; thirdly, the superiority of bishops and the inequality among ministers in the church have existed as an undeniable fact since the days of the apostles; fourthly, since lay-elders did not succeed the apostles, they cannot participate in church government. Although the *jure divino* episcopacy theory itself put forward in 1640-42 was nothing new when compared with its former counterpart, changes of political and social circumstances required a new role for the theory as part of a strategy of Episcopalian legitimation. In the threatening political circumstances of London petitioners' demand for 'root-and-branch' extirpation of episcopacy in December 1640 and the introduction of the Root-and-Branch Bill in the Commons in May 1641, Episcopalians, especially bishops, more than at any other period, needed the theory to vindicate the legitimacy of episcopacy and its prelatical hierarchy. An arresting point in the Root and Branch Petition of December 1640 is that London petitioners also raised an objection to the bishops' *jure divino* claims for episcopacy:



Yea further the pride and ambition of the *Prelates* being boundless, unwilling to be subject to either man or Lawes, they claime their Office and Jurisdiction to be *Jure divino*, exercise Ecclesiasticall authority in their own names and Rights, and under their own Seals, and take upon them Temporall dignities, places, and offices in the Common-wealth, that they may sway both swords.<sup>9</sup>

Despite London petitioners' criticisms, bishops did not abandon their *jure divino* claims. Rather they devoted themselves to the claims for justifying episcopacy and their hierarchy in that ecclesiastical system, equipped with their distinctive rhetorical modes and strategies. Joseph Hall, for instance, published *An Humble Remonstrance to the High Court of Parliament* in January 1641 and articulated his position once again in times of episcopal crises: 'this holy calling fetches its pedegree higher, even from no lesse, then Apostolicall; (and therefore, in that right, Divine) institution'.<sup>10</sup> When compared with Hall's former tract, *Epicopacie by Divine Right*, where he adopted the form of section-by-section explication of *jure divino* episcopacy theory, this tract is a typical example of deliberative rhetoric. In the tract Hall offers a persuasive address, in which he accounts for the legitimacy of episcopal church government, to the Long Parliament, which was then in heated debate about the Root and Branch Petition. Coupled with this deliberative rhetoric there is another rhetorical genre in use: epideictic rhetoric. This is taken on in his rhetorical gesture of praising both Houses in his *exordium*: 'Yee are the Sanctuary, whereto now everyman flees, whether really, or pretendedly distressed ... Your noble wisdomes know how to distinguish of men and action, and your inviolable justice knowes to award each his owne' (pp. 3-4). Hall makes use of a thoroughly apologetic tone in his deliberative and epideictic rhetoric, which is patently a rhetorical strategy calculated to inflate the effectiveness of his *jure divino* argument by highlighting the fact that his language is moderate and decent, unlike some anti-Episcopalians' libelous language.

Hall in his tract introduces the topic of the *jure divino* episcopacy in his *narratio*, presents his accounts and proofs of it in his *confirmatio* and refutes anti-Episcopalian

stances in his *refutatio*.<sup>11</sup> The configuration of these rhetorical forms determines the logical structure of his arguments, which constitutes the distinctive trait of his tract as a whole. It needs to be noted here that Hall's arguments for legitimating episcopacy and its offices are carried out largely through two routes: one is concerned with the *jure divino* episcopacy claim itself and the other is with its relation to kingship. As for the first issue, he continues to remind parliamentarians of the divine origin of episcopacy, its uninterrupted practices 'of more then 1500 yeares standing' (p. 18) in England, and of 'the superiority of Bishops over Presbyters' (p. 28). By these means he aspires to reaffirm that the established episcopacy is a church system necessary, perpetual and therefore unchangeable. As for the second, he attempts to defend the *jure divino* claim in his refutation to anti-Episcopalians who impugned its legitimacy as encroaching on the king's supremacy: 'The office is from God; the place, and station, and power, wherein that office is exercised, is from the King; it is the King that gives the Bishopricks, it is God that makes the Bishop' (p. 27). Thus, instead of yielding the *jure divino* claim for episcopacy to his opponents and impairing the notion of *jure divino* kingship, Hall labors to place the offices of bishops safely under Royal Supremacy.

If Hall recounts his *jure divino* arguments in the form of logical organization grounded on classical rhetoric, Jeremy Taylor, in the tract *Of the Sacred Order and Offices of Episcopacy* (August 1642), reviews the same subject in the shape of section-by-section accounts. In a sense, Taylor's tract does not offer logical presentation of the *jure divino* claims in its main text in the same manner as Hall's. Rather, in his epistle dedicatory he rationalizes the necessity of episcopacy by giving prominence to a symbiotic relationship between king and church, between king and bishops: 'Religion, and *Majesty*, the King, and the *Church* are interested as parties of mutuall concernment'.<sup>12</sup> Taylor goes on to emphasize the fact that bishops have been playing an important role in subordinating the people to the king and, in that respect, the interests of both bishops and the king are linked by special bonds:

But the *Bishops* duty to the *King* derives it selfe from a higher fountaine. For it is one of the maine excellencies in Christianity, that it advances the State, and well being of Monarchies, and Bodies Politique. Now then the Fathers of Religion the Reverend *Bishops*, whose peculiar office it is to promote the interests of Christianity, are by the nature and essentiall requisites of their office bound to promote the Honour and Dignity of *Kings*, whom Christianity would have so much honour'd, as to establish the just subordination of people to their Prince, upon better principles then ever, no lesse then their precise duty to God, and the hopes of a blissefull immortality. ... As if because in the law of Nature the Kingdome and Priesthood were joyned in one person, it were naturall, and consonant to the first justice, that *Kings* should defend the rights of the Church, and the Church advance the honour of *Kings*. (sigs. [4r-v])

In assessing the episcopacy controversy of 1640-42, W. M. Lamont holds that 'No longer do bishops acknowledge their tenure to be from kings and princes'.<sup>13</sup> Contrary to Lamont's judgment, Taylor's statement once again spells out the role of bishops 'as a vital arm of the political apparatus of the state and the vehicle for Caroline ideology'<sup>14</sup> at the very moment of the crisis of their existence. If bishops in the episcopal church acted as an ideological tool crucial to containing the people's resistance to the king, in times of crisis they strive to legitimate the church government and their privileged offices in it by evoking their tightening interdependence with the king. In that regard, Taylor's tract is a prime illustration of how bishops gave emphasis to the significance of political alliance between bishops and king as a rhetorical strategy. Taylor in his tract does not enunciate the famous maxim, 'No Bishop, no King', which James I had announced at the Hampton Court Conference, but he implicitly emphasizes the significance of bishops' ideological roles in sustaining and promoting the power of Charles I. By doing so, he is eager to show how dangerous it would be to abolish the episcopacy in view of the political interests of Charles I and bishops.

It would seem quite natural that the ideological designs of bishops aroused considerable antipathy from anti-Episcopalians, particularly when the abolition of episcopacy was top of the agenda at the early stage of the Long Parliament. Needless to

say, the major aim of anti-Episcopalians was to undermine the bishops' strategies for legitimation. The first thing the anti-Episcopalians tried to do was to repudiate the bishops' *jure divino* claims and, implicitly or explicitly, redefine them as *jure humano*. For instance, Alexander Henderson in *The Unlawfulness and Danger of Limited Prelacie* (January 1641) makes it clear that episcopacy is an institution by human rather than by divine right: 'they dispute against us for the Diocesan Bishop, and will prove Episcopacy, by *divine right*, knowing ... the assertion of the principall Office and Calling in the Church, meerly upon *humane right*'.<sup>15</sup> Henry Parker in *The Question concerning the Divine Right of Episcopacie* justifies the *jure humano* character of episcopacy, on the ground that 'the Apostolicall form of government, as to the supremacy of it, is not now in force'.<sup>16</sup>

Here, Henry Parker's tract demands particular attention, not least for its remarkable affinity with the tracts by Hall and Taylor in terms of rhetorical structure and logical character, despite the fact that its principal objective is to oppose the *jure divino* claims of Episcopalians. On the level of genre, Parker's tract does not belong to any of the three rhetorical genres (deliberative, forensic, epideictic). Yet its form corresponds to the five of the six parts of rhetoric, with a *refutatio* omitted: an epistle dedicatory functioning as an *exordium*, a *narratio* introducing the subject of episcopacy, a *divisio* classifying three main points regarding the episcopacy controversy, a *confirmatio* presenting accounts and proofs of each point, and a *peroratio*. Parker's tract as a whole is totally sustained by the logical elements of rhetoric without the embellishment of figuration. Parker's point in arguing against the *jure divino* episcopacy is that the bishops' temporal and spiritual privileges implied in their *jure divino* arguments should be relinquished and that a national church should be rearranged so as to be subjected to secular powers: 'under the King, that Junto of Divines, Statesmen, and Lawyers, in Parliament, which hath a Legislative power over the State, hath the same over the Church' (p. 3). This Erastian stance does encompass Parker's opposition to *jure divino*

Presbyterianism which emanated from the Presbyterian side of the episcopacy controversy, but it is not perceptibly projected as part of his rhetorical strategy for focusing on attacking the *jure divino* claims of bishops.

In the meanwhile, it is not surprising to find anti-Episcopalians seeking to separate bishops from the king, and this is mostly rehearsed as their rebuttal of the maxim, ‘No Bishop, no King’. For instance, Edward Bagshaw in his parliamentary speech declares that ‘The second thing that is trenching upon the Crowne is this, that it is holden at this day, that Episcopacy is inseparable to the Crowne of *England*; and therefore it is commonly now said, *no Bishop, no King; no Miter, no Scepter*: which I utterly deny; for it is plaine and apparant, that the Kings of *England* were long before Bishops, and have a subsistence without them, and have done and may still depose them.’<sup>17</sup> Lord Brooke also gives his oppositional voice to the maxim in *A Discourse Opening the Nature of that Episcopacie* (November 1641):

It being (as I conceive it is) cleered both from *State-policy, Antiquity* and *Scripture*, how incompatible Civill government and such Episcopacy are, I hope we shall never hereafter be choaked with that Proverbe, *No Bishop, no King*. ... Some of these Tenets spring from invincible Ignorance; others have beene the base pullulations of spirits enslaved to false ends: This *No Bishop, no King* (as I have fully proved) pertakes of both, and therefore hath no weight with me, nor I hope shall ever hereafter be of credit with any body else [.]<sup>18</sup>

The sharp disapproval of the famous maxim by Bagshaw and Lord Brooke demonstrates that the antagonistic rhetorics of anti-Episcopalians are not limited merely to reproving the bishops’ claims to *jure divino* sanction but proceed to castigate bishops for turning to the king for their own interests. There is little doubt that this condemnation is a rhetorical backlash against bishops’ justification for a symbiotic relationship with the king. Although it is partially hinted at in the above statement, Lord Brooke’s tract as a whole is a disquisition demonstrating on the basis of evidence from ‘State-policy,

Antiquity and Scripture' how 'bishops are only *jure humano* in their calling'<sup>19</sup> and how episcopacy by divine right is incompatible with civil government. This method of chapter-by-chapter demonstration in two sections of the tract suggests that Brooke's tract is 'unmistakably part of the educational nurture (humanism)',<sup>20</sup> which he shared with Hall, Taylor and Parker; and that in common with the three persons' tracts, it revolves heavily on the method of logical exposition. This polemical form contrasts sharply with that of Milton in dealing with the same issues regarding *jure divino* episcopacy.

With the publication of his five anti-prelatical tracts between May 1641 and April 1642, Milton plunges himself into the controversy to add his voice to anti-Episcopalians' attacks on bishops' arguments for legitimation.<sup>21</sup> Like anti-Episcopalians, Milton's oppositional strategies fall upon the problems of *jure divino* theory and the dissociation of interdependence between bishops and Charles I. Milton's repudiation of bishops' *jure divino* claim and its reformulation as *jure humano* in his second anti-episcopal tract, *Of Prelatical Episcopacy* (June 1641), essentially differ in no way from the contemporary anti-Episcopalians' rhetorical strategy. The contention in the tract is that the *jure humano* nature of episcopacy permits human beings to abolish episcopacy, complying with their judgment on whether it is working to their advantage or not:

Episcopacy, as it is taken for an Order in the *Church* above a *Presbyter*, or as wee commonly name him, the Minister of a Congregation, is either of Divine constitution, or of humane. If onely of humane, we have the same humane priviledge, that all men have ever had since *Adam*, being borne free, and in the Mistresse Iland of all the *British*, to retaine this *Episcopacy*, or to remove it, consulting with our owne occasions, and conveniences, and for the prevention of our owne dangers, and disquiets [...] (CPW, I.624)

Milton's argument that episcopacy is not an ecclesiastical system by divine sanction but merely one by 'rare device of mans braine' (*The Reason of Church-Government*, CPW,



l.781) and which therefore can be abolished by human authority reveals the extent to which he was firmly in line with anti-Episcopalians' assaults on the bishops' *jure divino* claims. Milton's distinction from them, however, rests with the fact that rather than suggesting any substantial, logical analysis concerning the *jure divino* claims, he opts for the figurative use of words as part of the rhetorical mode and strategy of delegitimation. For instance, when bishops uphold the pre-eminence of their authority by emphasizing their status as the successors of the apostles and the continuity of that status in history, Milton in turn highlights an adverse impact that their succession has made in English history as follows:

Most certaine it is (as all our *Stories* beare witnesse) that ever since their comming to the See of *Canterbury* for neere twelve hundred yeares, to speake of them in generall, they have beene in *England* to our Soules a sad and dolefull succession of illiterate and blind guides: to our purses, and goods a wastfull band of robbers, a perpetuall havock, and rapine: To our state a continuall *Hydra* of mischief, and molestation, the forge of discord and Rebellion: This is the Trophey of their Antiquity, and boasted Succession through so many Ages. (*Of Reformation, CPW*, I.602-3)

The passage shows how effectively Milton is drawing on the rhetorical devices of tropes and figures in charging bishops' attempts to legitimate their traditional authority. The metaphors of robbery and devastation are considerably effective in displaying that their long succession has been a history of pillage and plundering at the level of economy; and those of 'Hydra' and 'forge' are appropriate for dramatizing that it has been a process of unending misery and strife at the national level. With the dynamic use of these tropes, Milton endeavours to invert the arguments of bishops' legitimation leaning on tradition and antiquity and, in the end, to reduce the symbolic metaphor of bishops' pride – 'Trophey of their Antiquity' – to that of ridicule and contempt. This semantic inversion is made possible, above all, by his artful combination of metaphor and paradox. What is particularly noteworthy here is that these rhetorical devices do not simply serve



as an aesthetic tool embellishing his tract but function as an ideological means of discrediting bishops' arguments for their authority by divine right. The rhetorical devices also prove useful when Milton tries to win over readers to his anti-Episcopalian cause by inducing feelings of repugnance towards bishops.

We also observe Milton's figurative attack on the *jure divino* claims of bishops in his inveighing against Joseph Hall in particular. We already know that one of Hall's *jure divino* claims in his *Humble Remonstrance to the High Court of Parliament* was to stress bishops' decisive superiority over Presbytery. Milton looks upon it as Hall's ideological manipulation for perpetuating the episcopal hierarchy and the inequality of ministers in the church. Hence, Milton's figurative refutation of it in his third anti-prelatical tract, *Animadversions Upon the Remonstrants Defence* (July 1641): 'You will find some such as will prognosticate your date, and tell you that after your long *Summer Solstice* the *Æquator* calls for you, to reduce you to the ancient, and equall house of *Libra*' (CPW, I.698). The astronomical figuration here epitomizes the personal doom of Hall as a bishop, but it can be extended to foreshadow the fate of the declining episcopal order. The age-old, hierarchical dominance of bishops as hinted in the metaphor 'long *Summer Solstice*' is drawing to an end, and the equality of ministers is predicted as exemplified in the metaphor '*Libra*', the seventh sign of the zodiac where day and night are the same length. This mixture of astronomical and astrological figuration is seen as a relentless attack in figuration on Hall's argument for prelatical hierarchy. As is indicated in the phrase, 'the ancient, and equall house of *Libra*', the church government which Milton had in mind at the time and to which he gave stalwart support was a Presbyterian form of government. A passage in his fourth tract, *The Reason of Church-Government* (January or February 1642), calls for our particular attention. This enables us to gauge the extent to which Milton supports the legitimacy of Presbyterian equality in the church as well as to look at the way Milton makes effective use of another metaphor to criticize prelatical hierarchy and its effects:

I say Prelaty thus ascending in a continuall pyramid upon pretence to perfect the Churches unity, if notwithstanding it be found most needfull, yea the utmost helpe to dearn up the rents of schisme by calling a councell, what does it but teach us that Prelaty is of no force to effect this work which she boasts to be her maister-peice; and that her pyramid aspires and sharpens to ambition, not to perfection, or unity. This we know, that as often as any great schisme disparts the Church, and Synods be proclam'd, the Presbyters have as great right there, and as free vote of old, as the Bishops, which the Canon law conceals not. So that Prelaty if she will seek to close up divisions in the Church, must be forc't to dissolve, and unmake her own pyramidal figure, which she affirms to be of such uniting power, when as indeed it is the most dividing, and schismaticall forme that Geometricians know of, and must be faine to inglobe, or incube her selfe among the Presbyters, which she hating to do, sends her haughty Prelates from all parts with their forked Miters, the badge of schisme or the stampe of his cloven foot whom they serve I think, who according to their hierarchies acuminating still higher and higher in a cone of Prelaty, in stead of healing up the gashes of the Church, as it happens in such pointed bodies meeting, fall to gore one another with their sharpe spires for upper place, and precedence, till the councell it selfe prove the greatest schisme of all. (*CPW*, I.790)

The geometrical metaphors of 'pyramid' and 'cone' here are symbolic of the hierarchical structure of the episcopal order, which Milton argues should be remoulded into an equally proportioned shape, that is, into the structure of a globe or cube indicative of a Presbyterian form of church government. When bishops assert that prelatical hierarchy is a safeguard against schism in the church, Milton embarks on a counter-attack on the assertion, saying that bishops' ambition to climb up to the very top of the pyramidal structure is the main cause of fomenting schism and discord. Here, the top of the 'pyramidal figure' is an emblematic embodiment of ambition and schism, and bishops are represented as schism itself as depicted in the trope, 'forked Miters'. In contrast with his fierce attack on the prelatical order, Milton is strong in defence of the Presbyterian order in his use of metaphors taken from solid geometry. Milton at the time envisions the 'presbyterial government' (I.834) as 'the only true Church-government' (I.835), for he sees it as a viable alternative to the established prelatical system in its democratic reconfiguration grounded on equality of rank and office amongst ministers.

Here, the geometrical tropes of globe and cube are a clear manifestation of his support for Presbyterianism as ‘a Presbyterian partisan’.<sup>22</sup> In *The Reason of Church-Government* Milton goes so far as to make an unequivocal announcement in favour of *jure divino* Presbyterianism, in rebuttal to bishops’ *jure divino* claims for episcopacy: ‘they durst alter *that divine institution of Presbyters*, which the Apostles who were no various and inconstant men surely had set up in the Churches’ (I.778: my emphasis).<sup>23</sup>

Just as rhetorical tropes and figures are a principal means of deflating bishops’ *jure divino* arguments, they are also employed effectively in Milton’s imputation of bishops’ reliance on the king’s power:

Surely there is not any Prince in *Christendome*, who hearing this rare Sophistry can choose but smile, and if we be not blind at home we may as well perceive that this worthy Motto, No *Bishop*, no *King* is of the same batch, and infanted out of the same feares, a meere ague-cake coagulated of a certaine Fever they have, presaging their time to be but short: and now like those that are sinking, they catch round at that which is likeliest to hold them up. And would perswade Regall Power, that if they dive, he must after. But what greater debasement can there be to Royall Dignity, whose towring, and stedfast heighth rests upon the unmovable foundations of Justice, and Heroick vertue, then to chaine it in a dependance of subsisting, or ruining to the painted Battlements, and gaudy rottennesse of Prelatry, which want but one puffe of the Kings to blow them down like a past-bord House built of *Court-Cards*. (*Of Reformation*, CPW, I.582-83)

Milton is acutely aware that, like Taylor, bishops are seeking their survival by falling back upon ‘Regall Power’ and by underscoring their alliance with the king in terms of mutual interest. Milton here singles out the metaphors of disease, congealment and collapse for highlighting the gruesome and catastrophic consequences which might be brought about by bishops’ hanging on to the king.<sup>24</sup> The string of metaphors parades the morbid and so waning conditions of bishop’s ideological machinations, and Milton urges the ‘Royall Power’ to regain his original ‘Justice’ and ‘Heroick vertue’ by severing his symbiotic relationship with bishops. Like Bagshaw and Lord Brooke,

Milton is concerned with cutting off the bishops' strong tie with the king through his attack on the slogan, 'No Bishop, no King'. But unlike them, he tries to address the ideological implications of the slogan through the emphatic effects of metaphor. This rhetorical mode of Milton's is also evident in *The Reason of Church-Government*:

Here we have the type of the King sow'd to the typet of the Bishop, suttly to cast a jealousie upon the Crowne, as if the right of Kings, like *Meleager* in the *Metamorphosis*, were no longer liv'd then the firebrand of Prelaty. But more likely the Prelats fearing (for their own guilty carriage protests they doe feare) that their faire dayes cannot long hold, practize by possessing the King with this most false doctrine, to ingage his power for them, as in his owne quarrell, that when they fall they may in a generall ruine, just as cruell *Tyberius* would wish, when I dye, let the earth be roul'd in flames. (l.769-70)

'Typet' is 'a long narrow cloth, attached to the hood or sleeve of ecclesiastical garments';<sup>25</sup> and the phrase, 'the type of King sow'd to the typet of the Bishop', alludes to the possibility that the bishops' defence of their offices by divine right might encroach on the right of the king. This figurative charge on the bishops' *jure divino* claim – 'this most false doctrine' – becomes more poignant when Milton likens the loss of the king's right caused by the *jure divino* claim to the death of Meleager in Ovid's *Metamorphosis*. Meleager in Greek mythology is the leader of the Calydonian boar hunt, and Ovid in *Metamorphosis* recounts how Meleager's mother Althea caused his death by burning the log whose span of life was coterminous with his as her revenge for his son's killing her brothers. The point that the idea of bishops' *jure divino* infringes on the king's power, as we saw in Bagshaw's statement, was part of a rhetorical strategy for attacking bishops exploited by anti-Episcopalians. Metaphors in the above passage show that Milton advances the same idea in a figurative rather than a logical way. These rhetorical modes create the dramatic effect of highlighting bishops' secret desire to predominate over the king, which would lead finally to the collapse of royal power. Of course, this is not true in the real political circumstances of the time in which bishops were impeached and

imprisoned, and in which the House of Commons was asking the House of Lords for the passage of the Bishops' Exclusion Bill.<sup>26</sup> Milton is well aware of the actual predicaments in which the bishops found themselves at the time. Accordingly, there is no doubt that this is part of his counter-strategy to the rhetorical strategies of bishops who tried to legitimate their existence in their emphasis on their common destiny with the king. The final metaphors of 'ruine' and death suggest that bishops' strategies prove futile because of the strong prospect of their eventual downfall.

Don M. Wolfe points to the lack of logic in the constitution of Milton's prose in comparison with that of other prominent figures:

Compared to the prose of Bacon, Dryden, and Jeremy Taylor, or even that of Sidney and Raleigh, Milton's prose is singularly chaotic and capricious in organization. If he had trained himself in youth to write English prose, as he had poetry, Milton would have been prepared in 1641 to issue pamphleteering sallies of consistent literary as well as polemic distinction. Milton's awareness of his own limitations in prose may have delayed his enlistment in the crucial ideological warfare of his day.<sup>27</sup>

Wolfe's comments tend to overlook the humanist education in rhetoric Milton shared with Bacon, Dryden, Taylor, Sidney and Raleigh. If it is the case that the prose of the others was faithful to the art of logical arrangement of argument, that is, the art of *dispositio*, Milton's prose enjoys the rhetorical advantages of the art of *elocutio*. As we have seen so far, Milton was well acquainted with what were the main issues in the 'ideological warfare' waged between Episcopalians and anti-Episcopalians. If there is any remarkable difference from his contemporaries engaged in the *jure divino* episcopacy controversy, it may well be that Milton not only availed himself of the advantages of such rhetorical devices as tropes and figures for the purpose of delegitimizing the bishops' *jure divino* arguments, but thereby also demonstrated an

awareness that legitimation depended on much more than the deployment of reason or any purely literal derivation of right.

### **The Divine Word in Conflict: The Politics of Biblical Interpretation**

Christopher Hill in his book, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution*, notes that the Bible in the English Revolution was ‘a sword to divide, or rather an armoury from which all parties selected weapons to meet their needs’.<sup>28</sup> This conception of the Bible as a weapon is also found in Milton’s *Animadversions*, accompanied by his idiosyncratic method of vivid figuration:

Wee shall adhere close to the Scriptures of God which hee hath left us as the just and adequate measure of truth ... and with this weapon without stepping a foot further, wee shall not doubt to batter, and throw down your *Nebuchadnezzars* Image and crumble it like the chaffe of the Summer threshing floores, as well the gold of those Apostolick Successors that you boast of, as your *Constantinian* silver, together with the iron, the brasse, and the clay of those muddy and strawy ages that follow. (l.700-1)

If Milton conceived of the Bible as a weapon for attacking his Episcopalian opponents, and particularly Joseph Hall in *Animadversions*, the weapon was used not only by Milton himself but also by his opponents in the episcopacy controversy of 1640-42. The Bible on both sides of controversy was indeed a special weapon involved in antagonistic interpretation, and both sides waged fierce interpretive battles to appropriate the authority of God’s Word and thus justify their own different positions.

An interesting point in the episcopacy controversy is that Episcopalians and anti-Episcopalians reveal a slightly different perspective in their approach to the Bible: while Episcopalians have some reservations about the evidence of the Bible, anti-Episcopalians display a firm belief in its self-authentication and self-sufficiency. Joseph



Hall in *Episcopacie by Divine Right*, pointing out the ambiguity of meaning in biblical texts with respect to church government, claims that the sections of Scripture which provide the clearest evidence are required to resolve disagreement as to the matter:

if only Scripture must decide this question; and no other, either evidence or judgement will be admitted besides it; And if withall there be difference concerning the sense of the texts on either sides alledged; it must needs follow, that the clearer Scriptures must carry it, and give light to the more obscure [.]<sup>29</sup>

Hall in the tract acknowledges that Scriptures have diverse and equivocal meanings concerning the church system, but he takes up their ambiguity in the Bible as an excuse both for keeping the laity from participating in church administration and for justifying the inequality of ministers within the church:

Shortly then, if it shall be made to appeare, that the Scriptures brought for a lay-Presbytery are few, doubtfull, litigious, full of diverse and uncertaine senses, and such as many and much clearer places shall plainely show to bee otherwise meant by the Holy Ghost, than these new maisters apply them: then it cannot be denied, that the lay Presbytery hath no true footing in the Word of God, and that the old forme of Administration in an imparity of Ministers ought onely to be continued in the Church.<sup>30</sup>

Like Hall observing the vagueness of meanings in the Bible, Jeremy Taylor asks anti-Episcopalians to present a more distinct testimony from the Bible: ‘I hope the adversaries of Episcopacy, that are so punctuall to pitch all upon Scripture ground, will be sure to produce cleare Scripture for so maine a part of Christianity, as is the forme of the Government of Christs Church’.<sup>31</sup> By contrast, Lord Brooke sustains an unwavering conviction about the ‘self-authenticating quality’<sup>32</sup> of the Bible: ‘I could heartily wish, that in matters which receive their being from *Scripture*, so immediately as Church Discipline doth, wee might make the *Scripture* (which is a sufficient rule) our sole guide, our sole moderator’.<sup>33</sup> Milton also regards the Bible as self-sufficient: ‘the Scripture



only is able, it being the only Book left us of *Divine* authority, not in any thing more Divine than in the all-sufficiency it hath to furnish us' (*Of Prelatical Episcopacy, CPW*, I.625). In spite of the difference in their attitudes to the Bible, both rival groups in the episcopacy controversy, in effect, had recourse to 'the over-riding authority of the Bible' as a means of corroborating the legitimacy of their own arguments. The result is that 'the Bible became a battle-ground' for justification.<sup>34</sup>

The sections of the Bible which are particularly controversial and which are cited very often in the episcopacy controversy of 1640-42 are Philippians 1, Acts 20:28, I Timothy 1:3, I Timothy 3:1-3, Titus 1, I Peter 5:1-3, and Revelation 2. Three points seem, among other things, to have been most controversial: first, the questions of whether the Latin term '*episcopus*' should be translated into 'bishop' or 'overseer' and of whether the terms 'bishop' and 'presbyter' are the same in name; secondly, that of whether Timothy and Titus were bishops or not; and thirdly, that of whether the word 'Angel' in Revelation denotes a bishop or the collective Presbytery. The particular chapters and verses of the Bible relating to these questions became entangled in an interpretive quarrel over their meaning, in which God's Word was far from being neutral or indifferent to each party's interests. In the controversy, the Bible as the text of authority, and divine words in it, became the site of ideological contestation.

The matter of translation is in the first place raised by anti-Episcopalians. Lord Brooke in his *Discourse*, remarking that the Latin word '*episcopus*' was at times translated into 'bishop' and at other times into 'overseer', presents Philippians 1 and Acts 20 as the evidence:

So that *Phil. I.* he writes to the Bishops and Deacons at *Philippi*. Is it probable that a little Towne in *Macedonia* should have many *Bishops*, when one Bishop must have many Cities, in his Dioces? Those *Who translated the Bible*, foresaw This: And therefore *Acts 20*. They have translated the word *Episcopus* an *Over-seer*. Yet in other places they translate it *Bishop*. (p. 80)

Lord Brooke's statement appears to make a comment about confusion over the translation of the term '*episcopus*', but what it implicitly assumes is that the correct translation of the term should have been 'overseer' rather than 'bishop'. The difference in translation does make a big difference to its implied meaning, for the term 'overseer' does not contain the sense of hierarchical dominance as much as that of 'bishop'. By attending to the semantic differences implicit in the translation of the term '*episcopus*' and by pointing out the fact that the original meaning of 'bishop' was that of 'overseer', Lord Brooke tries to refute the contention that prelatical hierarchy is a necessary condition divinely authorized. What is characteristic of Lord Brooke's exegesis is that it gives some hint of the ways in which biblical texts were submitted to semantic changes in the process of the translation of the Latin Vulgate, Hebrew and Greek Scriptures into vernacular versions.

The history of biblical translation shows the complex interrelation between translators' political and theological viewpoints and the modes of their language use and the resulting changed meanings. For instance, William Tyndale's preference for the term 'congregation' to 'Church' and the term 'elder' to 'priest' in his version illustrates that different choice of vocabulary in the process of translation effected great change in meaning and that this was a serious challenge to traditional theological signification.<sup>35</sup> The Geneva Bible, which followed the tradition of Tyndale and which was popular with ordinary people as well as educated men as 'the Bible of Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton', had semantic importance in its marginal notes which were seen as containing 'anti-clerical' and 'anti-monarchical' implications.<sup>36</sup> Part of King James's decision to have another English Bible, the so-called 'Authorized Version', was a result of his political calculations for counteracting the popularity of the Geneva Bible and the subversiveness of its marginal notes. In the process of the translation of the Authorized Version the king ordered its translators to eliminate the marginalia of the Geneva Bible;<sup>37</sup> on the other hand, through the new version he tried to impose the orthodox

dogmas of the Anglican Church on all areas of society. The episcopacy controversy of 1640-42, however, shows that the attempt indeed turned out to be ineffectual.

We find some evidence in the episcopacy controversy that the marginal notes of the Geneva Bible might have been used in upholding anti-Episcopalian positions against prelatical hierarchy in the church. Philippians 1 and Acts 20 (specifically Philippians 1:1 and Acts 20:28), in which Lord Brooke mentioned the problem of biblical translation, in fact, do not betray any difference in translation between the Geneva Bible and the Authorized Version. The marginal note of the Geneva Bible on Philippians 1:1, however, has a crucial interpretive implication: it suggests a meaning for 'bishop' different from that of the established Church by recording that 'By bishops here he meaneth them that had charge of the worde & governing, as pastors, doctors, elders'.<sup>38</sup> According to the marginal note, there is no disparity in status and office between bishops and pastors, doctors, elders. Judging from this, there is a strong probability that the anti-prelatical argument against hierarchical inequality in the church developed from the reference in the marginalia.

In the meanwhile, it is not surprising that Episcopalians interpret the matters of translation and the confusion of naming in Philippians 1:1 and Acts 20:28 in the way that is advantageous to them. These matters seem to have been much contested between Episcopalians and anti-Episcopalians, as Jeremy Taylor's statement illustrates: 'If there be a confusion of Names in Scripture, particularly of *Episcopus* and *Presbyter*, as it is contended for, on one side, and granted on all sides, then where both the words are used, what shall determine the signification?'<sup>39</sup> Here, Taylor properly points out the conflict of signification surrounding the naming of '*Episcopus*' and '*Presbyter*', but the following statement shows that he is offering an account beneficial to the bishops' interest:

Although *Bishops* be called *Presbyters*, yet even in Scripture names are so distinguished, that meere *Presbyters* are never called *Bishops*, unlesse it be in conjunction with *Bishops*, and then in the Generall addresse, which, in all faire deports, is made to the more eminent, sometimes *Presbyters* are, or may be comprehended. This observation if it prove true, will clearely show, that the confusion of names of *Episcopus*, and *Presbyter*, such as it is in Scripture, is of no pretence by any intimation of Scripture, for the indistinction of offices, for even the names in Scripture it selfe are so distinguished, that a meere *Presbyter* alone is never called a *Bishop*, but a *Bishop* an *Apostle* is often called a *Presbyter*, as in the instances above. (p. 130)

When Taylor says that the confusion of the two names, ‘*Episcopus*’ and ‘*Presbyter*’, signifies neither the confusion of offices nor ‘the parity of offices’ (p. 142), it is, needless to say, his attempt at interpretive justification for bishops’ superiority over presbyters in church offices. We find in Milton’s *Of Prelatical Episcopacy* an interpretive pattern which runs counter to Taylor’s: ‘Through all which Booke can be nowhere, either by plaine Text, or solid reasoning found any difference between a Bishop, and a Presbyter, save that they be two names to signify the same order’ (I.625). To Milton, the two names of ‘bishop’ and ‘presbyter’ in biblical texts do not signify two disparate orders but are incorporated into one meaning. Here, Milton’s interpretive movement to incorporate two disparate names into one meaning relates to double ideological functions: on the one hand, it is oriented against the legitimacy of prelatical hierarchy, but on the other it is oriented towards legitimating his Presbyterian position on the equality of ministers.

If thus Taylor and Milton offer contrasting interpretations of the names ‘bishop’ and ‘presbyter’, another specific place of the Bible where we can see the interplay between interpretation and its ideological functions is I Peter 5:1. This reads: ‘The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed’.<sup>40</sup> Even though I Peter 5:1 makes it apparent that St Peter gave his address to the elders as an equal elder, Taylor insists that St Peter and the elders were bishops: ‘Such Elders S. *Peter* spoke to, as he

was himselfe, to wit, those to whom the regiment of the Church was committed, [were] the *Bishops of Asia, Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Bithynia*' (p. 129). In the process of the formation of the primitive church, the borderline between bishops and elders was not clear, which might primarily have been responsible for the confusion of the names in the Bible. Yet Taylor's statement illustrates that he is employing the confusion in such a way as to serve the interests of bishops by reinterpreting the term 'elders' as having the sense of 'bishops'. Milton's refutation in *The Reason of Church-Government* is an attack on interpretive gambits of this kind concerning I Peter 5:1: 'No lesse to the contempt of him whom they fain to be the archfounder of prelaty S. *Peter*, who by what he writes in the 5 Chap. of his first Epistle should seeme to be farre another man then tradition reports him' (I.760). In accusing bishops of engaging St Peter for the business of legitimating their prelatical hierarchy, Milton brings forward an alternative interpretation for Presbyterianism: 'there he commits to the Presbyters only full authority both of feeding the flock; and Episcopating: and commands that obedience be given to them as to the mighty hand of God, which is his mighty ordinance' (I.760). Where Taylor replaces the term 'elders' with 'bishops', Milton in turn rewrites it as 'presbyters'.

If Acts 20:28 and I Peter 5:1-3 leave much room for interpretation favourable to Episcopalians of the names of both 'overseers' (Acts 20:28) and 'elders' (I Peter 5:1), and of phrases such as 'Feed the flock of God which is among you' (I Peter 5:2) and 'Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock' (I Peter 5:3), I Timothy 3 and Titus 1: 5-7 do quite the reverse. These two sections offer the possibility that bishops can justify their superior status through ordination. Titus 1:5 conspicuously seems to have been a strong point for bishops, as is indicated in Lord Brooke's account: 'I know their strong Fort, *Tit. 1.5. For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in Order the things that are Wanting, and Ordain Elders in every City, &c.* Here they think the Power of a Bishop is set forth at large' (p. 77). Earlier in *Episcopacie by Divine Right*, Joseph Hall legitimizes bishops' superior power by

coming up with the examples of Timothy and Titus as ‘*The clear Testimonies of Scripture*’.<sup>41</sup> Hall asserts in the tract that the example of Timothy represents ‘a fixed Superiority of power’ (p. 28), and ‘an English Bishop’ (p. 28) as successor to Timothy has the same status as that of Timothy, and that the bishops’ office is, as in the case of Titus, ‘To ordain Ministers, and to correct disorders’ (p. 34). Lord Brooke looks with disfavour on this sort of interpretation:

But what if so? Will they bee content to bee limited to This Power? if so, wee shall the sooner agree. I think no man ever thought, Good *Titus* had a Commission heere to draw the *Civill Sword*; or so much as to strike with his *Church Keyes*. (p. 77)

*Timothy* received his gift by imposition of *Presbyteriall hands*. If an extraordinary gift was conveyed in an ordinary way: Why might not an ordinary calling, and affaires of an ordinary nature, be managed by an extraordinary man, be carried forth in an extraordinary way? (p. 78: my emphasis)

Lord Brooke just keeps silent about the bishops’ contention that Titus’s office to ordain ministers was authorized by St Paul: instead, he contrasts Titus’s office with contemporary bishops’ offices. Lord Brooke makes the point that whereas Titus discharged the duties of his office ‘By way of instruction, and exhortation, not by way of command’ (p. 77),<sup>42</sup> contemporary bishops exert an imperative power in the church and a secular power in the state. Through this method of differentiation, he strives to discredit the validity of bishops’ appropriation of Titus. Another interpretive strategy for Lord Brooke is to turn to Timothy’s example to refute the bishops’ claim of superiority through ordination. I Timothy 4:14 states that Timothy’s ordination was carried out by the Presbytery: ‘Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophesy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery’. Lord Brooke’s statement, which seems to be based on this phrase, implies that just as such an extraordinary person as Timothy was ordained by the ‘ministerie of the Church’,<sup>43</sup> so elders too could be



ordained by 'an extraordinary man' like Timothy or Titus. In other words, the implication is that contrary to the bishops' assumption, ordination is neither one of their privileges nor a symbol of their superiority, but could equally be carried out by ministers.

If Lord Brooke's interpretive strategies are characterized by silence, differentiation and reference to another part of the Bible for exposition, Milton's strategies are dependent upon such methods as word-play and figuration which constitute the most notable rhetorical traits in his anti-prelatical tracts. In making a direct accusation against Hall's interpretation of Timothy and Titus, Milton in *Animadversions* writes,

Nor can you prove out of the Scripture that *Timothy* was *Bishop* of any particular place; for that wherein it is said in the third Verse of the first *Epistle: As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus*, will be such a glosse to prove the constitution of a *Bishop* by, as would not onely be not so good as a *Burdeaux* glosse; but scarce be receiv'd to varnish a Visard of *Modona*. All that can bee gather'd out of holy Writ concerning *Timothy* is that hee was either an *Apostle*, or an *Apostles* extraordinary Vice-gerent, not confin'd to the charge of any place. The like may bee said of *Titus*, (as those words import in the 5. Verse), that he was for that cause left in *Crete*, that he might supply, or proceed to set in order that which Saint *Paul* in Apostolick manner had begun, for which hee had his particular Commission, as those words sound, (*as I had appointed thee.*) So that what hee did in *Crete*, cannot so much be thought the exercise of an ordinary Function, as the direction of an inspired mouth. (I.711)

Milton, in contesting Hall's claim that Timothy was bishop of Ephesus and Titus was bishop of Crete, argues that if Hall seeks to legitimate episcopacy with such a premise, it is no more than a deception without sufficient ground. For Timothy and Titus, he argues, were not bishops of any particular place, and further they were extraordinary men endowed with special commissions which cannot be compared with the ordinary office of 'an ordinary *Bishop*' (I.710) of his time. For this refutation of Hall's argument, Milton exploits word-play on the two meanings of 'gloss'. According to Milton, Hall's exegesis (one meaning of 'gloss') on Timothy and Titus is an outward sheen or false colouring (another meaning of 'gloss') worse than 'a *Burdeaux* glosse' or 'a Visard of *Modona*'.



This *paronomasia* is pursued for rhetorical exaggeration to show that Hall's interpretation of Timothy and Titus is completely unreliable. In keeping with the strategy of rhetorical exaggeration, Milton is very reticent about Titus's commission to 'ordain elders' (Titus 1:5), as was Lord Brooke. The major difference between the two, however, is that while Lord Brooke tried to solve the vexatious question of ordination in Titus 1:5 by skipping to the case of Timothy, Milton eschews mentioning the fact itself and instead takes the strategy of a merciless, figurative attack on Hall's interpretation. Despite the main difference in their strategies, the cases of Lord Brooke and Milton typify how anti-Episcopalians reacted to strong points in favour of bishops in the Bible.

The final antagonism relating to biblical interpretation in the episcopacy controversy is centered on the question of the seven Angels of the seven churches in Revelation. The point in dispute is whether the Angels should be interpreted individually or collectively. Whereas Episcopalians interpret the word in an individual sense, anti-Episcopalians accept it as a collective connotation. Hall construes the Angel of each church to whom St John addressed his epistle by the Spirit of God as only one Angel, the bishop of the church:

Neither can all the shifts in the world elude that pregnant Vision and charge of the blessed Apostle St. *John* ... who having had the special supervision of the whole *Asian* Church, was by the Spirit of God commanded to direct his 7 Epistles to the Bishops of those seven famous Churches, by the name of so many Angels: To the Angel of the Church of *Ephesus*; To the Angel of the Church in *Smyrna*, &c. For what can be more plain, than that in every of these Churches (as for instance that of *Ephesus*) there were many Presbyters, yet but one Angel; if that one were not in place above the rest, and higher by the head than they, how comes he to be noted in the throng? Why was not the direction to all the Angels of the Church of *Ephesus*? All were Angels, in respect of their Ministry, one was the Angel in respect of his fixed Superiority.<sup>44</sup>

The reason why Hall places particular stress on the single Angel, of course, is to argue for his consistent position that a bishop is superior to other ministers. It is not surprising

that this interpretation met opposition from anti-Episcopalians, as in other places of the Bible we have examined so far. As was the case with the controversy concerning naming, the problem of the Angel in Revelation provides room for dispute on both sides. While the ‘angel of the church in Smyrna’ (Revelation 2:8) to whom St. John delivered his epistle might have been Polycarpus, a particular representative of the church, ‘you’ to whom St John addressed the Word of God’s Spirit in the epistle might not have been a particular Polycarpus but the collective Presbytery in the church. Over this ambiguous appellation of ‘Angel’, and in opposition to its interpretation by bishops like Hall, anti-Episcopalians claim that the word ‘Angel’ denotes the collective Presbytery, as in John White’s parliamentary speech:

as Angel is a name common to all Presbyters who are Christs Messengers and Ambassadors: So it appears to be used here by the very context cap. 2.v.10. Where speaking to the Angel of the Church of *Smyrna*, the holy Ghost saith, *Feare none of the things thou shalt suffer, the Devill shall cast some of you into prison, but be thou faithfull, &c.* Angel (being *nomen multitudinis*) is taken in these chapters collectively for all the Presbyters (some of whom the adversaries should imprison,) and not for any one above or before the rest.<sup>45</sup>

Milton’s interpretation of the word ‘Angel’ basically shares White’s assumption of its Presbyterian persuasion. In *Animadversions* Milton provides four testimonies to support the view that the word ‘Angel’ represents the collectivity of Presbytery in Revelation 2. The first testimony Milton offers is Revelation 2:7 (‘He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches’), which supports his argument that ‘the seventh verse concludes that this was spoken to the Churches’ (I.712). But the problem lies in the assumption that ‘Now if the Spirit conclude collectively, and kept the same Tenor all the way; for we see not where he particularizes, then certainly hee must begin collectively, else the construction can bee neither *Grammaticall* nor *Logicall*’ (I.712). Although the likelihood is that the term ‘Angel’ in Revelation will denote an individual

angel, Milton asserts that there is no ambiguity in Revelation 2. The underlying assumption is that the note of collectivity in Revelation 2:7 should be maintained throughout Revelation if it is to meet the requirements of grammatical or logical construction.

Milton's second testimony is Revelation 2:5, even though he does not specify it in the tract. In Revelation 2:5, God's Spirit warns 'the angel of the church of Ēph'-ē-sūs' (Revelation 2:1) that if the Angel makes a mistake, the Spirit will take away the Angel's candlestick. Milton's exegesis is that 'wee cannot thinke he would doe so for one *Bishops* fault. Therefore those faults must be understood collective, and by consequence the subject of them collective' (I.712). This argument is not wholly convincing, for the Angel might well refer to a single person in the Ephesian church. The third testimony is Revelation 2:10, and it is the same as provided in White's speech. This is one of the most useful testimonies in reinforcing Milton's as well as White's argument, since the use of 'some of you' in the verse definitely signifies a collective subject.

Milton's argument using the fourth testimony, Revelation 2:24, is less convincing than his second argument, for Milton gives a somewhat far-fetched account of the verse. Milton interprets the phrase, 'unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thÿ-'ā-tī-rā' (Revelation 2:24), as follows: 'in the 24. Verse this word *Angel* is made capable of a *Pronoune plurall*, which could not bee, unlesse it were a *Collective*' (I.712). The Angel in Milton's statement points to 'you' in verse 24. But the pronoun 'you' in the verse is not so much a pronoun plural as Milton assumes as, in all probability, a singular pronoun distinct from 'the rest'. Although Milton seeks to prove that the word 'Angel' in Revelation 2 signifies the collective Presbytery in view of grammar or logic, it is ironical that he interprets the first pronoun 'you' on the basis of a grammatical error. It is not evident whether he made such a mistake deliberately or not. What is evident is the way in which Milton interprets the word 'Angel' in Revelation 2. Milton disregards the fact that the meaning of the word is ambiguous and uncertain in Revelation 2, asserting that

his interpretations are valid and legitimate from the Presbyterian perspective. Here, we notice the fact that Milton's biblical interpretations are as factional as those of Hall.

We have so far been dealing with the problems of biblical translation in the episcopacy controversy and the disputes over particular sections of the Bible between Episcopalians and anti-Episcopalians. Examination of these problems casts doubt on the assumption that biblical texts bear the original meaning of God's Word; but it has a far more profound implication, in that it makes us look at the complex intersections of textual authority, meaning and secular interests. As Kevin Sharpe points out, 'It was essential to claim biblical endorsement for almost any action in early modern England'.<sup>46</sup> This was chiefly because the Bible was recognized as a text of authority which would bear witness to the original meaning of God's Word. Yet we have seen in the episcopacy controversy of 1640-42 how the original meaning in biblical texts gave birth to fiercely antagonistic interpretations in accordance with religious, secular and factio

nal interests. Both sides in the controversy appealed to the textual authority of the Bible for the purpose of legitimating their contrasting positions, and took great pains to appropriate the meanings of God's Word as their own. The controversy, above all, showed that the divine Word did not belong to the sphere of non-partisan transcendence, but was at the very heart of factional concerns engaging in the interpretive battles over meanings.

### **The War of Words: Milton and the Confuter of *A Modest Confutation***

As we saw briefly in the previous sections, Milton's *Animadversions* was notable for its fierce and scurrilous attack on Joseph Hall. The tract was 'a point-by-point reply' to Hall's *A Defence of the Humble Remonstrance, Against the frivolous and false exception*

of *Smectymnuus* (April 1641), and was written in defence of ‘Smectymnuus’, a group of Presbyterian ministers in dispute with Hall at the time.<sup>47</sup> In *Animadversions*, Milton follows the tradition of Martin Marprelate’s vituperative and satiric attack on Elizabethan bishops in the 1580s, embarking on a relentless verbal attack on Hall’s persona and rhetoric, and on his attempt to legitimate the bishops’ power in state and church.<sup>48</sup> The purpose of Milton’s invective in the tract was to unmask ‘Hall’s image as authoritative peacemaker’<sup>49</sup> and to redefine it as that of a hypocritical cleric ‘*taken in the greatest dearest and most dangerous cheat, the cheat of soules*’ (*Animadversions, CPW*, I.664). In line with this crushing redefinition of Hall’s image, Milton’s other purpose was to expose the danger of Hall’s rhetoric seen as ‘equivocall Sophistry, scattering among his periods ambiguous words’ (I.694). Furthermore, rather than confine the range of his attack to Hall’s image and rhetoric, he widened it to the extent that he accused Hall of acting as an ideological spokesman for the corrupt established Church. For effective accomplishment of these multiple purposes, the rhetorical devices Milton used in the tract were ‘Lists of vices, invective, satire, irony, parody, hyperbole, grotesque metaphors, puns, and numerous other forms of rhetorical weaponry’,<sup>50</sup> which finally brought a response from an anonymous pamphleteer.

Outraged at Milton’s abusive battering against Hall, probably in January or February 1642, an anonymous writer published a pamphlet entitled *A Modest Confutation of A Slanderous and Scurrilous Libell, Entituled Animadversions upon the Remonstrants Defense against Smectymnuus*. Don M. Wolfe guesses that Hall might have written the tract in prison (at the time Hall was imprisoned in the Tower on a charge of treason) or that his eldest son Robert Hall might have been its author. William Riley Parker remarks that it might have been ‘a father-son collaboration’, but he comes to the conclusion that the matter of authorship still ‘remains a secret’.<sup>51</sup> Apart from the question of authorship, one of the remarkable features of the confuter’s pamphlet is that his rhetorical methods are more or less conditioned by Milton’s methods in



*Animadversions*. The confuter, in a similar manner to Milton, attacked his opponent's character and mode of language, an attack which in turn provoked Milton's reply in *An Apology against a Pamphlet* (April 1642). The *Apology*, Milton's final anti-prelatical tract, is his justification for the use of scurrilous language in *Animadversions* and, at the same time, his point-by-point refutation of the confuter.

Since *A Modest Confutation* is the confuter's riposte to Milton's *Animadversions* and *An Apology* is Milton's counter-attack on the *Modest Confutation*, it is not surprising that there is some similarity among the three tracts at the level of content and language structure. But if we take a careful look at the three tracts, we find a more intimate connection between the *Modest Confutation* and the *Apology* than between *Animadversions* and the *Modest Confutation*. This may well be mainly because the *Modest Confutation* and the *Apology* adopt the similar polemical form of section-by-section refutation. Yet it is even more significant that both tracts display a common struggle over words and their meanings, and common rhetorical strategies. Milton and the confuter in their tracts are compelled to form a relationship of antagonistic dialogue in an attempt to appropriate words and an authoritative text – Bacon's *Discourse* – aimed at attacking each other and justifying one's own position. This complex interaction of appropriation, expropriation and reapplication of words and text constitutes the crucial internal structure of the two tracts, in keeping with a variety of rhetorical similarities.

The confuter in his address 'To the Reader', making accusations against Milton's character and scurrilous language, describes him as someone who in his youth spent his time 'in loytering, bezelling, and harlotting'.<sup>52</sup> The words in the confuter's description are exactly the ones Milton employed in condemning bishops for the promiscuity of their younger days: 'they ... spend their youth in loitering, bezelling, and harlotting' (*Animadversions*, I.677). The confuter snatches these words out of Milton's context and, in turn, makes use of them to traduce Milton's character. To the confuter's assassination



of Milton's character, (for example: '*he that would finde him after dinner, must search the Play-Houses, or the Bordelli, for there I have traced him*' (sig. [A3v])), Milton responds in a like manner:

In the Animadversions, saith he, I finde the mention of old clokes, fals beards, night-walkers, and salt lotion; therefore the Animadverter haunts Playhouses and Bordelloes; for hee did not, how could hee speake of such gear? Now that he may know what it is to be a childe, and yet to meddle with edg'd tooles, I turne his *Antistrephon* upon his owne head; the Confuter knowes that these things are the furniture of Playhouses and Bordelloes, therefore by the same reason the *Confuter himselfe hath beene trac't in those places.* (*An Apology*, I.886)

It is interesting to ask at this point to what extent Milton and the confuter adhere to the general rules of linguistic decorum in the abusive language they both use to attack the characters of each other. Reuben Sánchez states that 'A precise definition of decorum as it was understood in the Renaissance is impossible because, like *persona*, it is a protean term'.<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, Sánchez suggests two types of decorum: 'a structural decorum of accepted linguistic practice at the time' and 'a contextual decorum designed to fit the author's intentions'.<sup>54</sup> Seen from the perspective of the distinction between the two, the confuter and Milton both seem to maintain a degree of contextual decorum, but tend to violate structural decorum. In other words, whilst the two polemicists keep to the contextual propriety demanded to meet their polemical needs, they discomfit and transgress 'the accepted structures of discourse'<sup>55</sup> of their time. They make savage aspersions against each other beyond the rules of decorous discourse, which may have been sustainable to a large extent by means of their anonymity.<sup>56</sup> Hiding behind anonymity, they proceeded to move beyond the rules of discourse established among educated men, and were not reluctant to hurl merciless insults against their opponents.



The confuter's fierce attack on Milton's character exemplifies this discursive transgression. Character assassination is reinforced by his portrayal of Milton as a fool on stage:

*To make up the breaches of whose solemn Scenes, (it were too ominous to say Tragically) there is thrust forth upon the Stage, as also to take the eare of the lesse intelligent, a scurrilous Mime, a personated, and (as himself thinks) a grim, lowring, bitter fool. (sig. A3r)*

The confuter derides Milton for interfering in the solemn controversies between the prelates and Smectymnuans as if he was performing the role of a buffoon. Milton responds to this by choosing the word 'Mime' from the confuter's sentence and reinterpreting it. If the confuter uses the word 'Mime' as the meaning of a 'jester' or a 'buffoon' with a pejorative connotation, Milton revises it in two different senses with positive connotations:

Nor yet doth he tell us what a Mime is, whereof we have no pattern from ancient writers except some fragments, which containe many acute and wise sentences. And this we know in *Laertius*, that the Mimes of *Sophron* were of such reckning with *Plato*, as to take them nightly to read on and after make them his pillow. *Scaliger* describes a Mime to be a Poem imitating any action to stirre up laughter. But this being neither Poem, nor yet ridiculous, how is it but abusively taxt to be a Mime. (*An Apology*, I.879-80)

The 'Mime' Milton redefines in his context denotes 'a kind of simple farcical drama among the Greeks and Romans' (*OED* 4a) such as the farcical dramas which were written by *Sophron* and which *Plato* used to read at night. The word 'Mime' according to this definition has nothing to do with the foolish clown depicted in the confuter's context, nor does it have any negative connotation. Milton uses the term 'Mime' in a new sense as designating plays which such serious philosophers as *Plato* used to enjoy reading. Milton's second definition of 'Mime' relates to poems written to induce

laughter. Milton argues that if the term 'Mime' is defined as this kind of poem, his *Animadversions* cannot be accused of being 'Mime', since it is not a poem in form: even less is it ludicrous. Thus, Milton appropriates the word 'Mime' from his opponent and transforms it into different senses capable of satisfying his intentions.

Another method of tackling the term 'Mime' used by Milton is to accept the meaning of the word in the confuter's context. But Milton skilfully turns the meaning against Joseph Hall. This reapplication of the meaning to his opponents is carried out by Milton's artful logic:

And whereas he tels us that *Scurrilous Mime was a personated grim lowring foole*, his foolish language unwittingly writes foole upon his owne friend, for he who was there *personated*, was only the *Remonstrant*; the author is ever distinguished from the person he introduces. But in an ill houre hath his unfortunate rashnesse stumbl'd upon the mention of miming. (1.880)

Milton's *Animadversions* comprises a frame of dialogical exchange between Hall the Remonstrant and Milton the Answerer. According to Milton's logic, the 'Mime' as signifying a buffoon is not Milton the Answerer but Hall the Remonstrant, for Milton himself as the author of the tract cannot be the main character in the writing. To put it another way, since Milton the Answerer is the actual author of his tract, only Hall the Remonstrant can play the role of the 'Mime' as a character. Thus, the confuter does not help Hall but reduces him to the status of a fool. Milton here takes exactly the meaning of 'Mime' in the confuter's context, but he exploits it in targeting his two adversaries through his artful conversion.

As far as Milton is concerned, the conversion and reapplication of meaning prove astute and striking when we examine his exploitation of the meaning of the term 'Convocation'. The confuter in section 8 of *A Modest Confutation* proclaims that contrary to Milton's argument in *Animadversions*, he and bishops were welcome to the meeting of the Long Parliament: 'They know, and so do I, That the Sunne looks not

upon a braver, nobler Convocation, than is that of King, Peeres, and Commons' (p. 16). Milton's refutation of this is that although the confuter appears to express his approval of the Long Parliament, in effect, 'his praising of them is as full of nonsense and Scolastick foppery, as his meaning he himselfe discovers to be full of close malignity' (I.920). The term in the confuter's tract which Milton is targeting this time is none other than 'Convocation':

Where didst thou learne to be so agueish, so pusillanimous, thou lozel Bachelour of Art, as against all custome and use of speech to terme the high and sovran Court of Parliament, a Convocation? (I.920)

Neither is this an indignity only but a reproach, to call that inviolable residence of justice and liberty, by such an odious name as now a *Convocation* is become [.] (I.921)

The *OED* records that the term 'Convocation' used in the war of words between the confuter and Milton is of particular relevance to its two meanings: 'An assembly of persons called together or met in answer to a summons' (*OED* 2) and 'In the Church of England: A provincial synod or assembly of the clergy, constituted by statute and called together to deliberate on ecclesiastical matters (*OED* 3)'. The confuter uses the term 'Convocation' in the first sense referring to the Assembly of the Long Parliament. Yet Milton forces it away from the confuter's intention and links it with the second meaning. What Milton particularly wished to evoke from readers here was the memory of the Convocation of 1640 and all kinds of repellent associations attached to it. The Convocation summoned during the period of the Short Parliament in 1640 was notorious for drawing up new canons which many people found offensive. The canons not only explicitly set down the principle of *jure divino* kingship which 'was not a new belief, but ... was not universally accepted', but forced all the clergy to take a new oath promising not to alter 'the doctrine and discipline of the church of England'. In accordance with the

doctrine and discipline, all preaching and printing against them were forbidden and ecclesiastical rituals relating to the altar and communion tables were strengthened. The Convocation of 1640 which was ill-famed for pronouncing enforced religious conformity later came under heavy attack by the Long Parliament regarding its lawfulness.<sup>57</sup> Recalling all the negative meanings attached to the name 'Convocation', Milton impugns the confuter's use of it to refer to the Long Parliament. What Milton wants to address here is to expose the hidden intention that the confuter would not have welcomed the meeting of the Long Parliament by pointing out the problem of his use of language.

With this purpose in mind, Milton incessantly asks readers to look into the confuter's hidden intention betrayed by the use of the term 'Convocation'. Milton's attempt to shift the reader's consciousness from his opponent's intention to his by emphasizing the different meanings of the word constitutes an important part of his polemical strategy in *An Apology*. Yet the strategy of appealing to readers through an emphasis on words and their meanings does not originate from Milton himself, but is galvanized by the confuter's method of focusing readers' attention on Milton's improper use of language. The confuter in his address 'To the Reader' particularly highlighted the scurrility and indecency of Milton's language through selectively assembled citations of the offensive words Milton used in *Animadversion (A Modest Confutation*, sigs. [A3v-4r]). The confuter's rhetorical strategy of gathering Milton's abusive words in one place created 'a strong cumulative effect';<sup>58</sup> and this was designed to warn readers not to be misled by the great potency of Milton's language as well as to alert them to the fact that Milton was not a reliable man, given the evidence of his scurrilous use of language.

In response to the confuter's appeal to readers, and, in turn, in his efforts to inculcate in them a positive image of himself, Milton gives detailed accounts of his life and study in his digression (I.888-93). But at the same time, he follows the confuter in

attempting a counter-attack by directing the reader's attention to the mode of language used by his opponent. This time it is realized in his attack on the confuter's title page:

And because he pretends to be a great conjector at other men by their writings, I will not faile to give ye, Readers, a present taste of him from his own title; hung out like a toling signe-post to call passengers, not simply *a confutation* but *a modest confutation* with a laudatory of it selfe obruded in the very first word. ... And seeing he hath neither kept his word in the sequel, nor omitted any kinde of boldnesse in slandering, tis manifest his purpose was only to rub the forehead of his title with this word *modest*, that he might not want colour to be the more impudent throughout his whole confutation. (I.875-76)

Milton's strategy here is to uncover the semantic gap between the title of the confuter's tract and his linguistic practices in the main text. To put it more precisely, Milton argues that even if the confuter affects modesty in his writing in the title page, in reality, his whole tract is far removed from being modest; rather it is full of aspersions and slanders. For this argument, Milton cancels the sense of the word 'modest' as used by the confuter and links it to that of the word 'slandering' which he interprets in relation to the confuter's full text. This is similar to the manner in which he dealt with the word 'Convocation', in that he tries to expropriate its sense from the confuter's context and graft it onto another meaning to suit his intention. Yet the method differs slightly from his former one, for while the former involves associating the meaning of 'Convocation' with one of its two semantic possibilities, this one couples the meaning of 'modest' with a totally opposite meaning deduced from the confuter's whole text. This case as well as others shows how Milton takes a superior position to that of the confuter in the fight over the meaning of words, although the two polemicists utilise similar strategies of character assassination and attacks on their enemies' use of language.

Appropriation of authoritative texts by the two writers is another aspect of the war of words between *A Modest Confutation* and *An Apology*. Sir Francis Bacon's *A Wise and Moderate Discourse, Concerning Church-Affaires* (1641) in particular was at the

core of their dispute.<sup>59</sup> A common feature in the way both Milton and the confuter exploit Bacon's *Discourse* is that they make selective references to the text with a view to justifying their own positions and at the same time attacking their opponents. The contest was triggered by Milton's selective borrowing of Bacon's source in *Animadversions*, aiming to criticize the bishops' unfair policy against Puritan pamphleteering: 'this hath bin ever so, in so much, that Sir *Francis Bacon* in one of his discourses complains of the Bishops uneven hand over these Pamphlets, confining those against Bishops to darknesse, but Licencing those against Puritans to be utter'd openly' (1.668).<sup>60</sup> In accusing Milton of having distorted Bacon's authority in *Animadversions*, the confuter in his tract suggests another borrowing from Bacon's text in favour of bishops:

Before I answer your Justification of these libels, I must tell you, you have wronged the noble ingenuity and fair memory of that wonder of our age, Sir *Francis Bacon* whom you here bring in as a witnesse against the Bishops: He complains (you say) of the *Bishops uneven hand over these kind of Pamphlets*. You say so: Hear him. [*And here I do much esteem the wisdom and religion of that Bishop, which replied to the first Pamphlet in this kinde; who remembred that a fool was to be answered, but not by becomming like unto him; and considered the matter he handled, and not the person with whom he dealt.*]

You will say perhaps, this was but one Bishop: Hear him again in the name of them all. [*I hope assuredly that my Lords of the Clergie have no intelligence with these other Libellours, but do altogether disallow, that their dealing should be thus defended ... [For I have great reason to satisfie my self toughing the judgment of my Lords the Bishops in this matter, by that which was written by one of them, whom I mentioned before with honour.]* (pp. 3-4)

In the long quotations from the *Discourse*, the confuter seeks to show the modesty with which bishops dealt with libelous pamphleteers, and to demonstrate how Bacon praised the bishops for such modest ways of treating the offensive Puritan pamphleteers. The confuter's borrowing is one chosen to invalidate Milton's argument against bishops by disclosing Milton's partial selection of the source, but the confuter's reference to the



source is also partial, chosen to give a favorable impression of bishops. The major reason why Milton and the confuter could make this expedient selection from Bacon's *Discourse* was not least because of Bacon's mid-way stance between bishops and Puritans in 'the Admonition controversy in 1589'. Bacon in the *Discourse* identified each side as having been responsible for provoking the controversy, and, as a result, admonished 'the bishops and the Puritans in roughly equal measure'. It is true that Bacon's 'eirenic standpoint' in the *Discourse* essentially provided the occasion for Milton and the confuter to make selective use of the source in ways which were perfectly congruent with their opposing positions.<sup>61</sup> Nevertheless, the borrowing of the source by both Milton and the confuter shows the extent of partisan utilization of texts of authority, including, as we have seen, the Bible.

We find another quotation from Bacon's text in the *Modest Confutation*, which serves to attack Milton's scurrilous language in *Animadversions*:

For what else it can teach I am as far to seek, as you are of those grave Authors that defend it. I care not to know what your reading hath been; and mine own is confest small: Yet One I have met withall, who (till you confute him with a graver) shall speak home to the purpose. *To leave all reverend compassion towards evils, all religious indignation towards faults, to turn Religion into a Comedy or Satyr, to rip up wounds with a laughing countenance, to intermixe Scripture and scurrility sometimes in one sentence, is a thing far from the devout reverence of a Christian, and scant beseeming the honest regard of a sober man.* (p. 2)

The italicized passage is the quotation from Bacon, who criticized Puritans for using offensive language in such serious matters as religion. The confuter deploys the source so that it exactly pinpoints Milton's use of language in *Animadversions*. If Milton capitalizes on one part of Bacon's work in *Animadversions* for an attack on bishops, the confuter makes a counter-attack on Milton in the *Modest Confutation* by drawing on another part designed to censure Milton's scurrilous language. In response to this,



Milton in the *Apology* embarks on retaliation against the confuter, with the same part but transformed configuration of the source introduced by the confuter:

Let him go now and brand another man injuriously with the name of *Mime*, being himselfe the loosest and most extravagant *Mime*, that hath been heard of; whom no lesse then almost halfe the world could serve for stage roome to play the *Mime* in. And let him advise againe with Sir *Francis Bacon* whom he cites to confute others, what it is to *turn the sinnes of Christendome into a mimicall mockery, to rip up the saddest vices with a laughing countenance*, especially where neither reproofe nor better teaching is adjoynd. (I.881-82)

We already know that the ‘Mime’ was made to refer to Hall by Milton’s shrewd shift in meaning. Milton here, in taking advantage of the ambiguity of authorship in the *Modest Confutation*, heaps scorn on Hall and the confuter at the same time: that is, he is casting a slur on Hall’s satirical writing as ‘*a mimicall mockery*’ and is also making fun of the confuter as one who is unaware of the nature of Hall’s writing. This double attack culminates in Milton’s reworking of Bacon’s *Discourse*. If the original was meant to rebuke the Puritans’ use of vituperative language and the confuter exploited it to censure Milton’s similar linguistic practices, Milton’s reworking of it serves to turn the blame in the reverse direction towards Hall and the confuter. This alteration of Bacon’s original text manifests itself once again when Milton seeks to justify his ‘tart rhetorick’ (I.901) and vehement invective: ‘Now may the confutant advise againe with Sir *Francis Bacon* whether *Elijah* and the Martyrs did well to turne religion into a Comedy, or Satir; *to rip up the wounds* of Idolatry and Superstition *with a laughing countenance*’ (I.903). Milton claims that just as *Elijah* and many of the martyrs turned to comedy or satire to make a mockery of ‘false Prophets’ or ‘superstitious persecutors’ (I.903), so he copied the same derisive modes in *Animadversions* to criticize the idolatry and superstition promoted by Hall and the bishops. Here, Milton’s patching up of Bacon’s original with his own words

plays a crucial part in supporting the legitimacy of his vituperative tongue in *Animadversions*, in a manner not entirely supported by Bacon's work.

We have seen in section 3 that the fight over words and their meanings and over an authoritative text is pivotal in the verbal clash between Milton and the confuter; and in the clash, the same words and the same source are put to different uses for their antagonistic, polemical purposes. What is noticeable in the dispute is that Milton held a more prominent place than the confuter. For whereas the confuter shows a propensity for making direct quotations of Milton's words and Bacon's text to expose the scurrility of Milton's language use and the partiality of his use of the source, Milton supports his position by more diverse methods. In *An Apology*, Milton, as in the case of the word 'Mime', expropriates the meaning of his opponent's word and uses it in his own favour through its reinterpretation, or reapplies an original negative sense away from his opponent's context to direct it not towards Milton himself but towards his opponents through a skilful logic; and as in the cases of the words 'Convocation' and 'a Modest Confutation', Milton unearths the semantic gap between his opponent's words and his covert motives through the conversion of meaning. Bacon's *Discourse* is an example which reveals how far Milton's appropriation dismisses the text's original context for the purposes of both attacking his adversaries and justifying his use of abusive language.

This diverse signification and textual practice should be seen less as an experiment in multiple signification, or the textual manifestation of a mere verbal dispute than as a mode of engagement by Milton in the wider context of the episcopacy controversy of 1640-42. The mode in essence grows from Milton's vehement strictures on bishops and their supporters in the face of their attempt to justify the episcopal order and its hierarchical structure. What is particularly striking about Milton's anti-prelatical tracts is his rhetorical modes of delegitimation as indicated in his figurative assaults on bishops and in his attack on Hall and the confuter which capitalizes on a modified signification of words. The modes also include his partisan interpretation and exploitation of texts of

authority such as the Bible and Bacon's text, confronted with his opponents' attempt at prelatical legitimation. These fierce, rhetorical modes in the anti-prelatical tracts contrast sharply with his cautious criticism of Parliament's measure to control the press, as I shall try to show in chapter 2. The ferocity Milton displayed in the episcopacy controversy is more obviously seen in the Levellers' attacks on the Presbyterians in the licensing controversy of 1643-45. The next chapter traces the difference in rhetorical modes between Milton and the Levellers, in spite of their common objective of opposing to Parliament's reintroduction of the Licensing Order, together with the characteristics of a war of words between Levellers and Presbyterians, particularly William Prynne.

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 Notes

1. Henry Parker, *The Question concerning the Divine Right of Episcopacie* (1641; E 162(4)), sig. A2r.
2. Peloni Almoni, *A Compendious Discourse, Proving Episcopacy to be of Apostolicall Institution* (May 1641; E 157(13)), sig. A2r.
3. See Norman Sykes, *Old Priest and New Presbyter: Episcopacy and Presbyterianism since the Reformation with especial relation to the Churches of England and Scotland* (London and New York, 1956), p. 48; Gerald R. Cragg, *Freedom and Authority: A Study of English Thought in the Early Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia, 1975), p. 128; E. T. Davies, *Episcopacy and the Royal Supremacy in the Church of England in the Sixteenth Century* (Oxford, 1950), p. 23.
4. J. P. Sommerville, *Politics & Ideology in England, 1603-1640* (London and New York, 1986), p. 208. For the theoretical growth of Anglicanism by major Anglican writers in the sixteenth century and their implicit support for *jure divino* episcopacy theory, see E. T. Davies, chap. 1.
5. Robert Ashton, *The English Civil War: Conservatism and Revolution 1603-1649* (London, 1978), p.120.
6. On the similarities and differences in church policy between James I and Charles I, see Kenneth Fincham, 'Episcopal Government, 1603-1640', in *idem*, ed. *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1642* (Basingstoke and London, 1993), pp. 71-91; Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake, 'The Ecclesiastical Policies of James I and Charles I, in Kenneth Fincham, ed. *The Early Stuart Church, 1603-1642*, pp. 23-49; Julian Davies emphasizes the difference between James I and Charles I over church policy in the light of Charles I's dismantling of his father's policy of accommodation. See Julian Davies, *The Caroline Captivity of the Church: Charles I and the Remoulding of Anglicanism 1625-1641* (Oxford, 1992), especially chap. 1 and epilogue; on Charles I's attempt to enforce religious uniformity in the three kingdoms and its failure, see Conrad Russell, *The Causes of the English Civil War* (Oxford, 1990), chap. 5.
7. Aston, *The English Civil War*, p. 120.
8. J. P. Sommerville, 'The Royal Supremacy and Episcopacy 'Jure Divino', 1603-1640', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 34 (1983), 548. Sommerville raises doubts about the emphasis on the incompatibility of *jure divino* episcopacy with the Royal Supremacy by some historians, particularly by William M. Lamont, and attempts to illuminate how bishops argued for *jure divino* episcopacy and *jure divino* kingship at the same time in the reigns of James I and Charles I. For Lamont's standpoint, see William M. Lamont, *Godly Rule: Politics and Religion, 1603-1600* (London, 1969), chap. 3. esp. p. 67.
9. *The First and Large Petition of the City of London and of other Inhabitants thereabouts*, appended in Don M. Wolfe, ed. *CPW*, I, p. 982.
10. Joseph Hall, *An Humble Remonstrance to the High Court of Parliament* (Amsterdam and New York, 1970), pp. 19-20. For this tract, see also George Thomason's collection (January 1641; E 204(5)).
11. Hall's *An Humble Remonstrance to the High Court of Parliament* indeed consists of two subjects, liturgy and episcopacy, which are presented in his *divisio*, but its focus is placed upon the latter and its related *jure divino* claims. For a general account of the tract, see T. F. Kinloch, *The Life and Works of Joseph Hall, 1574-1656* (London and New York, 1951), pp. 156-160.
12. Jeremy Taylor, *Of the Sacred Order and Offices of Episcopacy* (Oxford, August 1642; E 111(1)), sig. [2v].
13. W. M. Lamont, 'Episcopacy and a 'Godly Discipline', 1641-6', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 10 (1959), 83.
14. Davies, *The Caroline Captivity of the Church*, p. 3.
15. [Alexander Henderson], *The Unlawfulness and Danger of Limited Prelacie* (January 1641; E 206(5)), pp. 1-2.
16. Parker, *The Question concerning the Divine Right of Episcopacie*, p. 4.
17. Edward Bagshaw, *Mr. Bagshaws Speech in Parliament concerning Episcopacy and the London Petition* (February 1641; E 196(31)), p. 3.

18. Robert Greville, Lord Brooke, *A Discourse Opening the Nature of that Episcopacie* (November 1641; E 177(22)), pp. 86-87.
19. Smith, *LR*, p. 119.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
21. On Milton's concern with the issue of *jure divino* episcopacy, see Michael Lieb, 'Milton's *Of Reformation* and the Dynamics of Controversy', in Michael Lieb and John T. Shawcross, eds. *Achievements of the Left Hand: Essays on the Prose of John Milton* (Amherst, 1974), p. 57.
22. Martin Dzelzainis, 'Milton and Sir Francis Bacon's *A Wise and Moderate Discourse, Concerning Church-Affaires* (1641)', *Notes and Queries* 242 (1997), 183.
23. There is some disagreement in Milton scholarship as to Milton's relation to Presbyterianism during the period of 1641-42. For instance, Don M. Wolfe points out Milton's Presbyterian allegiances, but his overall judgment of Milton's anti-prelatical tracts is focused on Milton's leanings towards Independency. Like Wolfe, Thomas Corns also notes Milton's inclination to Independency in *The Reason of Church-Government*: 'It is not clear when Milton started to think of himself as an Independent. ... But he anticipates as early as February 1642 a reconfiguration of the church that would permit the return of separatists'. Ken Simpson, from a slightly different perspective, claims that 'Milton grudgingly accepts presbyterial government, but views it almost irrelevant since discipline depends on individual piety'. In a similar vein, William B. Hunter denies Milton's Presbyterian partisanship at the time: 'In Milton's pamphlets of 1641 and 1642 I find no sense that he considered himself the spokesman for any such specific group of people, but rather for all genuinely devout Englishmen'. Unlike these critics, Martin Dzelzainis identifies Milton 'as a Presbyterian partisan'. See Don M. Wolfe, 'Introduction', in *CPW*, I, pp. 98-9, 115, 138, 147, 201; Thomas N. Corns, 'Milton's antiprelatical tracts and the marginality of doctrine', in Stephen B. Dobranski and John P. Rumrich, eds. *Milton and Heresy* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 46; Ken Simpson, "'That Sovran Book": The Discipline of the Word in Milton's Anti-Episcopal Tracts', in P. G. Stanwood, ed. *Of Poetry and Politics: New Essays on Milton and His World* (New York, 1995), p. 322; William B. Hunter, 'Milton and the Presbyterians', in his book *The Descent of Urania: Studies in Milton, 1946-1988* (London and Toronto, 1989), p. 94; Dzelzainis, 'Milton and Sir Francis Bacon's *A Wise and Moderate Discourse, Concerning Church-Affaires* (1641)', 183.
24. For a study of the relation between Milton's use of these metaphors and his historical vision in *Of Reformation*, see David Loewenstein, *Milton and the Drama of History: Historical Vision, Iconoclasm, and the Literary Imagination* (Cambridge, 1990), chap 1.
25. *CPW*, I, p. 769, note 8.
26. Bishops were impeached by Parliament on 4 August 1641 and thirteen bishops were arrested and imprisoned on charges of treason on 30 December 1641; and the Bishops' Exclusion Bill was accepted by the Lords on 5 February 1642 and finally accepted by Charles on 14 February 1642. See *CPW*, I, pp. 737, 738, 863.
27. Don M. Wolfe, 'Introduction', in *CPW*, I, p. 109.
28. Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (London and New York, 1993), p. 6.
29. Joseph Hall, *Episcopacie by Divine Right* ([April] 1640; E 203(8)), Part 1, p. 69. This tract consists of three parts, each of which has separate page numbering.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
31. Taylor, *Of the Sacred Order and Offices of Episcopacy*, p. 7.
32. Cragg, *Freedom and Authority*, p. 142.
33. Lord Brooke, *A Discourse Opening the Nature of that Episcopacie*, p. 65.
34. Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution*, pp. 5, 52.
35. For Tyndale's preference for specific vocabularies in his version and his dispute with Thomas More resultant from it, see David Lawton, *Faith, Text and History: The Bible in English* (New York and London, 1990), p. 122, and also Roger Pooley, *English Prose of the Seventeenth Century, 1590-1700* (London and New York, 1992), p. 96.

36. Lawton, *Faith, Text and History*, pp. 4, 60; for a more detailed account of the Geneva Bible, see Gerald Hammond, *The Making of the English Bible* (New York, 1983), chaps. 3 and 4; on the translation of the Geneva Bible, its use during the Elizabeth reign, and Laud's suppression of the Bible, see Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution*, pp. 56-8.
37. Lawton, pp. 64-5; Pooley, p. 96; Hill, p. 64.
38. *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition* (Madison, Wisconsin and London, 1969).
39. Taylor, *Of the Sacred Order and Offices of Episcopacy*, p. 112.
40. *The Holy Bible: King James Version* (Cambridge, 1997). All references to the Bible are given in the text. I use this Bible except when making reference to the marginalia of the Geneva Bible, since disputed places in the episcopacy controversy display the similarity of translation between the Geneva Bible and King James Version.
41. Hall, *Episcopacie by Divine Right*, Part 2, p. 26.
42. This quotation is missing in the first edition of Lord Brooke's *Discourse*, and I quote it from his second edition reprinted in William Haller, ed. *Tracts on Liberty in the Puritan Revolution 1638-1647*, vol.II (New York, 1934).
43. An account of the presbytery in I Timothy 4:14 of the Geneva Bible. The Bible uses the term 'Eldership' instead of 'Presbytery'.
44. Hall, *Episcopacie by Divine Right*, Part 2, pp. 41-2.
45. John White, *A Speech of Mr. John White made in the House of Commons concerning Episcopacy* (June 1641; E 198(18)), sig. Hhh3r.
46. Sharpe, *REME*, p. 76.
47. Corns, *UV*, p. 27. Smectymnuus is the acronym of Stephen Marshall, Edmund Calamy, Thomas Young, Matthew Newcomen and William Spurstow, and Thomas Young was Milton's former tutor. On Milton's association with Smectymnuus, see William Riley Parker, *Milton's Contemporary Reputation* (New York, 1971; first published in 1940), pp. 15-7. Parker argues that Milton in his first two tracts helped Smectymnuans in an indirect way, but that his third pamphlet, *Animadversions*, was a product of his direct intervention in the Smectymnuan controversy at their request. Hugh Trevor-Roper points out that Stephen Marshall, a leading minister of the Smectymnuans, paid attention to Milton's support and even used some of Milton's phrases in his parliamentary sermons. See Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Catholics, Anglicans, and Puritans: Seventeenth-Century Essays* (London, 1989), p. 255; on the Smectymnuan controversy and Milton's support for them, especially in relation to their differences in writing style, see Thomas Kranidas, 'Style and Rectitude in Seventeenth-Century Prose: Hall, Smectymnuus, and Milton', *HLQ* 46 (1983), 239-69.
48. For the most detailed and elaborate account of the Martin Marprelate tracts and their influence on Milton's anti-prelatical tracts, see Raymond A. Anselment, *'Betwixt Jest and Earnest': Marprelate, Milton, Marvell, Swift & the Decorum of Religious Ridicule* (Toronto, Buffalo, and London, 1979), chaps. 3 and 4; see also James Eagan, 'Milton and the Marprelate Tradition', *MS* 8 (1975), 103-21, and Lieb, 'Milton's *Of Reformation* and the Dynamics of Controversy', pp. 70-2.
49. Kranidas, 'Style and Rectitude in Seventeenth-Century Prose', 239.
50. Mareen Thum, 'Milton's Diatribal Voice: The Integration and Translation of a Generic Paradigm in *Animadversions*', *MS* 30 (1993), 11. The distinctive point of this essay is that it takes note of the wider political implications of Milton's rhetorical strategies for attacking Hall 'as the self-proclaimed representative of an institutional and ideological collectivity' (16), see especially 11-23. Most other researches on *Animadversions* are focused on Milton's rhetorical methods and his attack on Hall's persona and rhetoric, see Corns, *UV*, chap 2; Henry S. Limouze, 'Joseph Hall and the Prose Style of John Milton', *MS* 15 (1981), 121-41; Richard McCabe, 'The Form and Methods of Milton's *Animadversions upon the Remonstrants Defence against Smectymnuus*', *English Language Notes* 18 (1981), 266-72. McCabe's essay notes that Milton's rhetorical technique is indebted to that of Hall used in his controversies with Jacobean and Caroline nonconformists; on Milton's defamation of Hall's character, see Audrey Chew, 'Joseph Hall and John Milton', *ELH* 17 (1950), 274-95.
51. Wolfe, 'introduction', in *CPW*, I, p. 203; Parker, *Milton's Contemporary Reputation*, p. 267.



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52. Anon., *A Modest Confutation of a Slanderous and Scurrilous Libell, Entitled, Animadversions* (1642), sig. A3r. The text is reprinted in Parker's *Milton's Contemporary Reputation*. Subsequent citations follow this text.
  53. Reuben Sánchez, *Persona and Decorum in Milton's Prose* (London, 1997), p. 43.
  54. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
  55. Reuben Sánchez, 'From Polemic to Prophecy: Milton's Uses of Jeremiah in *The Reason of Church Government* and *The Readie and Easie Way*', *MS 30* (1993), 30.
  56. The matter of decorum in Milton's anti-prelatical tracts, especially in *Animadversions* and *An Apology*, seems to be a controversial issue among critics. While critics like Thomas Kranidas and Joseph Anthony Wittreich, Jr. assert that behind Milton's aspersions against Hall and the prelates there is the perception of decorum towards the higher unity required of the rules of rhetoric, critics like Joan Webber and Maureen Thum point out that Milton's language in *Animadversions* and *An Apology* is far from being decorous. Incorporating these contrary opinions, Sánchez divides the concept of decorum in Milton's prose works into the two conceptual categories, 'a structural decorum' and 'a contextual decorum'. See Thomas Kranidas, "'Decorum' and the Style of Milton's Antiprelatical Tracts', in Stanley Fish, ed. *Seventeenth Century Prose: Modern Essays in Criticism* (New York, 1971), pp. 475-88; Joseph Anthony Wittreich, Jr. "'The Crown of Eloquence": The Figure of the Orator in Milton's Prose Works', in Michael Lieb and John T. Shawcross, eds. *Achievements of the Left Hand: Essays on the Prose of John Milton* (Amherst, 1974), p. 22; Joan Webber, *The Eloquent "I": Style and Self in Seventeenth-Century Prose* (Madison, Milwaukee, and London, 1968), p. 202; Thum, 'Milton's Diatribal Voice', 13-4; Sánchez, *Persona and Decorum in Milton's Prose*, chap. 2.
  57. Conrad Russell, *The Fall of the British Monarchies 1637-1642* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 136-8.
  58. Thum, 'Milton's Diatribal Voice', 11.
  59. Bacon's *Discourse* was written in 1589 but it was first published later in 1641.
  60. On Milton's selective borrowing from Bacon's tract for his Presbyterian allegiances, see Dzelzainis, 'Milton and Sir Francis Bacon's *A Wise and Moderate Discourse, Concerning Church-Affaires* (1641)', 182-83.
  61. *Ibid.*, 182, 183.



## Chapter Two: The Licensing Controversy, 1643-1645

### Milton's *Areopagitica*: The Rhetoric of Negotiation and Critique

As Norbrook properly puts it, Milton's *Areopagitica* is 'one of the most erudite and allusive political pamphlets ever composed'.<sup>1</sup> It cannot be denied that the profound and allusive character of *Areopagitica* is the main reason for the interest of numerous critics and scholars with a variety of critical perspectives. Among the numerous interpretations of *Areopagitica*, recent criticism generally reveals three distinctive features in its implicit or explicit disapproval of readings of the tract as a libertarian document endorsing complete freedom of speech and of the press. One of the features is a strong argument against the prevalent reading of *Areopagitica* as a mystifyingly idealist and libertarian document, identifying instead in the tract an intolerant and only limitedly liberal Milton. The most notable critic of this orientation may well be John Illo. For Illo, both Milton's adoption of the Isocratean speech in which Isocrates urged the Areopagus to regulate and control the manners of Athenians and his intolerance towards Roman Catholicism, Anglo-Catholicism, Laudian Anglicanism, and even radical dissent or heterodoxy, are the apparent evidence that Milton's idea of freedom of speech and the press is fundamentally not democratic but aristocratic. *Areopagitica* is seen not as a libertarian document for universal freedom of the press, but as 'a political document of repression'.<sup>2</sup> Illo's stance develops from his counter-argument to the popular misconception that Milton is supporting a universal and absolute freedom of publication. Nevertheless, his analysis tends to misjudge Milton's partisanship in 1644 in assuming that Milton is in opposition to radical sectaries; and, more seriously, it leads to an undervaluing of Milton's political calculations in his adoption of the Isocratic rhetorical model.

The second critical tendency is observed by Christopher Kendrick and Lana Cable, who view Milton's use of images and metaphors in the tract as an embodiment of his radical individualism. For Kendrick, Milton's intentional selection of classical oration in *Areopagitica* – 'a fairly well-defined argumentative structure' – functions as an 'official' or 'strategic ethos' calculated to persuade the Erastians (those who were in favour of the war with the king but opposed to the separation of church from state) in the toleration controversy. This 'official ethos', as represented in argumentative discourse, clashes with Milton's passionate 'self-validating ethos', which embodies another characteristic element of language in *Areopagitica* – 'a network of figuration' – which exists at a different level from the 'official ethos' and opens up a rift in it. For Kendrick, the 'self-validating ethos' functions as an important means of embodying Milton's subversive ethos and radical individualism.<sup>3</sup> Thus Kendrick, in the context of the toleration controversy, highlights Milton's political strategy of appealing to the Erastians with his argumentative discourse and in it the clashes between two levels of language, the argumentative and the figurative. In contrast, ideology for Cable is basically something that impedes the incessant flow of meaning, desire and imagination, and *Areopagitica*'s truth lies in the image construction itself as opposed to any fixed ideology that underlies its rational arguments.<sup>4</sup> Though Kendrick and Cable appear to take contrasting views of the relationship between ideology and language in their readings of *Areopagitica*, their arguments implicitly assume that argumentative discourse in the tract is linked with an official ideology, and that the real force of Milton's language lies in figurative language antithetical to the argumentative discourse. The problem with these two critics is that they view the relation between argumentative and figurative language as antithetical and non-relational, and, more seriously, they reduce the value of Milton's use of metaphors and images by attributing it to his radical individualism.

The general tenor of the third critical direction is concerned with opposition to such 'a paradigm of individualism'<sup>5</sup> as is shown in the cases of Kendrick and Cable and

which has dominated Milton criticism. The leading critics of this critical current are probably David Norbrook and William Kolbrener. Norbrook and Kolbrener, questioning the paradigm of subjectivity founded on a separation of the private and public spheres, seek to position Milton's *Areopagitica* within the wider and more general political context of Renaissance republicanism and thus to identify the confluence of private and public spheres in the tract.<sup>6</sup> Norbrook and Kolbrener offer a critical adjustment to the reading of *Areopagitica* dominated by a modern liberal and individualistic perspective. Nevertheless, it is also true that their analyses keep us from fully understanding Milton's complex rhetorical gestures as related to the licensing controversy.

The common feature of all these critical tendencies is that they miss the complexity of Milton's rhetorical strategies and modes in the immediate context of the contemporary licensing controversy. Before we look at the singular traits of Milton's rhetoric in *Areopagitica*, we need to commence by observing the political and economic implications of Parliament's reimposition of the severe 1637 Star Chamber Decree. Parliament abolished the Star Chamber in July 1641, which led to the *de facto* cessation of a censorship system which had operated in the alliance of political, religious and economic interests among the crown, the church and the Stationers' Company. The abolition of the Star Chamber, however, did not indicate an intention to open up complete freedom of speech and of the press to the public, given the fact that Parliament introduced its own licensing measures three times before the Licensing Order of 1643: the measures of 29 January 1642, 26 August 1642 and 8 March 1643. These three measures were motivated primarily by Parliament's diverse purposes to eliminate chaos and piracy in the printing industry, protect parliamentary activities and proceedings from its opponents, suppress royalist propaganda and check the widening currency of various sects' radical ideas. The measures reflected to a great extent Parliament's unceasing concern with the political and ideological functions of the press, though it was at the time preoccupied with more crucial constitutional and religious issues like the war with

the king and the abolition and re-establishment of a state church. Parliament's awareness of the ideological role of the press and its inclination to set up a new state-controlled censoring apparatus to supplant the royal and ecclesiastical system of censorship culminated in the Licensing Order of 16 June 1643.

The 1643 Licensing Order is dominated by two main points. One is that in the Order Parliament reintroduced almost all of the stringent censorship machinery of the 1637 Star Chamber Decree including pre-publication licensing, registration of all printing materials with the names of author, printer and publisher in the Register at Stationers' Hall, search, seizure and destruction of any books offensive to the government, and arrest and imprisonment of any offensive writers, printers and publishers. The Licensing Order was the product of Parliament's desire to establish its own censoring machine in place of the royal and ecclesiastical system for controlling the press. For this purpose, on the one hand Parliament relied on the support of the Stationers' Company – 'the most successful enforcement agency of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century government' – in return for its monopoly of the printing trade.<sup>7</sup> But on the other it set out to build up its own licensing system of which the administrative and judicial functions were assigned to both Houses and their committees. This parliamentary scheme was a 'devious political strategy of entangling commercial self-interest with political and religious censorship',<sup>8</sup> to borrow an expression of the Order, 'according to Ancient custom',<sup>9</sup> and it was also an announcement of Parliament's resolution to take the censoring machine into its own hands.

If Parliament took a leading role in controlling the press in the traditional alliance between political forces and economic interests, the licensing controversy of 1643-45 was also bound up with the Presbyterian faction's political and religious ambition to strengthen their power in Parliament and the Westminster Assembly of Divines along with the Presbyterians boosting their power outside Parliament. The Presbyterian designs met with fierce opposition from five Independent ministers in the Assembly of

Divines who kindled the toleration controversy with the publication of *An Apologeticall Narration* (January 1644). The toleration controversy developed into the Independents' and the sects' demand for their right to form 'gathered churches' outside the Presbyterian form of church government as a national church, which enabled the anti-Presbyterian forces to form a political coalition during the period 1644-45.<sup>10</sup> The licensing controversy was brought into sharp focus in the broad conflict over toleration and formed an important part of the toleration controversy. Although the licensing controversy was raised as an important issue within the toleration controversy, it could be seen on its own as a crucial index to 'a significant expansion in the political public sphere'<sup>11</sup> consequent upon the emergence of civil society and the corresponding ideological and linguistic conflict between contending social forces. For while Parliament and the Presbyterians tried to restrict the possibility of the rights of those who enjoyed free circulation of discourse in a sudden expansion of the political public sphere during the period 1641-43, radical printers and writers like William Larnier, Richard Overton, John Lilburne, William Walwyn, Henry Robinson and John Milton were not above going beyond the bounds of the licensing measure in order to extend the possibility of the language. During the period 1644-45, all pamphlets by these radical writers were published without authorization, that is, without licence or imprint. Their efforts to extend the possibility of the language of their rights to publication, in actuality, were made in their challenges to authority and in their questionings of the validity of the law imposed by authority.

It is unlikely that Milton did not know of Parliament's intention to merge its political interests with the Stationers' Company's economic interests in its reintroduction of a strict censoring machine in 1643. Besides, he might also have been conscious of Parliament's unwillingness to lead a more radical reform and of its gradual return to a conservative direction, with the Presbyterian faction's strengthening of power in Parliament during the period 1643-45. In particular, when he noticed that the

Parliament's Licensing Order was being used as a means both of suppressing the radical ideas of the emerging Independents and sects and of advancing Presbyterian factional interests, Milton may have perceived the illegitimacy and partiality of the ideological move Parliament was trying to make through the Licensing Order. If this was the case, Milton's call for the revocation of the Licensing Order in *Areopagitica* could have been inseparable from his political awareness of this exercise of parliamentary control over the production and circulation of specific discourses. From this perspective, *Areopagitica* could be read as a product of Milton's acute observation and implicit criticism of such ideological maneuvering of Parliament, from the perspective of the political alliance between Independents and sectaries.

One of the remarkable features of *Areopagitica*, however, is that Milton's criticism is not being made in a direct way as in his anti-prelatical tracts. As we saw in these, Milton's criticism of Episcopalians' strategies of legitimation took the form of a bitter and virulent polemic. By contrast, Milton's opposition to Parliament's press censorship in *Areopagitica* is posed in a considerably indirect and oblique way. That is, it is presented in such a way as to appear as if his criticism of Parliament was not blame but praise and advice, as he writes, 'His highest praising is not flattery, and his plainest advice is a kinde of praising' (*CPW*, II.488). In the circumstances where he should criticize the unfairness of Parliament's 'publisht Order' (II.489), Milton makes every effort with highly rhetorical ingenuity to show that his advice has nothing to do with flattery or criticism but springs from his cordial praise of Parliament's actions and its wisdom:

Neither is it in Gods esteeme the diminution of his glory, when honourable things are spoken of good men and worthy Magistrates; which if I now first should begin to doe, after so fair a progresse of your laudable deeds, and such a long obligation upon the whole Realme to your indefatigable vertues, I might be justly reckon'd among the tardiest, and the unwillingest of them that praise yee. (II.487)



This paradoxical inversion and irony can be said to have been the result of Milton's shrewd rhetorical strategy of complicated negotiation with Parliament. In November 1644 when he wrote *Areopagitica*, Milton may have thought of Parliament less 'as an energetic vanguard of institutional change', as Norbrook has assumed, than as a dominant power which might abandon such institutional reform as he expected it to make, institutional reform which would secure 'the utmost bound of civill liberty' (II.487).<sup>12</sup> Thus, it could be inferred that Milton's rhetorical modes were part of a complex mechanism by which he engaged in skilful negotiation with, and implied criticism of, the dominant power. This rhetorical enactment is achieved notably through his capacity to handle with utmost skill the genres and constituent elements of classical rhetoric.

*Areopagitica* conforms faithfully to the rules of classical rhetoric at the level of the whole structure. Its basic format is that of classical deliberative rhetoric; and Milton faithfully represents the rhetorical genre as, in modeling himself on Isocrates and presenting Parliament as the Athenian Areopagus, he aims to persuade Parliament to repeal the 1643 Licensing Order.<sup>13</sup> Milton's assumption of the role of counsellor addressing his opinions to Parliament as governing body in deliberative rhetoric and his courteous praise of Parliament in the epideictic rhetoric used in his *exordium* and *peroratio* determine the deferential tone of the tract as a whole.

Coupled with this deliberative and epideictic rhetoric in the tract are the six parts of classical rhetoric (*exordium*, *narratio*, *divisio*, *confirmatio*, *refutatio* and *peroratio*) belonging to *dispositio*, which serve as a firm foundation for its logical configuration. In particular, *narratio*, *divisio*, *confirmatio* and *refutatio* are major elements which constitute the logical arrangement of his four arguments: (1) the history of licensing, (2) its bad effects on reading, (3) the ineffectuality of licensing, (4) the harm done to the pursuit of learning and truth.<sup>14</sup> The foundation of *Areopagitica*'s 'argumentative structure' is built on the underlying connection between deliberative rhetoric and the



four parts of classical rhetoric. For when the primary aim of deliberative rhetoric is to prove whether legislation relating to public affairs is advantageous or disadvantageous to a given society, Milton tries to prove that the Parliament's 1643 Licensing Order is far from being profitable through a variety of proofs and refutations of possible objections in his four arguments. In line with these rhetorical elements which feature the tract's argumentative texture, Milton makes effective use of other crucial elements of classical rhetoric, particularly *elocutio* and its crucial components, tropes and figures. *Elocutio* is reflected in Milton's capacity to define the overall polite tone of the tract, and his effective use of figurative devices is concerned with his intention to persuade Parliament to repeal the Licensing Order by enhancing the power of emotional appeal.

In *Areopagitica*, Milton's choice of a deliberative and epideictic genre and the logical deployment of his arguments bear some similarities to Joseph Hall's modes of discourse in *An Humble Remonstrance to the High Court of Parliament* which we have already met in chapter 1. As in the treatise of Hall, *Areopagitica* takes the form of Milton's eulogy to Parliament, in keeping with the configurations of logical construction. Milton's preference for these modes of classical rhetoric in *Areopagitica* demonstrates most distinctively how he intended to win the support of an educated elite in and outside Parliament by giving a clear indication of the extent of his rhetorical education. In a sense, the modes of classical rhetoric can be said to have been part of a standardized discursive rule among those who were trained in the humanist education at the time. Milton appears to adopt 'the known forms and recognized norms'<sup>15</sup> entirely, in Bourdieu's words, by depending on 'instruments of production, such as rhetorical devices, genres, legitimate styles and manners and, more generally, all the formulations destined to be 'authoritative' and to be cited as examples of 'good usage''.<sup>16</sup> This recourse to 'the known forms and recognized norms' on the surface of the tract's rhetorical structure, as with Hall, gives the impression that Milton does not have any intention of discrediting Parliament's authority. In his apparent adoption of this structure

of classical rhetoric, Milton attempts artful negotiation with Parliament in three ways. First, he labours to maintain his polite attitude towards Parliament as far as possible when calling for repeal of the Licensing Order. Secondly, he assumes that the Licensing Order might have been reimposed irrespective of Parliament's intentions, even though he knew that Parliament took a leading role in enacting the law: 'That ye like not now these most certain Authors of this licencing order, and that all sinister intention was farre distant from your thoughts, when ye were importun'd the passing it, all men who know the integrity of your actions, and how ye honour Truth, will clear yee readily' (II.507). Thirdly, he tries to avail himself of the rhetorical effect of his eulogy on Parliament to the full by emphasizing parliamentarians' wisdom and virtues in such phrases as 'your faithful guidance and undaunted Wisdome', 'your laudable deeds', 'your indefatigable vertues' (II.487), 'the integrity of your actions' (II.507) and 'Your highest actions' (II.570).

However unlike Hall's justification for the episcopal order through the same rhetorical modes, behind Milton's rhetorical strategies of negotiation with Parliament is the deeper, more nuanced criticism of illegitimate censorship which was exercised in the name of civil power, and, even more seriously, was based on the reintroduction of repressive measures characterized as a traditionally conservative censoring system. Milton's criticism of the illegitimate censorship by the civil power shows how the modes of classical rhetoric serve as a means of delegitimation. This is antithetical to Hall's objective in his tract. Another important difference between Milton's *Areopagitica* and Hall's tract is that *Areopagitica* reveals an adequate fusion between his arguments against the legitimacy of the Licensing Order and the figurative devices harnessed to magnify the effects of the arguments. From this perspective, argumentative discourse and figurative language in *Areopagitica* do not clash with each other, as Kendrick and Cable have argued, but they form a crucial partnership in the ideological function of

implicitly justifying Milton's opposition to, and criticism of, the Parliament's Licensing Order.

Milton begins with figurative language just before he introduces his first argument. He tries to liken books to 'malefactors', 'Dragons teeth' and 'armed men' (II. 492) in his use of tropes and figures such as simile and personification. This comparison of books to criminals and soldiers is an allusion to his political awareness that books might be used as an ideological instrument for royalist propaganda and to his approval of the need to 'have a vigilant eye' on such books (II.492). Nevertheless, the problem with Parliament's licensing policy, in Milton's view, is that it does not limit the scope of its application to royalist books, but extends to suppressing what he counts as 'a good Book' (II.492):

And yet on the other hand, unlesse warinesse be us'd, as good almost kill a Man as kill a good Book; who kills a Man kills a reasonable creature, Gods Image; but hee who destroyes a good Booke, kills reason it selfe, kills the Image of God, as it were in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the Earth; but a good Booke is the pretious life-blood of a master spirit, imbalm'd and treasur'd up on purpose to a life beyond life. 'Tis true, no age can restore a life, whereof perhaps there is no great losse; and revolutions of ages doe not oft recover the losse of a rejected truth, for the want of which whole Nations fare the worse. We should be wary therefore what persecution we raise against the living labours of publick men, how we spill that season'd life of man preserv'd and stor'd up in Books; since we see a kinde of homicide may be thus committed, sometimes a martyrdome, and if it extend to the whole impression, a kinde of massacre, whereof the execution ends not in the slaying of an elementall life, but strikes at that ethereall and fift essence, the breath of reason it selfe, slaies an immortality rather then a life. (II.492-43)

Here Milton does not specify what belongs to the category of what he thinks of as 'a good Book' or who is to blame for suppressing the good book in 1644. But we could infer that it is referring to books containing radical political and religious ideas, specifically books relating to the ideas of the Independents and sects under Parliament's control in the immediate licensing controversy. For, in the controversial context of

licensing in 1644, Milton could not have imagined as ‘a rejected truth’ either a royalist cause or a Presbyterian one. However, his intentional silence on Parliament’s responsibility for the suppression of books and even his identification with the dominant power through the use of ‘we’, as David Aers and Gunther Kress point out, can be seen as part of ‘a sensible tactical move’. Milton assumes, as they note, that he ‘understands the practices of the group he addresses and is one of them, sharing their values, aspirations and difficulties, therefore unlikely to be advocating against their (our!) real interest’.<sup>17</sup> Milton’s assumption, however, should not be taken at face value; his identification with parliamentary interest through the use of ‘we’ is seen as an attempt at shrewd, rhetorical negotiation with Parliament. This rhetoric of negotiation with Parliament in *Areopagitica* is, in a sense, dialectically related to his implied criticism of press censorship. The above passage – ‘revolutions of ages doe not oft recover the losse of a rejected truth’ – indicates the general phenomenon that a rejected truth is not fully recovered even in times of historical change. His tacit criticism is that this specific time of change in English history is a far cry from the recovery of the ‘rejected truth’, given Parliament’s operation of the conservative licensing system and its repressive implications against a free press and free expression. Milton’s allusion to, and criticism of, the repressive character of this parliamentary measure are represented in the metaphor of the killing of a man, used to imply the suppression of books. And the effect of the metaphor is gradually strengthened both in similar emphatic metaphors – ‘homicide’, ‘martyrdome’ and ‘massacre’ – and in its contrasting images of the possibility of the life and immortality of ‘a good Booke’.

Thus, for Milton, figurative language functions as a rhetorical means of justifying his opposition to the ‘project of licencing’ (II.493) and its related unvoiced disapproval of current rulers, and the very next passage, which introduces his first argument, shows his awareness of this:

But lest I should be condemn'd of introducing licence, while I oppose Licencing, I refuse not the paines to be so much Historicall, as will serve to shew what hath been done by ancient and famous Commonwealths, against this disorder, till the very time that this project of licencing crept out of the *Inquisition*, was caught up by our Prelates, and hath caught some of our Presbyters. (II.493)

Milton tries to appear to be far from critical or offensive, to be totally objective when presenting historical examples of licensing in his first argument. But 'Milton's history of the banishment of authors, censorship, and licensing of books', as Mary Ann McGrail points out, is 'selective'.<sup>18</sup> This selective appropriation of historical proofs testifies to the fact that his arguments and their proofs are artfully structured in such a way as to delegitimize Parliament's licensing policy and, at the same time, to legitimate his opposition to it, just as when he depends on figurative discourses for the same purposes.

Milton's account of historical examples of censorship shows his intention subtly to criticize the severity and partiality of the current civil power's licensing policy. According to Milton, in Athens and Rome only two types of writing – blasphemous/atheistic writings and libelous writings – were suppressed by the civil powers, and other writings were free from the state's censorship: 'Except in these two points, how the world went in Books, the Magistrat kept no reckning' (II.498). Furthermore, Milton asserts that in Rome, even a book upholding the position of a political opponent was not suppressed by the ruler: 'And for matters of State, the story of *Titus Livius*, though it extoll'd that part which *Pompey* held, was not therefore suppress by *Octavius Caesar* of the other Faction' (II.499). There is an implicit assumption in these arguments that whereas the civil powers in Athens and Rome took relatively tolerant positions with regard to censorship of books, the English Parliament representing the current civil power is operating a strict licensing policy applying censorship to almost all fields. Milton is also critical of the fact that the parliamentary Licensing Act is being used as a means to suppress the ideas of politically different positions, when compared with the Roman licensing policy that took a tolerant attitude

toward such ideas. Milton's critique of the implications of the 1643 Licensing Order is further reinforced as he tries to compare the law to the severe Spanish Inquisition and to the episcopal licensing policy by association and imagery.

The reason why Milton is so critical of Parliament's Licensing Order of 1643 stems from the perception that despite the changed political situation in which royal-episcopal power has been replaced by parliamentary power, the civil power is just following 'an old canonicall slight' (II.541). The civil power, in Milton's view, fails to pay serious regard to 'the peoples birthright and priviledge' (II.541) to express their opinions freely and publish them in public. Milton here calls into question the power's validity to determine production, circulation and consumption of discourse by blocking the right of the private subject freely to access the press. For Milton, the right of the private subject is not something that is subjected to the state power as practised in the former regime, but it should be redefined as the exercise of the people's privilege. This viewpoint insinuates that Milton attempts to review the relationship between power and the right of the subject in a new light. In other words, the possibility of the right of the subject to freedom of opinion, Milton argues, should be expanded so that power is less involved in this right, or only helps to increase the right. Milton's critique of the 1643 Licensing Order conveys a tacit warning of Parliament's inability to redefine the relationship between the two in a new sense, differentiated from that of the former regime.

The tacit criticism of Parliament's printing policy turns into a voiced but circumlocutory remonstrance against it, when Milton assesses the extent of the damage the Licensing Order has done to the liberty of printing and learning: 'liberty of Printing must be enthrall'd again under a Prelaticall commission of twenty, the privilege of the people nullify'd, and which is wors, the freedom of learning must groan again, and to her old fetters; all this the Parliament yet sitting' (II.541-42). Milton raises the question of the harmful impact of Parliament's control of printing on the freedom of learning as



an important issue in the fourth part of his four-part argument. It is significant not just because the fourth argument constitutes more than half of the tract. Rather, its significance lies in the ways in which the combination of his argument with figurative language as a means of strengthening the argument is deployed to refute the legitimacy of Parliament's Licensing Order. In the fourth argument, Milton professes direct criticism of the Stationers' arguments and indirect dissatisfaction with Parliament's approval of the arguments. Milton contends that the Licensing Order is 'the greatest discouragement and affront, that can be offer'd to learning and to learned men' (II.530). This argument has much to do with his confutation of the Stationers' logic of legitimation for the Licensing Order.<sup>19</sup> When the Stationers' Company pleaded with Parliament for the necessity of a severe Licensing Order in the petition, *To the High Court of Parliament: The Humble Remonstrance of the Company of Stationers* (April 1643), its main claim was that 'The first and greatest end of order in the Presse, is the advancement of wholesome knowledge', and its second end is 'not merely private' but 'publike'.<sup>20</sup> In running sharply counter to the Stationers' logic of legitimation, Milton tries to demonstrate how the Licensing Order serves as a stumbling block to the advancement of learning and to the pursuit of truth, and how it helps to propel private rather than public ends. For these arguments, Milton deploys various kinds of imagery and metaphor as a vehicle for supporting his case as well as performing the critical function of his opposition to the Licensing Order.

In order to show how harmful the Licensing Order is to 'learning and to learned men' as a refutation of the Stationers' first argument, Milton uses the image of a learned man as a schoolboy, the image of measurement and the metaphors of imprisonment, tyranny and gagging. The effect of the accumulation of these diverse images and metaphors is to highlight, in Milton's words, how 'much we are hinder'd and dis-inur'd by this cours of licencing toward the true knowledge of what we seem to know' (II.548). The Licensing Order is not only a great obstacle to the discovery of true knowledge, but



what is more problematic is that it is an institutional embodiment blocking the pursuit of truth. Just as he depends on a network of metaphors and images to emphasize the threat of the Licensing Order to the advancement of knowledge, Milton makes best use of the trope of truth to show how the Order could be harmful to the encounter with truth in process:

Truth indeed came once into the world with her divine Master, and was a perfect shape most glorious to look on: but when he ascended, and his Apostles after him were laid asleep, then strait arose a wicked race of deceivers, who as that story goes of the *AEgyptian Typhon* with his conspirators, how they dealt with the good *Osiris*, took the virgin Truth, hewd her lovely form into a thousand peeces, and scatter'd them to the four winds. From that time ever since, the sad friends of Truth, such as durst appear, imitating the carefull search that *Isis* made for the mangl'd body of *Osiris*, went up and down gathering up limb by limb still as they could find them. We have not yet found them all, Lords and Commons, nor ever shall doe, till her Masters second comming; he shall bring together every joynt and member, and shall mould them into an immortall feature of lovelines and perfection. Suffer not these licencing prohibitions to stand at every place of opportunity forbidding and disturbing them that continue seeking, that continue to do our obsequies to the torn body of our martyr'd Saint. (II.549-50)

The trope of truth serves as the ruling metaphor in Milton's fourth argument in the sense that it incorporates his arguments on a logical as well as a figurative level. For Milton, the process of acquiring true knowledge is part of the process for arriving at truth. The harmful effect that the Licensing Order has on the growth of true knowledge, contrary to the Stationers' defence of the licensing, by extension also applies to the quest for truth. Here, the trope of truth as a dismembered body is used as a way of strengthening Milton's opposition to the Stationers' first logic of legitimation and Parliament's acceptance of the Stationers' petition. It is true that in Milton's use of the trope of truth, as Norbrook points out, there is a 'tension between Truth as absolute and Truth as process', and 'Milton's position is not at this point simply antinomianism, with personal truth transcending any institutional embodiment'.<sup>21</sup> But Milton's appeal to Parliament

and his statement just after the trope of truth – ‘Suffer not these licencing prohibitions to stand at every place of opportunity forbidding and disturbing them that continue seeking’ – show that he is using the trope as a figurative device for supporting his argument against the specific institutional embodiment of the Licensing Order. Here, there is little doubt that he has in mind the Stationers’ specious argument that the licensing contributes to ‘the advancement of wholesome knowledge’ and his implicit criticism of Parliament’s licensing policy.

Milton’s refutation of the Stationers’ second argument of legitimation is observed in his different metaphor of truth as a commodity: ‘Truth and understanding are not such wares as to be monopoliz’d and traded in by tickets and statutes, and standards’ (II.535). The Stationers’ argument that the aim of licensing is not for private interests but for ‘publike good’ (sig. [A1v]) is seen by Milton to be no more than a gimmick of legitimation for sustaining their privileged monopoly of the press. By using the metaphors of ‘tickets and statutes, and standards’, symbolic of the Stationers’ trading monopoly, and by making the point that truth should not be treated as a monopolized commodity, Milton tries to turn the Stationers’ second argument for legitimation on its head. It is at this juncture that the crucial link between truth and the commercial metaphor is made so as to counter the Stationers’ second argument.

In fact, Milton does not deny the figuration of truth as a commodity itself. As has been indicated in the phrase ‘it [licencing] hinders and retards the importation of our richest Marchandize, Truth’ (II.548), Milton raises a question about the ways in which licensing obstructs free exchange and circulation of knowledge as a process of which truth is the end, just as the monopoly of the printing business by the Stationers hinders free trade and competition among stationers. Thus, the tropes of truth that are used in different ways in *Areopagitica* serve as a metaphor which in the first place incorporates his refutations to the Stationers’ defence of the licensing. Yet further, the tropes of truth both as a dismembered body and as a monopolized commodity function as a central

metaphor demonstrating how the Licensing Order prevents us from striving continually to attain to truth in process. The implication of the figuration of truth in *Areopagitica* is that behind Milton's strong opposition to the Stationers' arguments for licensing is a more shadowy critique of Parliament which exchanged its political interests with the Stationers' economic interests and which was therefore responsible for frustrating the advancement of knowledge and the quest for truth. What is at stake in *Areopagitica* is that Milton's criticism of Parliament is at work in an ambiguous and oblique way. This is evidence that Milton's *Areopagitica* is a political pamphlet written during his complicated rhetorical negotiation with the dominant power in an attempt to delegitimize its acts. What is telling in *Areopagitica* is that this rhetorical strategy continues to the last *peroratio* in his complex message of covert warning to, and skilful eulogy of, Parliament: 'to redresse willingly and speedily what hath bin err'd, and in highest authority to esteem a plain advertisement more then others have done a sumptuous bribe, is a vertue (honour'd Lords and Commons) answerable to Your highest actions, and whereof none can participat but greatest and wisest men' (II.570).

### **The Levellers, the Press and the Rhetoric of Freedom of Speech**

At the time when Milton was writing and publishing *Areopagitica*, the future Levellers were partaking in more transgressive activities in their challenges to the legitimacy of the Licensing Order imposed by the authority. According to H. R. Plomer, a printer William Larnier and a pamphlet writer Richard Overton were involved in operating clandestine presses called the Coleman Street Press, the Martin Mar-Priest Press, the Goodman's Fields Press and William Larnier's Press, in 1644-46. They also participated in printing the most radical unlicensed pamphlets of the time such as Walwyn's *The Compassionate Samaritane*, most of Lilburne's pamphlets and Overton's Martin Mar-

Priest pamphlets. In the process Larner and Overton were subject to suffering from the search for, and seizure of, printing materials and presses, the removal of secret presses from place to place to escape the constant surveillance of agents of the Stationers' Company (especially Joseph Huns Scot and his subordinates), and finally to arrest and imprisonment by the House of Lords in 1646.<sup>22</sup> While Larner and Overton were forced to undergo inevitable clashes with the authorities by operating the secret presses in defiance of Parliament's ban, Lilburne in 1645 went through something similar by publishing provocative pamphlets that brought him face to face with William Prynne, the spokesman of the Presbyterian faction. On 15 January 1645 Lilburne published *A Copie of a Letter, Written by John Lilburne Leut. Collonell. To Mr. William Prinne Esq.,* an aggressive pamphlet attacking Prynne's *Truth Triumphing over Falsehood, Antiquity over Novelty* (2 January 1645). Lilburne demanded Prynne's response in his pamphlet, but Prynne instead referred Lilburne's case to the Committee of Examinations of the House of Commons. In addition to this, Lilburne was summoned before the Committee twice more on charges of printing and publishing *Reasons of Lieu. Col. Lilbournes sending his Letter to Mr. Prin* (June 1645) and *The Copy of a Letter from Lieutenant Colonell John Lilburne to a friend* (written in July 1645 but collected by George Thomason in August 1645). Not only did a series of Lilburne's pamphlets come from illicit presses in violation of the parliamentary licensing act, but furthermore in *The Copy of a Letter ... to a friend* Lilburne gave a detailed account of his experience in the Committee of Examinations and complained about the unequal treatment of himself and the Presbyterians by Parliament. This finally led the House of Commons to make the decision that Lilburne should be sent to prison.<sup>23</sup>

This series of stories is very revealing, in the sense that they show how the expansion of the public sphere was not made without political and ideological struggle and how power was mediated, resisted and redefined in the public sphere in relation to the printing press and print matter. As Lilburne complains, power was partial in its

exercise, allowing the Presbyterians easy access to the press and blocking access to it to radical writers and printers. The way in which power worked to the conservative Presbyterians' advantage was certainly resisted in the transgressive use of the press and pamphlets by radical printers and writers. The future Levellers' questionings about the legitimacy of such a partial exercise of power were expressed as the exercise of their right to print, publish and circulate their own pamphlets on their own or by means of other unlawful presses. This transgressive use of the press and printing offers an insight into how they tried to redefine the relation between power and themselves and that between power and the press, as well as an insight into how they sought to redefine these relations in terms of the private subject's right, as Milton did in *Areopagitica*. Thus, the press and print production in the public sphere became the site of ideological contestation in which power was inscribed, resisted and redefined.

Another point that draws our attention in these stories is the future Leveller leaders' concern with the matter of the press and its use before the emergence of the Leveller movement proper. It is a well-known fact that the Levellers made strategic use of print as an ideological instrument indispensable to their movement.<sup>24</sup> Yet it is also true that little attention has been paid to the future Leveller leaders' shared interests in the question of freedom of the press and to their transgressive use of print and the press before the emergence of the organized Leveller movement. Walwyn, Lilburne and Overton not only showed their common interest in the issue of the parliamentary Licensing Act in 1644-45; but their shared experience of the transgressive use of print might have become an occasion for informing how print should be used for their future movement. In effect, it can be said that the period 1644-45 was a significant starting point in view of the relationship between their future Leveller movement and its use of print as an ideological instrument. In particular, the year 1645 was of crucial importance, since it was the period when not only did the three future Leveller leaders become mutually acquainted,<sup>25</sup> but they were all severally at the centre of the licensing

controversy due to their demand for freedom of speech, their challenge to authority and Prynne's hostile response to their unlicensed pamphlets.

In the context of the licensing controversy, it is particularly interesting to note that the rhetorical modes in the tracts by the three Levellers are in stark contrast with those in Milton's *Areopagitica*. This appears, above all, to have arisen from the difference of their political positions in their approach to the issue of licensing. As we have already seen, Milton conveys complex messages in *Areopagitica* in the strategic acuteness of negotiation with, and criticism of, Parliament, but the future Leveller leaders' rhetorical advocacy of freedom of speech is relatively direct and unambiguous. Furthermore, Milton keeps a critical distance from the sects in the circumstances of the so-called political coalition between Independents and sects,<sup>26</sup> but the three Levellers raise the question of freedom of opinion in their active defence of the liberty of conscience of the sects. Walwyn, for instance, makes it manifest in the title of the main body of *The Compassionate Samaritane* published probably in June or July 1644 – 'Liberty of Conscience Asserted, and the Separatist vindicated' – and he also announces it directly in the text:

I have endeavoured in this Discourse to make appeare by the best reason I have, that every man ought to have Liberty of Conscience of what Opinion soever, with the caution above named: In doing whereof, I have upon occasion removed all prejudices that the people have concerning the Separatist, and vindicated them from those false aspertious [sic] that are usually cast upon them to make them odious.<sup>27</sup>

Lilburne also shows a favourable attitude towards the sects in his pamphlet, *A Copie of A Letter, ... To Mr. William Prinne Esq.*, stating that 'a generation of men whom they falsely call Sectaryes ... have in the uprightnesse of their hearts without *Syedianlike* ends, ventred all they have in the world for the good of the *Parliament*, and the Common-wealth of England'.<sup>28</sup> Overton is no exception when in *The Araigement of Mr.*



*Persecution* (April, 1645) he honours the sects' commitment to the public good through the character of Mr Liberty-of-Subject who is a spokesman for his position: 'the *Anabaptists, Brownists, Independants, &c.* true and faithfull Subjects to the State, that stood to the *publike cause* ... I say, these more *noble spirited men* ... freely spend their lives, fortunes, and estates for the *Liberty of the Subject* ... from the most noble and rationall principle, *the Common Good* and not for *selfe respect*'.<sup>29</sup>

While the Levellers in the tracts declare this explicit support for the sects and their freedom of expression, they launch harsh assaults in chorus on the Presbyterians at once for suppressing the right of the sects to express their ideas and, by forcing Parliament to adopt the Licensing Order, for monopolizing the press for their factional interests. The Levellers, in these fierce attacks on the Presbyterians, proclaim that as freedom of the press is the people's right and privilege, the press should be open to all including the sects on equal terms. There seems little doubt that these outspoken voices, in their obvious antagonism towards the Presbyterians, employ determinedly more direct tones in their tracts, in contradistinction to *Areopagitica*'s complex messages and tones. In spite of the shared features in the Leveller tracts, however, they present a striking illustration of how each of the future Leveller leaders develops quite a different writing style when dealing with the same topic. With the different styles and rhetorical modes, they all attempt to argue for the legitimacy of the subject's right to freedom of speech in countering the illegitimacy of Parliament's Licensing Order and the Presbyterians' tyranny over the press.

Walwyn's *The Compassionate Samaritane* follows the mode of classical rhetoric at the level of its overall formal structure like that of Milton's *Areopagitica*. Together with the address to the House of Commons which is tantamount to an *exordium*, the main body of the tract conforms faithfully to the remaining five parts of the classical rhetorical model. In the tract Walwyn introduces his argument in *narratio* and then, in order, proceeds to its reasons, probable objections and his answers to the objections,



which constitute *divisio*, *confirmatio* and *refutatio*, mapping out the logical elements of the tract. The noteworthy point in the tract is that it has a series of divisions and sub-divisions composed of objections and answers. The issue of freedom of speech in the tract is largely dealt with in the address to the House of Commons, sub-divisions of his answers to objections and *peroratio*. The issue is often mentioned in the main body of Walwyn's text, but the address to Parliament, in fact, epitomizes his whole argument: the English people's right to freedom of speech; the 1643 Licensing Order as an unjust law suppressing the sectaries' writings; the Presbyterians as the masterminds of this suppression and their monopoly of the press; and Walwyn's appeal for the abolition of the law to the House of Commons.

Although Walwyn's tract develops his ideas of freedom of speech largely relying on the argumentative aspect of classical rhetoric, it does not entirely exclude figures of speech. Just as Milton in *Areopagitica* uses the combat image between truth and falsehood in the personification of truth, saying 'Let her and Falshood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the wors, in a free and open encounter' (II.561), so Walwyn also combines such personification and the fighting image in the logical discourse of his rhetoric:

Truth was uot [sic] used to feare, or to seeke shifts or stratagems for its advancement! I should rather thinke that they who are assured of her should desire that all mens mouthes should be open, that so errorr may discover its foulnes, and truth become more glorious by a victorious conquest after a fight in open field. (p. 94)

The gagging image, 'the most literal and visual image of censorship', which Lilburne used for the dramatic exposure of the 'whole machinery of state persecution' in *A Worke of the Beaste* (1638), is also in use in the tract, although it is not so vivid or theatrical as Lilburne's in the *Worke*.<sup>30</sup> This use of the images of truth and gagging reveals the extent to which figures of speech and images were circulated and exchanged in contemporary

political discourse. Yet, more important, they were used not for ‘the need for precisely the kind of imaginative and spiritual activity’,<sup>31</sup> but for the ideological end of enhancing the rhetorical power of their arguments against censorship and for freedom of speech. Despite the attempt to incorporate figurative devices into the model of classical rhetoric for such a purpose, Walwyn’s figuration is not so diverse as Milton’s and not so dynamic as Lilburne’s.

What is particularly remarkable in Walwyn’s rhetorical mode in *The Compassionate Samaritane* is the forthrightness with which he addresses his opinions to Parliament. Walwyn makes it apparent from the beginning that Parliament as a representative body elected by the people should be held accountable for the common good of the people as a whole:

*To You whom the People have chosen for the managing of their affaires, I present this necessary Treatise without boldnesse and without feare: for I am well assured, that as it is mine, and every mans duty, to to [sic] furnish You with what we conceive will advance the Common good, or bring ease or comfort to any sort of men that deserve well of their Countrey ... so likewise it is, Your duty, to beare and put in execution, whatsoever to Your judgments shall appeare conducing to those good ends and purposes. (p. 62)*

Whereas Milton sustains a deferential tone towards Parliament throughout *Areopagitica*, Walwyn’s pamphlet is straightforward in its tone. With such a tone, Walwyn reminds Parliament of its accountability for ‘preserving or regaining the safety or freedome of the people’ (p. 99), which includes the people’s freedom of expression. And whereas Milton appeals to both Houses of Parliament for revocation of the Licensing Order, Walwyn considers only the House of Commons as his addressee. It is evident that Walwyn’s firm idea of the House of Commons as effective democratic representation enabled him to proclaim its duty to secure the people’s right to opinions which would in the end contribute to promoting the public good. Even in the presupposition of the equal duty of

both people and Parliament in terms of the advancement of the common good, it is also true that there is in his tract a contradictory message in respect of Parliament, when he presents Parliament as ‘loving Fathers’ in his *peroratio*: ‘the Presse may be free for any man, that writes nothing scandalous or dangerous to the State. That so this Parliament may prove themselves loving Fathers to all sorts of good men, bearing equall respect to all, according to the trust reposed in them, and so inviting an equall affection and assistance from all’ (pp. 103-4). It cannot be denied that the figurative representation of Parliament as ‘loving Fathers’ is linked with a rhetorical strategy useful for persuading Parliament to repeal the Licensing Order. Nevertheless, it is seen as a mark of the clash between two contrasting meanings, between Parliament as democratic representation in a modern sense and Parliament as ‘loving Fathers’ in a more archaic sense. This oscillation seems to have been a common feature in the discursive terrain of the time, for as I shall try to show in chapter 3, it reemerges in the attempt of regicide apologists to legitimate the execution of the king and the establishment of the republic against the powerful metaphor of the king as ‘a loving Father’.

If Walwyn in *The Compassionate Samaritane* demands the people’s right to freedom of speech in a classical rhetorical mode, Lilburne in *A Copie of a Letter ... To Mr. William Prinne Esq.* deals with the same issue in the form of a public letter to Prynne. Lilburne’s mode of writing seems to have been widely used for political discourse at the time. The usage was often in accordance with the ideological circumstances of the pamphlet writers and the political positions with which they might have been associated. The discursive form was at times used to attack their adversaries, as in the case of Lilburne, or as a response to such attacks as in the case of an anonymous writer’s reply to Lilburne’s letter, *A Review of a certain Pamphlet Under the name of one John Lilburne* (April 1645). It was also used in attacking opponents and defending those who belonged to the same factions as in the case of a Presbyterian minister John Vicar’s letter attacking an Independent John Goodwin and defending his

fellow Prynne, *To His Reverend and Much Respected Good Friend, Mr. John Goodwin* (February 1645), or in defending themselves from their opponents' attacks as in the case of John Bastwick's letter, *A Just Defence of John Bastwick* (August 1645). Such various uses of a short and dense letter mode were based on users' factional inclinations, and they were effective in eliciting their adversaries' responses and appealing to the public.

In recalling that during the English Revolution numerous pamphlets were published anonymously, these epistolary pamphlets of a relatively short length tended to specify the names of writers and addressees, or at least the names of addressees, due to at least in part their generic nature. This explicit orientation towards specific addressees, particularly when used for the purpose of biting strictures on their factional stances, revealed a tendency to intensify dialogic conflict. These modes of writing which took into account specific addressees were in fact at the same time directed towards the wider readership. With this readership in mind, pamphlet writers were inclined to disgrace their adversaries in public, aiming at the dismantling of their images and arguments. Lilburne's letter, more than any other, sums up well these features of the discursive form.

*A Copie of a Letter, Written by John Lilburne Leut. Collonell. To Mr. William Prinne Esq.*, as its title hints, is a dramatic representation of his challenge to Prynne, which reflects an aspect of his dynamic personality as an aggressive activist.<sup>32</sup> If Walwyn and Overton touch on the issue of freedom of speech while concealing their identities, Lilburne prefers a dramatic characterization of his presence in dealing with the same issue. This rhetorical strategy is also evident in the first paragraph of the letter where he magnifies his image as a martyr: 'Sir, You and I have both been *Sufferers*, by the hands of the *Prelates*, the common [sic] and open Enemies of Christs Kingdome' (p. 181). In 1637 Lilburne involved himself in printing Bastwick's *The Letany of John Bastwick* in Holland and in distributing several thousand copies of them in England secretly. The illegal printing and distribution of Bastwick's pamphlet subjected him to whipping, pillorying and imprisonment by the Star Chamber in 1638, together with other

victims – Prynne, Bastwick, Burton and Leighton – who had the same or more serious experiences on account of their criticism of Laudian episcopal policy in 1637.<sup>33</sup> In his letter to Prynne, Lilburne from the outset highlights the fact that Prynne and he were the common victims and martyrs of former prelatial censorship.

There are different opinions among critics regarding this self-dramatization and self-representation in Lilburne's pamphlets. On the one hand, it is argued that 'Lilburne tries to turn the English State towards democracy on the improbable fulcrum of his own self-image', but on the other it is suggested that Lilburne's 'personalisation of issues, and symbolic gestures' in his writings 'should be seen as a complex part of interactions and negotiations by which religious radicals, discontented citizens, soldiers and women discovered political action'.<sup>34</sup> But I would suggest that Lilburne's self-dramatization in his letter should be seen as part of his polemical and rhetorical strategies for publicizing the legitimacy of his argument for freedom of speech by turning the reader's attention towards the fact of the suppression of the press by the Presbyterians. Lilburne's focus on his status as a common victim with Prynne transmits a resonance suggestive of how the Presbyterians took the place of bishops in controlling freedom of opinion with the Licensing Order of 1643 the severity of which was equal to that of 1637. By stirring up the memory of the underdog of the former licensing policy and by emphasizing the Presbyterians' continuity even in changed political circumstances, Lilburne seeks to show the injustice of the new Presbyterian repression.

Apart from this dramatic gesture of self-presentation, Lilburne's letter uses several rhetorical devices to great effect, one of which is metonymy. Lilburne employs the word 'Blacke-Coates' when he ascribes the control of the press to the machination of Prynne and Presbyterian ministers in the Assembly of Divines: 'you, and the *Blacke-Coates* in the *Synod*, have not dealt fairly with your Antagonists in stopping the *Presse* against us' (p. 182). Lilburne uses the term 'Blacke-Coates' referring to the garments of Presbyterian ministers to indicate the evil attributes of the Presbyterians in an extremely

derogatory sense, which is intentionally chosen by him to characterize the Presbyterian divines as the symbol of iniquitous tyranny over the press. Lilburne also employs a variety of rhetorical apparatuses to communicate the image of tyranny: ‘we are brought into *Egyptian* bonds in this and other particulars, by the *Blacke-Coates*, who I am affraid, will prove more cruell *Task-masters* then their dear fathers the *Bishops*’ (p. 182). Here, the metonymy of ‘*Blacke-Coates*’ and metaphors of ‘*Egyptian* bonds’ and ‘*Task-masters*’ conspire to inculcate in readers negative images of Presbyterian oppression; and the tropes also play a crucial role in making the readers suspicious of the legitimacy of the Presbyterian dominance of the press.

In contrast to his virulent attacks on the Presbyterians through figurative means, Lilburne does not take Parliament to task for controlling the press at this time. Rather, he assumes that Parliament deliberately threw open the door to freedom of the press at the time of its first meeting: ‘the Presse might be as open for us as for you, and as it was at the beginning of this *Parliament*, which I conceive the *Parliament* did of purpose’ (p. 182). As the primary objective of Lilburne’s letter was to attack Prynne, and, by extension, the faction to which Prynne gave strong support in his writings, the letter does not in fact exhibit Lilburne’s attitude and position towards Parliament in detail. But Lilburne expresses his dissatisfaction with the partiality of Parliament’s licensing practice in another letter, *The Copy of a Letter from Lieutenant Colonell John Lilburne to a friend*:

I think it is very strange, that the Parliament should suffer none but such books [books by Prynne and Bastwick] to come out by their owne Authority, and not to cause the Authour to produce the speakers or movers of such Sedition, but suffer them *cum privilegio*, in generall termes to come abroad, and then punish innocent men, for their just vindicating their reputations.<sup>35</sup>

Although Lilburne in this letter does lay open his discontent with Parliament’s unfair licensing, his tone is not so bitter or spiteful as it is in his rhetorical attacks on Prynne



and the Presbyterians. This rhetorical caution is sufficient evidence that, like Walwyn, Lilburne was envisioning Parliament, particularly the House of Commons, as a governing body responsible for the peoples' 'Liberties, which is their birth-right and inheritance' (sig. Cr) and as a target of negotiation in his demand for freedom of speech in early and mid-1645.

Lilburne's choice of the format of letters as his discursive form in his fierce attack on Prynne and the Presbyterians or in his cautious approach to Parliament is in contradistinction to Overton's rhetorical modes in *The Araignment of Mr. Persecution*, the first and the most famous of a series of seven Marpriest tracts written in 1645-46. Overton's tract has a semi-dramatic form with dramatic allegory and satirical ridicule in the tradition of the Elizabethan Martin Marprelate's tracts, and the tract's trial scene, as Margot Heinemann points out, 'is believed to have served as the model for Bunyan when he wrote the trial of Faithful in *Pilgrim's Progress*'.<sup>36</sup> In *The Araignment* Overton's rhetorical features regarding the licensing controversy are largely expressed in the title page and the epistle dedicatory, even though the licensing issue is sometimes treated in the main body.

What is initially noticeable to us in the tract is that Overton in the title page adopts the persona of 'Yongue MARTIN MAR-PREIST, Son to old MARTIN the Metropolitane' (p. 205). Overton's intentional choice of persona reveals both the continuity and discontinuity of the transgressive tradition of the Marprelate tracts against censorship. For while it is in continuity with the earlier tracts in writing against the dominant power's censorship, it is discontinuous with the tradition in that it registers Overton's awareness of the changed political circumstances of Presbyterian dominance and the related new reality of its censorship. To be more precise, if the Elizabethan Martin Marprelate was a symbol of resistance to the bishops' suppression of the press from the Presbyterian standpoint, the shift of power from bishops to Presbyterians has turned the old Presbyterian Martin into 'the Metropolitane', meaning 'archbishop'. The

term 'metropolitan' figuratively used by Overton with satirical intention is a symbolic epitome of the rise of the Presbyterians to power, but it is ironical that young Martin 'is presented as a chip off the old block'.<sup>37</sup> Overton's ironical presentation of the persona is a satirical response to the irony of Presbyterian tyranny over the press against the Independents and sectaries. This filial and ironic association with old Martin increases the effect of Overton's sarcastic attack on the Presbyterian hegemony over the press. The presence of young Martin reminds the reading public that the son of a symbolic figure of resistance to the prelatical dominion over the press can in turn emerge as a symbol of defiance in the face of his father's change of position.

Overton's strategy of discrediting the Presbyterians through the persona of young Martin carries on in '*The Epistle Dedicatorie*' of the tract which is dedicated ironically to his adversaries. In an epistle riddled with satire, derision and parody of the Presbyterians, Overton tries to show how dauntless young Martin is in attacking them: '*you will not muzzle the ox that treadeth out your corne*' (p. 208). The animal image of young Martin and the gagging image here form a network of meanings symbolizing his satirical mockery of the state of Presbyterian press censorship and the persona's discursive capacity to lay bare and destroy the unjust state.

The second thing to note in the tract's rhetorical mode is that Overton on the title page attempts to parody 'imprimatur', one of the public marks of Parliament's Licensing Order: 'This is Licenced, and printed according to Holy Order, but not Entered into the Stationers Monopole' (p. 205). According to the Licensing Order of 1643, all printed matter should have imprimaturs and also the names of printers and publishers in their title pages. Overton is not only parodying the imprimatur but further replaces the real identities of all these public marks necessary for licensing permission from the authorities with ones he fabricated: 'Printed by *MARTIN CLAW CLERGIE*, Printer to the *Reverend Assembly of Divines* and are to be should [sic] at his Shop in *Toleration Street*, at the *Signe of the Subjects Liberty*, right opposite to *Persecuting Court*. 1645' (p. 205).

That Overton made Martin Claw-Clergie printer to the Assembly of Divines, as Nigel Smith points out, is linked to Overton's intention of saying that 'the Assembly need such a printer to cure them of the Presbyterian malaise'.<sup>38</sup> This parody of all public marks from authority extends to 'a notice of appointment'<sup>39</sup> from Parliament in *The Epistle Dedicatorie* which might lead to direct mockery of the authority of Parliament itself. Overton's derision, inversion and parody of all the official marks of authority, in fact, leave the impression that he is fighting against the authority of Parliament. Overton's title page and the *Epistle Dedicatorie* register such an unsettled relation between him and Parliament, though he tries to conceal the tension which might occur in his discursive practice by saying in the postscript that 'whereas his Licence may seem to be an imitation of an Order of Parliament, it is only to shew the ostentation, pride, and vaine glory of the boasting Presbyters' (p. 256).

This final addition bears witness to the fact that Overton was also in a position to negotiate with Parliament in 1645, like Walwyn and Lilburne, in his intention to attack the Presbyterian influence on the Licensing Order and its monopoly over the press. What is particularly distinctive in Overton's rhetorical modes, however, is that unlike the other two Levellers, Overton makes the authoritative marks of the Licensing Order themselves an object of satirical and ironical derision in the way that he turns the marks of authority against themselves. By parodying such marks, Overton appears to undermine the necessary textual process of legitimation, but there is no denying that this is the crux of his textual and rhetorical strategy for expressing his opposition to the Licensing Order. This pivotal strategy in his tract does generate a necessary tension with the authority with which he wished to negotiate at the time, though he pretends otherwise in his final statement. Overton's parodical, ironical and derisive use of all public marks in his text, in effect, turns out to be his textual attack on the authority of Parliament's Licensing Order.

From a semantic perspective, Overton's textual practice can also be said to be of some pertinence to the doubleness of the term 'licence' and the clash between its implied meaning in Overton's context and another meaning from a parliamentary standpoint. The term 'Licence' in the context of Overton's final statement denotes 'Excessive liberty; abuse of freedom; disregard of law or propriety; an instance of this' (*OED* 3b). But when it relates to Overton's objective in his tract and his textual practice, in fact, the term signifies 'Liberty (to do something)' (*OED* 1a), that is, the liberty to express and print opinions unhampered by the restraint of authority's forceful stipulation, whatever modes are chosen to convey the opinions. The implied meaning in Overton's textual excess does collide with another meaning of the term referring to 'A formal, usually a printed or written permission from a constituted authority to do something, e.g. ... to print or publish a book' (*OED* 2a). Overton's textual practice registers such a semantic conflict between dissimilar references of the term.

The three Levellers thus show their own idiosyncratic writing styles, rhetorical modes and textual strategies in their tracts against the Licensing Order. In their unique discursive practices, it is particularly significant to note that they sought to endow 'theories of democratic representation'<sup>40</sup> and concepts of the subject's right with a new political legitimacy. There is no doubt that they tried to maintain a critical distance from Parliament in their rhetorical practices or statements in 1644-45, contrary to their fierce attacks on the Presbyterians. Nevertheless, we need to be alert to the fact that when they sought the legitimation of freedom of the press and speech on the presupposition of the two significant concepts, they were keen to remould the relationship between the dominant power and subjects in a new conceptual framework. When Parliament sought to hold on to the ways and meanings of an old order in the control of discourses, the Levellers, in calling them into question, came up with a new conceptual framework of the link between 'democratic representation' and the civil right of free speech. At this

point, the Levellers' discursive practices can be seen as exemplifying the character of what Bourdieu has called 'heretical discourse':

Heretical discourse must not only help to sever the adherence to the world of common sense by publicly proclaiming a break with the ordinary order, it must also produce a new common sense and integrate within it the previously tacit or repressed practices and experiences of an entire group, investing them with the legitimacy conferred by public expression and collective recognition. ... This dialectical process is accomplished, in the case of each of the agents concerned and, most of all, in the case of the person producing the heretical discourse, in and through the *labour of enunciation* which is necessary in order to externalize the inwardness, to name the unnamed and to give the beginnings of objectification to pre-verbal and pre-reflexive dispositions and ineffable and unobservable experiences, through words which by their nature make them common and communicable, therefore meaningful and socially sanctioned. It may also be accomplished in the labour of dramatization, particularly visible in exemplary prophecy, which alone is capable of destroying the self-evident truths of the doxa, and in the transgression which is indispensable in order to *name the unnamable*, to break the censorships, institutionalized or internalized, which prohibit the return of the repressed, and first of all in the heresiarch himself.<sup>41</sup>

By enunciating Parliament's responsibility to protect the people's right to express their ideas freely, and by proclaiming that the people's right to free expression should be fully recognized as existing outside any power's arbitrary intervention, they opened up a new semantic horizon which the English people had not yet experienced in its history. It is true that their rhetorical modes in the production of this heretical discourse at the time were not as bitter or violent as they were when dealing with the Presbyterians, but this should be properly understood as part of their rhetorical strategies of negotiation with Parliament. In the process of such negotiation with Parliament, the three future Leveller leaders questioned the legitimacy of Parliament's reintroduction of the traditional mode of controlling opinions. And, more important, they made manifest the duty of Parliament as democratic representation to ensure the people's right to freedom of the press and speech, in Bourdieu's terms, 'in and through the *labour of enunciation*'. This practice of

‘heretical discourse’ by the Levellers is indeed distinct from Milton’s discourse of negotiation with, and criticism of, Parliament. Milton did not make a direct link between Parliament as democratic representation and its duty to secure the people’s right to freedom of opinion, on the grounds that he was not ‘sympathetic to theories of democratic representation’<sup>42</sup> in 1644. Nevertheless, Milton’s discourse could also be assigned to the category of ‘heretical discourse’, in the sense that Milton proclaimed, in his own artful discursive ways, the illegitimacy of Parliament’s institutionalized censorship repeating the practices of an older order, so as to produce a new meaning of the press free from arbitrary power.

### **A War of Pamphlets and Words: Radical Writers vs Presbyterians**

While contemporary radical writers like Milton and the Levellers retained a complex negotiation with Parliament in the licensing controversy, they used almost the same voice in launching virulent attacks on the Presbyterians in the controversy. Their antagonism to the Presbyterians works through two separate but linked rhetorical strategies in general. First of all, they connect the Presbyterian control of the press with the pursuit of their private interests through the monopoly of knowledge. Milton in *Areopagitica* charges that the Presbyterian divine ‘shall now at home in his privat chair assume both these [the sole ordination and jurisdiction] over worthiest and excellent books and ablest authors that write them’ (II.540). Similarly, Walwyn in *The Compassionate Samaritane* warns that the Presbyterians would ‘get up into the Chaire and become to them instead of a Lord Bishop, a ruling Presbytery’ (p. 74) and thus ‘become masters of all discourses’ (p. 80). Their major criticism is that the press, whose original and first end is for the public, is being exploited by the Presbyterians for their private and factional interests. By highlighting through the common metaphor of ‘chair’



the private character of Presbyterian dominion over the press and its products, they try to delegitimize the rationale of the Presbyterians for controlling the press. More important, however, central to their discourse of delegitimation is recognition of the way in which the Presbyterians' dominion over the press is linked to their ideological monopoly and use of knowledge. For Milton and the Levellers, the Presbyterians are conceived as a religious and political force whose goal of control of the press is to strengthen the traditional social order by means of control of knowledge and discourse. In that sense, for them, the Presbyterians are nothing better than the bishops in Caroline politics.

Accordingly, their second antagonistic rhetoric is concerned with their emphasis on how the Presbyterians are no different from the bishops in nature and name, or indeed are worse than the bishops in their ideological maneuverings over the press. Milton's strategy is to identify the Presbyterians with the bishops: 'Bishops and Presbyters are the same to us both name and thing' (II.539). Milton's strategy of identification is nothing totally new to us, when we recall that in *Of Prelaticall Episcopacy* he had already uttered similar words in order to censure the bishops' justification of the episcopal order: there is no 'difference between a Bishop, and a Presbyter, save that they be two names to signify the same order' (CPW, I.625). If Milton's voicing of the words in *Of Prelaticall Episcopacy* was both to refute the bishops' arguments for legitimating episcopacy and to support a Presbyterian form of church government and discipline, Milton's use of the words in *Areopagitica* serves quite the opposite purpose, accusing the Presbyterians of suppressing the press. In their attack on the Presbyterians, the Levellers are more belligerent than Milton, for they not merely associate the Presbyterians with the bishops negatively, but further present a hyperbolic picture of the Presbyterians as divines more malevolent than the bishops in their oppressive nature. Lilburne's statement in his letter to Prynne that the Presbyterians are 'more cruell *Task-masters* then their dear fathers the *Bishops*' (p. 182) is shared by the other two Levellers: Walwyn in *The Compassionate Samaritane* rails against the Presbyterians as 'a ruling Presbytery, which they feare will

bring in more rigidnesse and austerity, no lesse ambition and domination then the former' (p. 74), and Overton in *The Araignment of Mr. Persecution* remarks in a more hyperbolic gesture that 'a Presbyter shall be seaven times worse then a Bishop, for it is intended, he shall be more feerce and cruell then his fe'lowes' (p. 251).

Despite the similarities between Milton and the Levellers in these anti-Presbyterian rhetorics, Milton's *Areopagitica* and Walwyn's *The Compassionate Samaritane* based on the modes of classical rhetoric seem to have been less effective, given the fact that their tracts appear to have gone unnoticed. In contrast, it was Lilburne and Overton who elicited immediate responses from the Presbyterians in the licensing controversy.<sup>43</sup> Lilburne's *A Copie of a Letter ... To Mr. William Prinne Esq.* provoked a response from an anonymous writer in *A Review of a certain Pamphlet Under the name of John Lilburne*, not from Prynne as Lilburne expected. Instead, Prynne was referring Lilburne's case to the Committee of Examinations, which prompted Lilburne to publish *The Reasons of Lieu. Col. Lilbournes sending his Letter to Mr. Prin.* While Lilburne's attacks and the Presbyterians' counter-attacks were in progress, Overton published a series of four pamphlets over a period of three months attacking the Presbyterians: *The Araignment of Mr. Persecution* (April 1645), *A Sacred Decretall* (May 1645), *Martin Eccho* (June 1645) and *The Nativity of Sir John Presbyter* (June 1645). Lilburne and Overton's fierce attacks on the Presbyterians in general and Prynne in particular finally infuriated Prynne and spurred him on to write *A Fresh Discovery of Some Prodigious New Wandering-Blasing-Stars, & Firebrands* (July 1645), which occasioned an immediate response from Lilburne in *The Copy of a Letter from Lieutenant Colonell John Lilburne to a friend.*

This chain of pamphlets between the two Levellers and the Presbyterians is an exemplary indication of the countless pamphlet wars waged between conflicting forces during the English Revolution. But it also elucidates certain linguistic and rhetorical features of antagonistic dialogue in the specific context of the licensing controversy of

1645. We have seen that Lilburne's aggressive and militant rhetoric, heavily dependent upon diverse tropes and images, and Overton's satirical and derisive rhetoric in the semi-dramatic mode of *The Araigement of Mr. Persecution*, gave a vivid negative representation of the Presbyterians, and of the severity of Presbyterian tyranny over the press in particular. If this typifies the anti-Presbyterian rhetoric of Lilburne and Overton in the licensing controversy, Prynne's antagonistic rhetoric against the two Levellers as well as other radical writers focuses on his sanction of secular authority and the radical writers' transgression against that authority.

Prynne's *A Fresh Discovery of Some Prodigious New Wandering-Blasing-Stars, & Firebrands*, a form of section-by-section refutation, makes effective use of the two characteristics of his rhetoric. In particular, the tract's title page and epistle dedicatory, 'To the *High and Honourable* court of PARLIAMENT', exemplify the ways in which he uses the two characteristics as an important part of his rhetorical strategy. On its title page Prynne's tract emphatically reveals that it is within the regulations of law and authority by orchestrating the public marks of the Licensing Order: 'Published for the Common good by WILLIAM PRYNNE of Lincolns Inne, Esquire. ... London. Printed by *John Macock*, for *Michael Spark* senior, at the sign of the blue Bible in *Green Arbour*. 1645'. In contrast, the title page aggressively underscores the transgressive character of his adversaries' pamphlets, fulminating against 'most *Libellous, Scandalous, Seditious, Insolent, Uncharitable*, (and some *Blasphemous*) *Passages*; published in late *Unlicensed Printed Pamphlets*, against the Ecclesiasticall *Jurisdiction* and *Power* of *Parliaments*'.<sup>44</sup> Prynne in the epistle dedicatory to Parliament also seeks to win legitimacy for his arguments by highlighting his status as a defender of 'all publike *Order, Government, Authority*' (sig. Ar), but the epistle dedicatory is more clearly focused on attacking his adversaries' transgression against the authority of Parliament:

Certainly these seditious privy Covenants, Libels, Speeches, compared with the ensuing Sections, Letters, discover and portend no lesse then a strong conspiracy among some *Anabaptisticall Sectaries* to oppose the Power, Ordinances and Proceedings of Parliament, to extirpate all other Governments but their own, and to set it up by the sword, or popular commotions in despite of your Authority. And is it not then high time for your Honours, with all other well-affected Persons to look about you? to Vindicate your own *Power, Honour, Justice*, against these most seditious, audacious, contemptuous Libellers against your Sovereign Authority, your most Religious Ordinances [.] (sig. A2r)

Here, one of Prynne's antagonistic rhetorical strategies is that he is trying to entangle all radical writers transgressing against the Licensing Order with '*Anabaptisticall Sectaries*'. Anabaptists refused all the formal rites and procedures of a national church including an infant baptism, payment of tithes, and, at times, national obligations such as military service. Accordingly, as Christopher Hill points out, 'the name came to be used in a general pejorative sense to describe those who were believed to oppose the existing social and political order'.<sup>45</sup> In so far as the Levellers argued for freedom of the press and speech, they gave support to the sects, but they were not religious sectaries, nor did they have any intention of completely ignoring all authority of Parliament and its ordinances. Nonetheless, by associating the radical writers with the derogatory name 'Anabaptists', Prynne brands their practices and writings against press censorship as a disavowal of all legal procedures of civil government. Furthermore, Prynne tries to connect the radical writers' disregard for the Licensing Order with a conspiracy theory: that is, the Levellers' resistance to censorship is incriminated as a rebellious move towards the subversion of the present government and the establishment of a new one. Prynne's inflated rhetoric at this point has an evident ideological motive and purpose: his rhetoric does not simply reflect the given circumstances but serves as a means for promoting a factional interest on behalf of the Presbyterians. Prynne conceives of the press as an important instrument by which the Presbyterians can bring the public under control at the service of the constitution of a new hierarchical order of Presbyterian

dominance. From that perspective, the Levellers' demand for a free press is seen by Prynne as a challenge to the social and factional interests they are trying to establish in English society; and his rhetoric faithfully performs the ideological function of launching a counter-attack on such adversaries speaking against the constitution of Presbyterian social interests.

Prynne's counter-attack begins in earnest with that on Lilburne in section 1 of his main text, calling him 'the Ringleader of this Regiment of New-Firebrands' (p. 3) and accusing him of publishing *A Copie of a Letter ... To Mr. William Prinne Esq.* 'without license' and 'contrary to the Ordinance of both Houses, restraining the printing or dispersing of unlicensed, libellous, & seditious Pamphlets' (p. 3). Prynne's stress on the unlicensed, transgressive state of Lilburne's pamphlet, which forms a crucial part of his antagonistic strategies in his main text as well as in his title page and epistle dedicatory, is combined with a new textual strategy in section 2. In section 2, Prynne quotes specific parts of Lilburne's pamphlet and refutes some of them in the marginalia, a strategy similarly applied to Overton's *The Araignment of Mr. Persecution* and *A Sacred Decretall*. Prynne's quotations from the texts of Lilburne and Overton are selective; he takes exemplary instances of Lilburne's venomous attacks on the Presbyterian control of the press and Overton's ridicule of the Licensing Order. These serve to highlight the alleged libelous and transgressive character of Lilburne's and Overton's pamphlets.

In Prynne's marginal notes the complex processes of confutation, reapplication, inversion, transformation and distortion of the two Levellers' words and meanings unfold vividly. In response to Lilburne's words, '(b) you and the *Black-coats* in the Synod, have not dealt fairly with your *Antagonists*, in stopping the Presse against us' (p. 7),<sup>46</sup> Prynne attempts a refutation, saying 'b Neither I nor the black-coats, but the Parliament, were the sole Authors of these Ordinances' (p. 7). He embarks on the same sort of refutation of Overton's *A Sacred Decretall*: 'k It was a Parliamentary Ordinance of both Houses not made by Presbyterians' (p. 10).<sup>47</sup> Prynne's repeated statements about

Parliament's responsibility for the enactment of the Licensing Order are true as such, but they could be untrue when taking into consideration the law's passage under the strong influence of the Presbyterian faction within Parliament. Thus, the recurrent statements are seen as Prynne's rhetorical strategy for frustrating the two Levellers' efforts to negotiate with Parliament by emphasizing that Parliament is at the centre of the law's enactment and practice.

In his letter to Prynne, Lilburne demands that Parliament should '*punish that man (\* whatsoever he be) that shall abuse his Penne*' (p. 7). The words in Lilburne's context used to ask Parliament for the punishment of Prynne are, in turn, reapplied against Lilburne in the new context of Prynne's marginalia: '\* And therefore you who have abused your pen, as much as any man' (p. 7). Here Lilburne's words are oriented towards Lilburne himself through Prynne's shrewd reapplication of them. Prynne also uses the method of inverting Lilburne's original meaning through a minor modification of one word. For instance, when Lilburne designates himself and the sectaries as '*(c) wel-affected to the Parliament*' (p. 8), Prynne's alteration of the word 'well' to 'ill' inverts the meaning of the phrase as a whole: '*c You would say illaffected, as your Libels against their power, Ordinances, and proceedings evidence*' (p. 8). All these methods of Prynne's antagonistic rhetoric are applied to Overton's texts in a similar fashion, and it is also interesting to note the way in which Prynne distorts Overton's intention of arguing for freedom of the press. Overton asserts in *The Araignment of Mr. Persecution* that those who suffered under Presbyterian persecution '*sought to authority to (i) open the Presse, and still the Presbyters (as the custome is) were in the way*' (p. 10). In return, Prynne answers that there is no other reason in their call for freedom of the press than only '*seditions Libels, scurrility, blasphemy*' (p. 10). By incriminating those in favour of a free press, Prynne does not scruple to distort the commitment of Overton and the sectaries to equal and free access to the press. A variety of these rhetorical and textual modes against Lilburne and Overton demonstrate that Prynne is a



Presbyterian spokesman equal to the two Levellers in his polemical capacity. With such a capacity, Prynne at times displays the texts of Lilburne and Overton without any changes with a view to making them objectionable in the reader's eyes, but most of the time he excels in transforming the words of the Levellers into the meanings which fit his context.

Prynne's refutation of Lilburne and Overton illustrates the fact that the pamphlet war in the licensing controversy was represented as a war of words, but the controversy was also a war about words between the radical writers and the Presbyterians. Lilburne in his letter condemns Prynne for using 'bitter and unsavoury Language against the poore Saints of God' (p. 182). In response to this, an anonymous Presbyterian in his pamphlet, *A Review of a certain Pamphlet Under the name of one John Lilburne*, in turn attacks Lilburne's use of virulent language, and the style of his writing and of his argument, targeting Lilburne's words as 'bare affirmation', 'bare word' and 'beating of the ayre, strife about words, contention without a ground'.<sup>48</sup> The licensing controversy, as in the verbal encounter between Milton and the confuter in the episcopacy controversy, was concerned with 'the proper use of language' and, as Joad Raymond points out, 'On paper the war could be fought over the questions of style'.<sup>49</sup> The disputes over style and attacks on improper use of language on both sides of the controversy could be understood as a common strategy used to discredit the legitimacy of the adversaries' arguments.

The war of words regarding the licensing controversy involves hostile exchanges of words and meanings. As regards Lilburne's argument for freedom of the press and speech in his letter to Prynne, the anonymous writer's antagonistic assertion is that 'might everyone speak in publique what the madnesse of his brain and his deluded phansie leads him to, there would be no end of strife, but a world of confusion' (p. 2). While the Presbyterian writer articulates the division and conflict which might happen by opening up the press to the public, Lilburne ascribes the cause of such division to the

Presbyterians in the pamphlet, *The Reasons of Lieu. Col. Lilbournes sending his Letter to Mr. Prin*: ‘In dividing the affections of those that formerly were one, till such bitter dividing spirits as his kindled a blazing fire of discord and dissension amongst us’.<sup>50</sup> The anonymous writer exaggerates and inflates the meaning of division to legitimate Presbyterian dominion over the press; and in return Lilburne uses the meaning to attack his adversaries in general and Prynne in particular. To underscore the sense of such division as Prynne and the Presbyterians brought about and to increase the effect and emotional appeal of the meaning, Lilburne makes effective use of the metaphor, ‘a blazing fire’. The trope of ‘a blazing fire’, used to attack his adversaries, is taken by Prynne from its context in Lilburne’s work, and in turn is used in the title, *A Fresh Discovery of Some Prodigious New Wandering-Blasing-Stars, & Firebrands*, to attack radical writers including Lilburne and Overton. Of course, Prynne’s pamphlet does not feature a simple, direct adoption of Lilburne’s words. In the confrontation of the pamphlet war, Prynne instead incorporates the trope into his discourse, and then redirects it away from himself and his faction and towards his adversaries.

As with numerous pamphlet wars during the English revolutionary period, the licensing controversy also showed that ideological differences were represented as antagonistic rhetorics and disputes of words and about words. Different positions between radical writers who were in favour of a free press and conservative Presbyterians who were in opposition to it sought different justification for their arguments, which gave birth to diverse modes of antagonistic rhetoric in accordance with the various rhetorical strategies of the writers involved. It should be noted here that rhetorical schemes for the two conflicting forces were oriented primarily towards contrasting functions. For radical writers such as Milton and the Levellers, the rhetorical designs were principally linked up with the function of delegitimation, aiming at criticism of the monopolistic and factional use of the press by the Presbyterians; on the contrary, for the Presbyterians, they were oriented toward the function of legitimating

the dominance of Presbyterian interests. In the process of legitimation and delegitimation, words were an object of bitter recrimination and were entangled in dialogic struggle.

Milton's *Areopagitica* appears, in a sense, to have been detached from the bitter process of condemnations and exchanges of words in the licensing controversy. His seeming detachment from these contemporary disputes in *Areopagitica* was due, not to his indifference to factional position, but to his rhetorical strategies and modes deriving from his consideration of the object of his address and its related orchestration of the genres and forms of classical rhetoric. The main concern of Milton's *Areopagitica* was with the issue of the Licensing Order the legislation and practice of which were exercised in the bonds of interest between Parliament and the Stationers' Company rather than with blame for the Presbyterian impact upon press control. This main concern and its concomitant shrewd deployment of classical rhetorical modes made it possible for him, unlike Lilburne and Overton, to evade direct confrontation with the Presbyterians. In spite of the absence of direct confrontation, Milton's *Areopagitica* reveals an acute political perception of the ideological maneuverings of the dominant power and conservative forces surrounding press control. The significance of the tract, above all, can be found in Milton's complex rhetorical strategies and the modes chosen to delegitimize such ideological maneuverings. This function of delegitimation in Milton's rhetoric, as we shall see in chapter 3, turns into its opposite when he is in a position to defend Charles's execution and the English republic in the regicide controversy. The final victory of the Independents with whom he had identified himself required a radical change in rhetorical strategies and modes. In chapter 3 I shall discuss the changes in his rhetoric in comparison with other regicide writings as well as the salient features of the dialogic conflict between Royalists and regicide apologists.

## Notes

1. Norbrook, *WER*, p. 125.
2. John Illo, 'Areopagitic Mythic and Real', *Prose Studies* 11 (1988), 21.
3. Christopher Kendrick, *Milton: a study in ideology and form* (New York and London, 1986), pp. 21, 23, 29, and see also chap. 2.
4. Lana Cable, *Carnal Rhetoric: Milton's Iconoclasm and the Poetics of Desire* (Durham and London, 1995), chap. 4.
5. William Kolbrener, "'Plainly Partial": The Liberal *Areopagitica*', *ELH* 60 (1993), 60. Kolbrener's essay is reprinted in chapter 1 of his *Milton's Warring Angels: A Study of Critical Engagements* (Cambridge, 1997).
6. *Ibid.*; Norbrook, *WER*, chap. 3, and also *idem*, 'Areopagitica, Censorship, and the Early Modern Public Sphere', in Richard Burt, ed. *The Administration of Aesthetics: Censorship, Political Criticism, and the Public Sphere* (Minneapolis and London, 1994), pp. 3-33.
7. Fredrick S. Siebert, *Freedom of the Press in England 1474-1776* (Urbana, 1952), p. 166. On the relation between Parliament and the Stationers' Company during the period 1640-43, *idem*, chap. 8; on Parliament's attitude to the press during the period, *idem*, chap. 9. William M. Clyde, *The Struggle for the Freedom of the Press from Caxton to Cromwell* (London and Edinburgh, 1934), chap. 2. Christopher Hill, 'Censorship and English Literature', in *The Collected Essays of Christopher Hill, vol. I: Writing and Revolution in Seventeenth-Century England* (Brighton, 1985), p. 50. N. H. Keeble, *The Literary Culture of Nonconformity in Later Seventeenth-Century England* (Leicester, 1987), pp. 95-6. William Haller, *Liberty and Reformation in the Puritan Revolution* (New York, 1955), pp. 134-35.
8. Michael Wilding, 'Milton's *Areopagitica*: Liberty for the Sects', in Thomas N. Corns, ed. *The Literature of Controversy: Polemical Strategy from Milton to Junius* (London, 1987), p. 7.
9. *The Licensing Order of 1643*, reproduced in Appendix B, in Ernest Sirluck, ed. *CPW*, II, p. 796.
10. For a detailed account of the toleration controversy, see 'Introduction', in Ernest Sirluck, ed. *CPW*, II, and also Haller, *Liberty and Reformation in the Puritan Revolution*, chap. 5.
11. Norbrook, 'Areopagitica, Censorship, and the Early Modern Public Sphere', p. 7. Norbrook argues that 'there was a significant expansion in the public sphere, especially from the 1620s onwards' and 'there was a continuous political struggle to open up or to restrict its emergence' (p. 7). And yet he only mentions as its examples the repression of newsbooks by the republic and by Cromwell, and he does not show the extent of political and linguistic struggle surrounding its expansion and restriction.
12. Norbrook, *WER*, p. 130. Critics express different stances on Milton's attitudes towards Parliament at the time. Whereas Norbrook and Loewenstein emphasize Milton's belief in Parliament as a driving force of revolutionary change, Patterson argues that Milton was already disillusioned with the Long Parliament in 1644. In contrast with these critics, Wittreich Jr. tries to pay more attention to Milton's equivocal and ironical attitudes towards Parliament, but his estimation of the matter tends to disregard the context of Milton's intervention in the licensing controversy and the process of Milton's criticism and negotiation with Parliament through his rhetoric as I try to demonstrate in this chapter. See Norbrook, *WER*, pp. 130-31; Loewenstein, *Milton and the Drama of History*, chap. 2, esp. pp. 36-40; Annabel Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1984), p. 112; Joseph Anthony Wittreich Jr., 'Milton's *Areopagitica*: Its Isocratic and Ironic Contexts', *MS* 4 (1972), 103-5.
13. On the relationship between *Areopagitica* and Isocratic oration, see Wittreich Jr., 101-15; Paul M. Dowling, 'Areopagitica and Areopagiticus: The Significance of the Isocratic Precedent', *MS* 21 (1985), 49-69; Nigel Smith, 'Areopagitica: voicing context, 1643-45', in David Loewenstein and James Gratham Turner, eds. *Politics, poetics, and hermeneutics in Milton's Prose* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 106.
14. For a detailed account of *Areopagitica*'s rhetorical structure, see Wilbur Elwyn Gilman, *Milton's Rhetoric: Studies in His Defense of Liberty* (Columbia, 1939), chap. 1.

15. Pierre Bourdieu, chap. 6, 'Censorship and the Imposition of Form', in John B. Thompson, ed. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson, trans. *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 139.
16. *Ibid.*, chap 1. 'The Production and Reproduction of Legitimate Language', p. 58.
17. David Aers and Gunther Kress, 'Historical Process, Individual and Communities in Milton's Early Prose', in Francis Barker *et al.*, eds. *1642: Literature and Power in the Seventeenth Century* (Colchester, Essex, 1981), p. 296.
18. Mary Ann McGrail, 'Milton and Political Correctness', *Diacritics* 27 (1997), 102.
19. On the evidence of Milton's acquaintance with the Stationers' petition, see Blair Hoxby, 'The Trade of Truth Advanced: *Areopagitica*, Economic Discourse, and Libertarian Reform', *MS* 36 (1998), 186-88.
20. *To the High Court of Parliament: The Humble Remonstrance of the Company of Stationers* (April 1643; E 247 (23)), sig. [A1v].
21. Norbrook, 'Areopagitica, Censorship, and the Early Modern Public Sphere', p. 23.
22. For a detailed account of operations of illicit presses and print productions by Larner and Overton and their clash with the authorities, see H. R. Plomer, 'Secret Printing during the Civil War', *The Library* 5 (1904), 374-403.
23. On Lilburne's confrontation with Prynne and the authorities, see William M. Clyde, 'Parliament and the Press. II', *The Library* 14, 4th series (1934), 41-2; Pauline Gregg, *Free-born John: A Biography of John Lilburne* (London, 1961), pp. 115-22; Joseph Frank, *The Levellers: A History of the Writings of Three Seventeenth-Century Social Democrats: John Lilburne, Richard Overton, William Walwyn* (New York, 1969), pp. 45-6, 55-8.
24. For elaborate research on this matter, see Smith, *LR*, chap. 4.
25. Andrew Sharp, 'Introduction: the English Levellers, 1645-1649', in *idem*, ed. *The English Levellers: Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought* (Cambridge, 1998), viii.
26. While Michael Wilding argues that Milton's *Areopagitica* is a document defending the liberty of the sects and that it should be read in terms of Milton's defence for the working class, it seems to me that his estimation of Milton class-consciousness is rather far-fetched. Instead, I would suggest that Milton's defence for the liberty of expression of the sects is one raised to support anti-Presbyterian forces in the coalition between the Independents and the sects, rather than stemming from his strong belief in the sects' opinions. See Wilding, 'Milton's *Areopagitica*', pp. 7-38.
27. William Walwyn, *The Compassionate Samaritane* (January 1645), in William Haller, ed. *Tracts on Liberty in the Puritan Revolution 1638-1647*, vol. III (New York, 1934), p. 67. This text is the second edition of Walwyn's tract, and its first edition appeared, probably in June or July 1644. See Haller, p. 59.
28. John Lilburne, *A Copie of A Letter, Written by John Lilburne Leut. Collonell. To Mr. William Prinne Esq.* (January 1645), in Haller, ed. *idem*, p. 182.
29. Richard Overton, *The Araigement of Mr. Persecution* (April 1645), in Haller, ed. *idem*, pp. 241-42.
30. Smith, *LR*, p. 132.
31. Cable, *Carnal Rhetoric*, p. 133.
32. For the relationship between Lilburne's character and his writing style, see H. N. Brailsford, *The Levellers and the English Revolution*, ed. Christopher Hill (London, 1961), pp. 73-6.
33. On Lilburne's intimate relationship with Bastwick, his involvement in the publication, smuggling, and distribution of Bastwick's *Letany* and finally his arrest and imprisonment, see Frank, *The Levellers*, pp. 14-6. See also Smith, *LR*, p. 132.
34. Corns, *UV*, p. 146; Smith, *LR*, p. 135.
35. Lilburne, *The Copy of a Letter from Lieutenant Colonell John Lilburne to a friend* (July 1645; E 296 (5)), p. 13.
36. Margot Heinemann, *Puritanism and Theatre: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama under the Early Stuarts* (Cambridge, 1980), p. 251. For the characteristic of Overton's tract in the tradition of the Marprelate tracts, see Christopher Hill, chap. 3, 'From Marprelate to the Levellers', in *The Collected Essays of Christopher Hill, vol. I*, pp. 75-95, esp. pp. 84-5; see also Smith, *LR*, pp. 297-302. For an elaborate account of the series of Overton's Marpriest tracts with particular focus on his

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writing style, see Nigel Smith, 'Richard Overton's Marpriest Tracts: Towards a History of Leveller Style', in Thomas N. Corns, ed. *The Literature of Controversy: Polemical Strategy from Milton to Junius* (London, 1987), pp. 39-66.

37. Smith, 'Richard Overton's Marpriest Tracts', p. 45.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 58.
39. *Ibid.*
40. Norbrook, *WER*, p. 129.
41. Bourdieu, chap. 5, 'Description and Prescription', in *Language and Symbolic Power*, p. 129.
42. Norbrook, *WER*, p. 129.
43. For *Areopagitica's* ineffectiveness and the impact of the tracts by Lilburne and Overton on the contemporary licensing controversy, see Haller, *Liberty and Reformation in the Puritan Revolution*, p. 187.
44. William Prynne, *A Fresh Discovery of Some Prodigious New Wandering-Blasing-Stars, & Firebrands* (July 1645; E 261 (5)), no pagination.
45. Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas during the English Revolution* (London, 1972), p. 26.
46. Since Prynne quotes the texts of Lilburne and Overton without changes except when he adds alphabet letters or asterisks in the points of his refutations, I follow Prynne's page numbers when quoting the texts of Lilburne and Overton.
47. Its original page number is 9.
48. Anon., *A Review of a certain Pamphlet Under the name of one John Lilburne* (April 1645; E 278 (4)), pp. 1, 2, 4.
49. Joad Raymond, *The Invention of the Newspaper: English Newsbooks 1641-1649* (Oxford, 1996), p. 225.
50. John Lilburne, *The Reasons of Lieu. Col. Lilbournes sending his Letter to Mr. Prin* (June 1645; E 288 (12)), p. 7.



## Chapter Three: The Regicide Controversy, 1649

### Rhetorical Modes and Strategies of Legitimation in Regicide Writing

On 30 January 1649, King Charles was executed in front of the Banqueting Hall in Whitehall by the Independents, ‘a tactical alliance between military commanders and convinced radicals’.<sup>1</sup> The unprecedented event of the execution of the king was carried on in a swift and expeditious way. The process leading to the event took the form of open trial and execution, and John Bradshaw, Lord President of the High Court of Justice, announced ‘in the name of the People of *England*’<sup>2</sup> the legitimacy and authority of the court that Charles would not recognize. Nonetheless, the act of regicide was not carried out as part of a unified programme of the Independents, nor did it get the people’s enthusiastic support. Besides, the political situation of the first half of 1649 was being influenced by the repercussion of Pride’s Purge on 6 December 1648 – a military coup in which the Army purged more than 200 parliamentarians, mostly those Presbyterians who wanted to conduct negotiations with Charles – and by such radical constitutional changes as the abolition of the monarchy and the House of Lords, and the establishment of the English republic in May 1649. However revolutionary all these events were, they were never pushed forward on the basis of a coherent revolutionary ideology or programme, the Independents being rather conservative as a revolutionary force. As Derek Hirst has pointed out, ‘the men who ruled were still gentlemen, albeit somewhat poorer than those they replaced; and they conspicuously lacked a revolutionary ideology’.<sup>3</sup>

Along with this, Pride’s Purge and the regicide made it more difficult for the Independents’ political actions to gain legitimacy when they did not gain support from any of the major political forces, the Presbyterians, the Levellers and the Royalists.<sup>4</sup> The

Independents' complete divorce from the other political groupings made their political position vulnerable and insecure: they were the enemies of all other factions. To the Presbyterians, Pride's Purge and the regicide were seen as overriding the legal and executive apparatus of Parliament and overturning the traditional authority which they had expected to establish in a mixed government of Parliament and king. To the Levellers, they were seen as 'consolidating the army grandees' arbitrary power'<sup>5</sup> and therefore as shattering their hopes of a democratic reform at a political, economic and religious level, that is, of the extension of male franchise, the abolition of trading monopolies, the prohibition of tithes and the granting of complete religious freedom.<sup>6</sup> To the Royalists, they were seen as depriving them of the vested interests they had enjoyed under the rule of Charles I and as instituting a new tyranny untrammelled by consideration for the fundamental laws of England.

In the circumstances of the absence of popular support and the Independents' ideological lameness and political isolation, the top priority of the Independents was to secure the legitimacy of their political actions, and of the act of regicide in particular. For them, legitimation was imperative to sustain their survival and propagate their cause to the political nation. Since the act of regicide had become an immediate occasion for isolating the Independents from the political nation, it does not come as a surprise that they had an urgent need to seek its legitimation from those who might defend it. Soon after the regicide, they were able to gain support in print from such diverse writers as John Cook, John Milton and John Canne. Writings by these three writers require more attention than other pamphlets published in the first half of 1649, for they provide a compelling illustration of the characteristic rhetorical modes and strategies of legitimation in regicide writings. The tracts speak for similar political purposes, but they retain distinctive rhetorical genres and polemical forms. In crystallizing the ways in which different rhetorical modes are used for the common purpose of legitimation, the

three writers seek to persuade the vacillating political nation to endorse the Independents' actions.

The first noticeable Independent treatise after the king's execution came from John Cook, who had taken a leading part in the regicide as Solicitor-General of the High Court of Justice. Cook's *King Charls his Case; or, an Appeal to all Rational Men concerning his Trial* ([9 February] 1649), which had originally been intended as part of Cook's prosecution against Charles I in the High Court, but whose presentation in the court had been prevented by Charles's refusal of the authority of the Court, is a compelling document which shows Cook's distinctive rhetorical modes when pleading for the legitimacy of Charles's trial and execution. Cook's tract takes forensic form and uses the six-part structure of classical rhetoric. As is required in the forensic genre, Cook in the tract accuses Charles of injustice and tyranny exercised during the periods of his reign and the Civil War, and in so doing he tries to prove how rightful it is to punish the unjust and tyrannous king; and his text is structured in a method designed to prove the argument using mainly *narratio*, *confirmatio* and *refutatio* among the six parts of classical rhetoric. Yet the three parts, which constitute the core of his legal argument, are not totally focused on the criminal charges against Charles and events during his reign and the Civil War; for while Cook in *confirmatio* and *refutatio* presents the concrete evidence of a legal case against Charles, ranging from his personal rule to his responsibility for the Civil War, in *narratio* he deals with the wider general issues such as the relationship between law and kings and the principle of popular sovereignty.

Elizabeth Skerpan generally offers a negative estimation of Cook's use of forensic rhetoric in *King Charles his Case*: 'Cook's rhetoric reveals the limits of the forensic rhetoric. As a court case, his presentation may have been effective, but readers outside the strictures of the legal system react to far more than direct presentations of issues and outcomes'.<sup>7</sup> Although it is true that Cook's tract devoted a large space to an explanation of 'the events of Charles's reign'<sup>8</sup> mainly in *confirmatio*, he was neither unaware of the

ordinary reading public, nor was he focusing on the events alone in his use of forensic rhetoric. Cook's address to the reader, on the contrary, shows that Cook in the printed text had in mind the general reader: '*Therefore I shall deliver my thoughts to the courteous Reader, as I was prepared for it, if Issue had been joyned in the Cause, but with some addition for illustration sake, desiring excuse for the Preamble, because there is some repetition in matter*'.<sup>9</sup>

The primary aim of rhetoric was to persuade readers to accept the author's point of view, and rhetorical activities during the English Revolution were bound up with matters of legitimation and delegitimation. Cook's forensic rhetoric in *King Charls his Case* was also relevant to his regard for readers in its double ideological function. Forensic rhetoric was principally oriented around the purposes of defending or accusing in law courts. Yet Cook's use of the rhetorical genre in print, aimed at the broader reading public, was not simply confined to accusing Charles on the basis of events and proofs alone, but was expanded to attacking Charles's character. Cook's forensic rhetoric also served as a means of legitimating the Independents' political position in general and of defending Bradshaw's and Cook's involvement in the trial and execution of the king in particular: in the six parts of rhetoric, the attacks on Charles are made chiefly in *exordium*, the legitimation of the Independents' political principles in *narratio*, and the apology for the two regicides' participation in the regicide in *peroratio*, although these subjects are sometimes treated in other parts of the structure. At the level of the formal structure of the tract, it is also characteristic that Cook's condemnation of Charles in *exordium* is in sharp contrast with his praise of the High Court of Justice and Bradshaw and his defence of his role as a revolutionary ideologue in *peroratio*.

Cook's rhetorical mode of discrediting Charles through his negative depictions of the king in *exordium* is impressive:

Had he Ten thousand lives, they could not all satisfie for the numerous, Horrid and Barbarous Massacres of Myriades, and legions of Innocent Persons, which by his Commands, Commissions and Procurements ... have been cruelly slain, and inhumanely murdered, in this renowned *Albion* ... and yet this hard-hearted man, as he went out of the Court, down the stairs *Jan. 22.* said (as some of his Guard told me and others) That he was not troubled for any of the blood that hath been shed, but for the blood of one man (peradventure he meant *Strafford*). He was no more affected with a List that was brought in to *Oxford* of Five or six thousand slain at *Edgehill*, then to read one of *Ben: Johnsons* Tragedies: You Gentlemen Royalists that fought for him, if ye had lost your lives for his sake, you see he would have no more pitied you by his own confession, then you do a poor Worm; and yet what heart but would cleave, if it were a Rock, melt, if it were Ice, break, if it were a Flint, or dissolve, if it were a Diamond, to consider that so much precious Protestant blood should be shed in these three Kingdoms, so many gallant valiant Men of all sorts and conditions, to be sacrificed and lose their lives, and many of them to dye so desperately in regard of their Eternal conditions, and all this meerly and onely for the satisfying and fulfilling of one mans sinful and wicked will [.] (pp. 5-6)

Cook's characterization of Charles as the Man of Blood here is twofold and reader-oriented. First, it forms part of the rhetorical strategy intended to remind readers of the fact that Charles was the principal author of the Civil War. According to Patricia Crawford, from 1643 'ideas about the royalists and the king as men of blood were taken up in pamphlets and sermons', and the direct association of the king with blood guilt began to be moulded in 1645 by the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland and also by some parliamentarians after the capture of the king's correspondence at Naseby; and it was crystallized in 1647 by Levellers such as John Lilburne and by army officers such as Captain Bishop and Colonel Thomas Harrison as the expression, 'a Man of Blood'.<sup>10</sup> Cook invokes the dramatic image hostile to Charles which issued from the forces opposing the king during the Civil War; and this functions to remind Cook's readers once again that the king was responsible for the blood shed during the Civil War, and therefore also to convince them of the legitimacy of the king's trial and subsequent execution.

Second, what is more remarkable in Cook's rhetorical strategy is that he connects Charles's image as the Man of Blood with the king's character and his aesthetic preoccupations, thus moving beyond effective appropriation of the discursive practice employed by various forces against the king. Cook's portrayal of Charles as a pitiless king, who had less regard for those killed in the real war he had started than fictitious suffering in a tragedy, serves well to bring into his emotional attack on the king's character the Puritan readers who have been critical of the king's aesthetic and dramatic preoccupations. Cook's rhetorical move is not just limited to winning over Puritan readers but is stretched to bring Royalists into his emotional appeal. This strategy to strengthen the negative image of the king at the multiple levels of his character, his aesthetic tastes and attention to readers is seen as part of the wider rhetorical strategy of legitimating the regicide. Here, Cook's strategy of legitimation is largely supported by the negative method of delegitimizing the meaning of the king's traditional authority by identifying kingly rule with one man's will.

To offset the solemnity of forensic rhetoric and to reinforce his rhetorical intention of 'negative legitimation', Cook makes full and best use of figures and tropes such as metaphor, simile and analogy when criticizing Charles's misgovernment during his personal rule and his responsibility for the Civil War. For example, Charles is implicitly associated with Nimrod by analogy when condemned by Cook for the question of ship-money: 'I mean that great *Nimrod*, that would have made all *England* a Forrest, and the People which the Bishop call his sheep, to be his Venison to be hunted at his pleasure' (p. 13). Like Nimrod, the first tyrant and hunter in the Old Testament (Genesis 10:8-9), Charles is depicted as the great tyrant who sacrifices *salus populi* – well-being of the people - to his personal interests and wilfulness. The tyrannous attributes attached to, and embodied in, Charles and his regal power are made more conspicuous by the power of other metaphors symbolizing tyranny: 'this Lyon which has devoured so many sheep, may not onely be removed out of the way, but ... this Iron Scepter, which has been lifted



up to break this poor Nation in pieces like a Potters vessel, may be wrested out of the hands of Tyrants' (p. 38).

Cook's method of negative representation of the king through the use of tropes is also identified in his emphasis on 'Charles as a master of political dissimulation, prevarication and treachery'.<sup>11</sup> As with the association of Charles with Nimrod by analogy, this time Cook draws an analogy between Charles and Machiavelli, when he argues that it is not evil counsellors but the king who is responsible for all injustice and oppression committed during his reign: 'Mark a Machiavel-Policy; *Call no Parliaments to question the injustice and corruption of Judges for the Peoples relief, And make your own Judges, and let that be Law that they declare; whether it be reasonable or unreasonable it is no matter*' (p. 14). The analogy, designed to confute a variety of forces which wanted to exempt Charles from the accusation of tyranny and injustice, here functions as a rhetorical apparatus to underscore the fact that Charles's manipulative control was at the centre of every sinister act and policy. This attention to Charles's culpability for all the evil-doings acquires greater effectiveness in its rhetorical force by Cook's dependence on the metaphor of architecture: 'they [evil counsellors] did but hew and square the timber, he was the Master builder, that gave the form to every Architecture' (p. 35). Cook's figurative attack on Charles proves bitter and relentless when it comes to criticizing Charles's wiles and their devastating effects: 'his wit and knowledge proved like a sword in a mad-mans hand' (p. 35).

Meanwhile, this negative mode of legitimating the regicide on the basis of the attacks on Charles's character is paralleled by his assertive mode of justifying the regicides and their principles at the level of the tract's structure and content. First of all, one of the most central principles which Cook proposes to legitimate the regicide in the tract is the principle of popular sovereignty in *narratio*: 'all just power is now derived from, and conferred by the people' (p. 8). When Cook sets forth the principle in *narratio*, he takes the polemical method of logical explanation in response to the royalist precept

of the divine right of kings. Secondly, in *peroratio* Cook is keen to praise the High Court of Justice and the regicidal acts of the two major regicides, Bradshaw and Cook himself.

Here, as with the method of the attacks on Charles, Cook largely depends on the affective and figurative force of words. In *peroratio* he likens the High Court to ‘an habitation of Justice, and a royal Palace of Principles of Freedom’ (p. 38). Cook not only tries to glorify the Court as imbued with the symbolic authority of justice and freedom through figuration, but further makes it resemble the court of the Last Judgment in the Bible: ‘And I have one word to add, That High Court was a Resemblance and Representation of the Great day of Judgment, when the Saints shall judge all worldly powers, and where this judgment will be confirmed and admired’ (p. 40). The desire to invest the High Court with such powerful authority, of course, stems from his intention to publicize the legitimacy of the Court whose authority was not acknowledged by many people. Here the figurative manifestation of the Court contributes to enhancing the rhetorical effect of Cook’s bid to legitimate its authority. On the other hand, Cook defends Bradshaw’s and his participation in the regicide by emphasizing the moral qualities and motives of their engagement in it: he praises Bradshaw for his heroic performance with ‘great wisdom and undauntedness of Resolution’ (p. 41), and he claims that his part in the act was taken in accordance with principle, against tyranny and for a good conscience (pp. 38, 43).

The distinctive features of Cook’s mode of legitimating the regicide, of condemning Charles’s character and, conversely, of glorifying the High Court and the two regicides by means of the emotional and figurative power of words within the framework of forensic rhetoric marked by logical proofs, contrast starkly with that of Milton in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* ([13 February] 1649) in many ways. This is not to say that there are no similarities between the modes of the two, for Milton’s text also follows the six-part structure of classical rhetoric, and the idea of popular sovereignty is a crucial theoretical foundation for legitimating the regicide at the

level of the text's content. But it is evident that there are differences between the two polemicists' modes in their adoption of rhetorical genres and presentation of concrete proofs for legitimation. The main differences are that whereas Cook deals with the charges of Charles's tyranny from the specific historical context grounded in his inner perspective as Attorney-General of the High Court, Milton situates the case of Charles in the wider general context of the relation between the people and the king; and that whereas Cook attends to the ideological function of figuration as an effective means of legitimation, Milton in *The Tenure* depends more on logical arguments for legitimating the regicide.

As Skerpan notes, it is true that there is 'confusion over genre' in *The Tenure*, in spite of Wilbur Elwyn Gilman's argument and Merritt Y. Hughes' confirmation that the text's genre is that of deliberative rhetoric.<sup>12</sup> In general, deliberative rhetoric – which has to do with offering advice to political legislatures to persuade to or dissuade from a certain policy, adopted by Milton as a principal genre in *Areopagitica* – does not fit in well with the form of *The Tenure* in which Milton supports the Independents' political courses of Pride's Purge and the king's execution. It might then be safe to say that Milton's *Tenure* does not belong to any of the three genres of classical rhetoric – epideictic, forensic and deliberative – simply following the six-part structure of classical rhetoric as its main frame.<sup>13</sup>

In line with this basic framework of classical rhetoric, the title-page of *The Tenure* recapitulates what Milton's main concern in the tract is and in what way he develops the concern:

PROVING, That it is Lawfull, and hath been held so through All ages, for any, who have the Power, to call to account a Tyrant, or wicked KING, and after due conviction, to depose, and put him to death; if the ordinary MAGISTRATE have neglected, or deny'd to doe it. And that they who of late so much blame Deposing, are the Men that did it themselves. (*CPW*, III.189)

As the title-page makes clear, we find that his main concern is with the question of legitimation, of legitimating the Independents' execution of the king, and that the form he takes to achieve the aim will be the mode of 'proving'. The announcement that Milton would set himself the main task of legitimating the regicide as the subject of the text and choose the mode of 'proving' as its principal form exemplifies a great shift in the ideological function and mode of Milton's rhetoric in *The Tenure*. As we have seen in chapters 1 and 2, the primary ideological function of Milton's rhetoric in his anti-prelatical tracts and *Areopagitica* was to oppose the legitimacy of episcopacy and the Licensing Order, despite the fact that the ideological task of delegitimation was performed in complex interaction with that of the legitimation of his position; and figurative apparatuses played a prominent role in accomplishing the ideological functions. But the Independents' act of regicide requires of Milton a fundamental change both in his rhetoric strategy, replacing delegitimation with legitimation, and in its mode from the frequent use of figures of speech to the predominance of logical explanation. *The Tenure* demonstrates these changes very clearly, and indicates too some of their necessary consequences.

Milton's legitimation of the regicide is carried out, first of all, in the way in which he lends strong support to the Independents in his reproach of the Presbyterians, as is shown in *exordium* and *peroratio*. Some critical appraisals of *The Tenure*, however, concentrate excessively upon Milton's polemic against the Presbyterians rather than upon his modes of legitimation.<sup>14</sup> Milton does devote much of his text, largely in its *exordium* and *peroratio*, to attacking the Presbyterians. Yet this can be seen as part of his rhetorical mode of legitimating the Independents' political actions through criticism of the Presbyterians, analogous to Cook's method in attacking Charles in *King Charles his Case*. As part of this mode, Milton gives prominence to the differences between the moral qualities of Presbyterians and Independents: whereas the Presbyterians are portrayed as the faction which betrayed their fundamental cause against the king during

the Civil War ‘through sloth or inconstancie, and weakness of spirit’ (III.192), the Independents are those who ‘for the deliverance of thir Countrie, endu’d with fortitude and Heroick vertue to feare nothing but the curse writt’n against those *That doe the worke of the Lord negligently*, would goe on to remove, not only the calamities and thraldoms of a People, but the roots and causes whence they spring’ (III.191). In the dramatic contrast of the moral traits between two political parties, Milton tries to show that the Independents’ execution of the king was not an act swayed by their private interests but one grounded on the principle of public reason and ‘wisdom, vertue, and magnanimity’ (III.237).

Secondly, Milton attempts to justify the regicide by interpreting the Independents’ political victory as the work of divine providence:

If God and a good cause give them Victory, the prosecution wherof for the most part, inevitably draws after it the alteration of Lawes, change of Government, downfal of Princes with thir families; then comes the task to those Worthies which are the soule of that enterprize, to be swett and labour’d out amidst the throng and noises of Vulgar and irrational men. (III.192)

According to Milton, ‘God out of his providence and high proposal hath deliver’d him [the king] into the hand of thir brethren’, and has brought ‘him to the tryal of Justice, which is the Sword of God, superior to all mortal things, in whose hand soever by apparent signes his testified will is to put it’ (III.193). The king’s trial and subsequent execution are presented by Milton as an embodiment of divine will and the Independents as agents of the will; and it is difficult to deny that Milton’s appeal to divine providence here is closely associated with a rhetorical act of legitimation. The rhetoric of God’s providence was one of the most popular *topoi* during the English Revolution. Royalists, parliamentarians, the Levellers and other radical forces together argued for the legitimacy of their political actions on this claim. The king and Parliament waged war against each other in their firm belief in providential favour, and encouraged their armies

to sally forth with their appeals to divine providence. The Levellers and other radical forces also used the rhetoric in arguing against the illegitimacy of authority and for the legitimacy of their radical political activities.<sup>15</sup> Milton makes appropriate use of the discourse for legitimating the regicide at the very time when the Independents' current political predicament, seemingly besieged by numerous adversaries, required such a strong rhetorical weapon.

We know that Milton had declared on the title page that 'proving' would become the main form of *The Tenure*, but it is in fact actualized in *narratio*, *confirmatio* and *refutatio*. In the three parts, Milton presents a logical exposition regarding the relation between the people and kings and the people's right to elect and depose kings, marshals examples of dethroning and executing tyrannous kings, and refutes the Presbyterians' arguments against the execution of Charles. Here, we need to pay heed to the ways in which he uses biblical and historical examples to prove his arguments. As we have already seen in the previous chapters, Milton's use and interpretation of the examples were far from being neutral; they were, rather, basic to delegitimizing adversaries or issues against which he took a stand. Interestingly, the biblical and historical proofs in *The Tenure* are put to use for the opposite purpose of legitimating the regicide. For example, Milton chooses the biblical stories of Roboam (or Rehoboam) and Samuel in *narratio*:

Therefore when *Roboam* at his coming to the Crown, rejected those conditions which the Israelites brought him, heare what they answer him, *What portion have we in David, or Inheritance in the son of Jesse? See to thine own House David.* And for the like conditions not perform'd, all Israel before that time depos'd *Samuel*; not for his own default, but for the misgovernment of his Sons. (III.208)

The function of the biblical stories where Roboam, the eldest son of King Solomon, was dethroned from his power on account of his breaking the covenant he had made with the whole congregation, or Samuel, the last Judge of Israel, was deposed for a similar reason,



is to support his main arguments in *narratio*. That is, Milton would argue for a conditional or contractual relationship between kings or magistrates and people and the people's right to depose them in the case of their failure to uphold their side of the bargain. The implication of these stories is to demonstrate that it was lawful for the Independents in the name of the people to execute Charles I as a king who was unwilling to do his duty to the *salus populi*.

The historical proofs Milton provides in *confirmatio* are also deployed to perform the same ideological function. Milton instances six cases as proof of the precedent of deposing or killing tyrants in *confirmatio* (III.212-27): cases of the Greeks, Romans and the Jews, and of Christian times, England and Protestant states. Milton's enumeration and account of this proof are designed to show that Charles's execution is neither unusual nor unprecedented but is simply one illustration of numerous cases of justice done against tyrants. The historical examples, in concert with the biblical evidence, are a reminder that Milton makes selective or partisan use of these for the end of defending the regicide.

If we discern in the writings of Cook and Milton different rhetorical modes employed for the same purpose of legitimation, we also find another type of regicide writing in a Fifth Monarchist, John Canne. Canne's text, which basically takes the form of section-by-section refutations and answers, is well worth noting, on the grounds that it reveals Canne's idiosyncratic modes of legitimation, distinct from those of Cook and Milton. In its 'epistle dedicatory' to the House of Commons, Fairfax and the Council of War, Canne's *The Golden Rule, or Justice Advanced* ([February 16] 1649) makes it clear that its intention is to demonstrate the legitimacy of the regicide to the moderate readers who could not be assured of, or sympathize with, the recent act: '*I have taken in hand, not your cause so much, as the cause of the whole Nation, and have not only given a satisfactory answer to whatsoever may be objected against the act, but justified what hath been don by your authority in point of Law and conscience, to all rational and*

*indifferent men*'.<sup>16</sup> Although it takes quite a simple form of objection and answer in the main text, what is impressive is that it opens with a figurative apparatus for securing readerly sympathy for his arguments:

*ALCON of Creet*, as a Dragon was embracing his son, shot an arrow into the heart, and hurt not the child, but the Dragon died immediately. Our *State-Archers* will now shew their skill and art, if (by Gods blessing on their labor) tyranny and oppression may be taken away, without prejudice or hurt to the Nation: and for the better carrying on of so necessary and good a work, I have undertaken to prove, that when Princes become *Dragons* (as the Scripture usually stileth great Tyrants) 'tis lawful for the supream and Sovereign power of the People to shoot at them, and kill them likewise; and whatsoever to the contrary is objected, either from Scripture, Law, Reason, or inconveniences, I have fully answered and refuted. (p. 1)

Canne's implicit analogy of the Independents and King Charles as '*State-Archers*' and a bloodthirsty dragon respectively is designed to emphasize the contrast between a heroic image of the revolutionary forces and a monstrous image of King Charles. In making effective use of such contrasting metaphors, the primary purpose which Canne sets himself is to prove that it is legitimate for representatives of the people to execute unnatural and tyrannous kings. We find that, as with Milton, the mode of reasoning would occupy a pivotal place in the text, but the notable difference between the two is that whereas Milton's polemic is directed against the Presbyterians in the framework of classical rhetoric, Canne's is directed at the Royalists in the form of refutations to their objections and presentations of his own opinions. To this end, his text is focused on objection to the tenet of the divine right of kings which constitutes the ideological core of royalist belief-systems in general, and on confuting John Gauden's pamphlet, *The Religious & Loyal Protestation of John Gauden against the Purposes of the Army and others; about the trying and destroying our Sovereign Lord the King* (5 January 1649) in particular.

The royalist principle of the divine right of kings which had made a great contribution to establishing absolute royal power and royalist vested interests was indeed called into question in Parliament's challenge to Charles's authority during the Civil War, but it still held great sway as one of the Royalists' belief-systems and values as well as with ordinary people.<sup>17</sup> In that respect, the regicide was a symbolic act incarnating a semantic break with the divine sanction of kingship embedded in the royal person and status, and Canne's *The Golden Rule* is an interpretive attempt to support the Independents who had brought about the break. Canne's text bases its discussion firstly upon the example of kings in the Old Testament, by which it aims to legitimate the regicide in opposition to royalist arguments for 'the absolute power of a King, and the unlawfulness of resistance' (p. 8).

Here, it would be quite interesting to compare interpretive differences between Gauden and Canne concerning David and Saul in the Old Testament, for it illustrates the way in which Canne upholds the legitimacy of the regicide against royalist arguments. To make the point that it is impossible for any individual or any magisterial power to resist or punish a king, Gauden in his pamphlet presents the example of David's relation to Saul: 'you cannot be ignorant of *Davids* both Conscientious and Generous respect to *Sauls* safety and life, whom he leaves to Gods Justice, by no usurpation of power, successe, or oportunities of revenge, suffers himselfe to bee tempted to prevent the hand of God'.<sup>18</sup> In Gauden's reference lies the assumption that the king's divine right does not allow private persons or inferior magistrates any right to take part in the king's punishment, just as David showed his respect to King Saul's person. In response to this, Canne argues that 'The difference was but private and personal between *Saul & David*, *David* being *Sauls* private subject, servant and son-in-law; not publick between *Saul* and his Parliament or Kingdom' (p. 7). Canne's main point is that whereas the private relation of David to Saul prevented him from usurping Saul's regal power, it was legitimate for Parliament as representative of the people to punish Charles for his

offences. Canne's argument was an outright interpretive challenge to the principle of the divine right of kings, and, at the same time, it was an attempt to replace the principle with the concept of popular sovereignty. This complete substitution of the meaning of sovereignty is made manifest in his statement that 'The peoples power ... is above the King' (p. 11).

In Canne's tract, the principle of popular sovereignty emerges as a crucial means of vindicating the regicide in the process of dismantling and replacing the royalist conception of divine-right kingship. Yet the doctrine was also an important notion which informed the texts of Cook and Milton and which characterized other writings supporting the regicide published in the first half of 1649. Anthony Ascham, for instance, maintained in *The Original and End of Civil Power*, published in May 1649, that the people's power was the origin of civil power: 'I have a belief, *That the People are the Womb of all Powers*; and that from thence all Powers have received their warmth and lively vigour, and do continually receive their Nutriment. The production and preservation of the Civil Powers (under God) are from the same Root, the PEOPLE'.<sup>19</sup> In a similar vein, John Goodwin remarked in *The Obstructours of Justice; or, a Defence of the Sentence passed upon the late King* ([30 May] 1649) that 'the people, or their Representative, are superiour in power or authoritie unto the King'.<sup>20</sup> In a sense, the concept of popular sovereignty was the most assertive rhetoric for legitimation in the regicide writings of 1649. In the political circumstances in which the regicide lacked popular support, the concept was a powerful rhetorical weapon for justifying the revolutionary procedures leading to the event.

Aside from noting how persuasive and successful the rhetorical assertion was in winning over the wavering public to their cause in the regicide controversy of 1649, it is significant to remember that it was not so much the Independents' own creation as the product of appropriation. Henry Parker in *Observations Upon Some of His Majesties Late Answers and Expresses* (July 1642) already set forth the concept to justify the

parliamentary position against the king: ‘power is but secondary and derivative in Princes, the foundation and efficient cause is the people’.<sup>21</sup> In 1643, one year after the publication of Parker’s pamphlet, William Prynne in *The Sovereigne Power of Parliaments and Kingdomes* gave a more detailed account of the same position by marshalling numerous authorities such as Greek and Roman authors and historians, the Bible, famous protestant reformers, and examples of other European countries. Although Parker and Prynne neither expected the king to be executed, nor wanted the people to act independently of parliamentary authority, the meaning of the concept became implicated in the process of complicated appropriation and reapplication in the course of the Civil War. The idea was first appropriated and reworked by the Levellers for their radical political thought, as the assertion in *An agreement of the people* (October 1647) makes clear that ‘parliaments are to receive the extent of their power and trust from those that betrust them; and therefore the people are to declare what their power and trust is – which is the intent of this agreement’.<sup>22</sup> And then the concept was again appropriated by the Independents for the purpose of legitimating the regicide after the king’s execution. As Glenn Burgess has pointed out, for the Levellers the idea implied that ‘the people as a whole and not just their representatives had an active part to play in the reconstruction of political order’.<sup>23</sup> Yet for the Independents the idea did not have the same significance as it did for the Levellers.

The same concept of popular sovereignty, in actuality, had different meanings depending on the divergent political parties and circumstances during the Civil War and after the regicide. For parliamentarians such as Parker and Prynne, it had the connotation of parliamentary sovereignty which did not allow the people to argue for their own rights directly outside Parliament. For the Levellers, it signified broader participation of the political nation in the exercise of their rights. And for the Independents after the execution of the king, it had the same implication as parliamentarians of the early 1640s had in mind, but this can be said, in a sense, to have been used as a rhetorical

justification for masking the vulnerability of their regime and for legitimating the regicide in the eyes of the nation. Thus the Independents appropriated the vocabulary whose meaning had been put forth and extended during the Civil War for legitimating their vulnerable political circumstances. This is not, of course, to say that the regicide was not concerned with the revolutionary act. But it is rather to say that the idea of popular sovereignty expressed in the regicide writings as a positive rhetoric of legitimation was, indeed, a reworking of the theme which had been put forward in Parliament's conflict with the king and which had been developed in the Levellers' radical political thought.

The regicide writings by Cook, Milton and Canne reveal the extent to which they partake in the semantic transformation of the language fitted to the changed situations of the regicide. But what is more important in the regicide writings is the notable differences in their rhetorical modes. Despite the common objective of justifying and supporting the regicide with the common language of popular sovereignty, the three writings published in February 1649, immediately after Charles's execution, throw some light on how differences of polemical mode and of objects of attack made a difference in the rhetorical modes used for legitimation. If Cook in *King Charls his Case* made effective use of figurative devices to construct the negative image of Charles, Milton in *The Tenure* adopted the mode of proof in order to establish the legitimacy of the regicide against Presbyterian objections. Canne in *The Golden Rule*, along with the use of the powerful metaphor of archery, took the path of confuting the royalist arguments for *jure divino* kingship. The comparison of rhetorical modes among the three writers makes the change of Milton's rhetorical modes in 1649 stand out in stark relief.



### The *Eikon* Series: Authorship, Words and Textual Strategies

While defenders of the regicide were justifying the death of Charles I on the basis of the principle of popular sovereignty, *Eikon Basilike*, 'the King's Book', was having a great impact on the people. The *Eikon*, which seems to have appeared on the day of Charles I's execution and which Thomason received on 9 February 1649, was extremely popular, going through thirty-five editions in England and twenty-five abroad in 1649 alone. It owed its popularity and success to the shock of the regicide itself in the first place; but it was also the product of the Royalists' premeditated political propaganda. As the Royalists anticipated, 'the King's Book', 'the most widely read, widely discussed work of royalist propaganda to issue from the English Civil War',<sup>24</sup> played an important role in channeling the nation's shock into grief at the king's death and in developing sympathy for the royalist cause in its as yet unfinished war with the revolutionary forces.

Yet perhaps even more telling than the impact of these elements on its popularity and success is the fact that the power of *Eikon Basilike* is very dependent on a complex of interacting factors, that is, on the ideological effects of royal authorship and royal word, the effective choice of genre, and the idiosyncratic textual strategies of Charles's self-representation. Indeed, the various issues raised in *Eikon Basilike* were subjects of considerable controversy in the subsequent *Eikon* series. The publication of the *Eikon Basilike* was followed by that of *The Princely Pellican*, *Eikon Alethine*, *Eikon E Piste* and *Eikonoklastes* between the middle and the end of the year. The writers of the four texts were plainly conscious that royal authorship, royal language and the specific textual strategies of the 'King's Book' generated strong ideological power in its affective appeal to the public. Hence, the four writers exerted themselves with their own textual strategies to reinforce the effect, in the cases of *The Princely Pellican* and *Eikon E Piste*, or to undermine it, in the cases of *Eikon Alethine* and Milton's *Eikonoklastes*.

The matter of the authorship of *Eikon Basilike* was the first important issue not only for the four writers but also in other royalist writings. It is generally acknowledged that the *Eikon Basilike* was a product of John Gauden's joint authorship with Charles, based on the papers the king himself had composed, Gauden's direct involvement in its rewriting becoming known as a result of a controversy over its authorship during the 1690s.<sup>25</sup> For the Royalists, the matter of validating the royal authorship of the book was a consistent concern throughout 1649, since it was conceived of by them as crucial to rallying an uncertain public in the name of the king against a new regime pleading for legitimacy in the name of the people. Accordingly, from the outset, royalist writings took a powerful rhetorical posture based on the claim that the *Eikon* was the product of Charles's pen, as we can see in Francis Gregory's elegy entitled 'On the MARTYRDOM of His Late MAJESTIE, &c' contained in a collection entitled *Vaticinium Votivum* ([11 March] 1649):

Thy *Book* is our best Language; what to this  
 Shall e're bee added, is Thy *Meiösis* [a figure of understatement]:  
 Thy *Name's* a *Text* too hard for us: no men  
 Can write of it, without *Thy Parts* and *Pen*.<sup>26</sup>

Gregory's emphasis on royal authorship, in keeping with his eulogy of the 'King's Book', is also observed in a sermon entitled *The Subjects Sorrow* ([12 March] 1649) by Dr Juxon, Bishop of London: 'that Book is the quintessence of knowing zeale, the storehouse of the ripe and choice fruits of Christian piety, there are the principles of Religion perfectly digested into holy practice: there is the true Princely Image of King *Charles*, that *Golden Manuall*, being a stately building of Meditations, Consultations, Essayes, Debates, and Devotions'.<sup>27</sup> There seems to be little doubt that this emphasis on Charles's authorship is closely coupled with the Royalists' awareness of the ideological power of the royal word and name engrained in the royal text.

Both visual and verbal media served as the principal means through which kingly power was represented in early modern England. Even though Elizabeth I had a more particular preference for the visual in presenting her royal power, as Kevin Sharpe puts it, ‘visual and verbal were not necessarily antagonistic media’, and even ‘in the first century of printing, the royal word, through letters, proclamations and speeches, conveyed the king’s power to the corners of the realm’.<sup>28</sup> King James I was aware that the word, due to the rapid growth of printing and the new recognition of its significance in humanist rhetoric and Protestant scripturalism, could bring about a shift in the representation of royal power. Hence, he had ‘turned to the printed word as a way of expressing his power’, and, in particular, it was he that established the immediate relationship between the printed word and his authority by becoming the royal author of his own books.<sup>29</sup>

In fact, James’s use of the printed word provides us with a crucial insight into the ways in which the royal word in print creates certain ideological effects conducive to the strengthening of royal power. Print has the effect of magnifying the royal word and royal name to the level of the sublime by the creation of distance between the people and kingly authority. Here, the king’s word appears to function as the only sign controlling the meanings of subordinated groups outside the field of signification. The distance and force of authority which the royal word creates leads conversely to the subordinated groups’ unconscious internalization of the authority of the word, or to a non-reflective identification with the power of the king’s name. Gregory’s poetic phrases (‘Thy *Book* is our best Language’ and ‘Thy *Name*’s a *Text* too hard for us’) can be seen as an attempt to strengthen the ideological power and effect of the royal word and name; and the Royalists’ insistence upon Charles’s authorship is one among those ideological maneuvers.

The Royalists’ propagation of the sublime authority of the royal word and name with regard to the authorship of *Eikon Basilike* achieves its practical substantiation from

the strategic construction of the text, such as the choice of specific genre and textual strategies. On the question of genre, first of all we might note Lois Potter's opinion on *Eikon Basilike*:

The *Eikon* posed problems for which seventeenth-century readers, both royalist and parliamentarian, were mostly unprepared. One was a problem of genre. How was the book to be read? Was it a literary work, a series of religious meditations, or a political tract? In many ways, it was closest to the 'prison writing' already discussed, though of course it lacked the 'cavalier' dimension. The manner in which it was presented suggested that it was meant to be seen as transcending, not influencing, history.<sup>30</sup>

Potter gives rather an indefinite view of its generic form, but it will be helpful in determining it if we refer to the contemporary Dr Juxon's comment quoted above, that that book was 'a stately building of Meditations, Consultations, Essayes, Debates, and Devotions'. Although *Eikon Basilike* might create confusion over genre because of its distinctive form, Dr Juxon's comment and Knachel's judgment are useful in reducing the confusion by viewing it as having the form of 'a collection of essays or meditations'.<sup>31</sup>

*Eikon Basilike* consists of two main parts: each chapter has Charles' own accounts of the civil war episodes he judged important and prayers germane to the events. Chapters 25 and 27 are exceptions to the regular format: chapter 25, 'Penitential Meditations and Vows in the King's Solitude at Holmby', contains only the king's prayers and chapter 27, 'To the Prince of Wales', has no prayers. King Charles, using the form of essays or meditations, appears to convey a universal truth to the nation when expressing his views on past historical events, monarchy and the Church of England, but, in effect, the universal truth is concerned with the specific values and interests of the established old order. Here, the form of a collection of essays or meditations is chosen as a genre well suited to the ideological strategy of universalization. This politics of the

choice of genre, in some respects, coincides with an ideological motive underlying the question of authorship. The essay, or meditation, genre makes Charles look like a transcendent and universal presence who remains aloof from the specific historical and political turbulence and factionalism of the Civil War.

Rhetorical and textual strategies in *Eikon Basilike* are also oriented around this ideological motivation, and they are particularly bound up with two distinctive features involving Charles' self-presentation. One of the features of Charles's self-representation is that he constructs his own image as a supra-partisan figure through the repetitive use of the languages of conscience, reason, liberty and justice. According to Kevin Sharpe, it was after 1646 that Charles began to 'eschew partisan rhetoric', and this supra-partisan rhetoric was a crucial element that characterized *Eikon Basilike*.<sup>32</sup> It is evident from the outset when Charles gives his reasons for the convening of the Long Parliament in chapter 1, 'Upon His Majesty's Calling This Last Parliament':

And although I was not forgetful of those sparks which some men's distempers formerly studied to kindle in Parliaments (which, by forbearing to convene for some years, I hoped to have extinguished), yet resolving with myself to give all just satisfaction to modest and sober desires, and to redress all public grievances in church and state, I hoped, by my freedom and their moderation, to prevent all misunderstandings and miscarriages in this; in which, as I feared affairs would meet with some passion and prejudice in other men, so I resolved they should find least of them in myself, not doubting but by the weight of reason I should counterpoise the overbalancings of any factions. (*EB*, p. 3)

Here, the languages of 'freedom' and 'reason' contrast sharply with those of 'distempers' and 'passion and prejudice' used to describe his enemies. Charles's dependence on the languages of those abstract values in his account of the calling of the Long Parliament, in contradistinction with the derogatory language of his description of his enemies, is meant to emphasize his royal presence positioned 'above the polemical fray'.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, the rhetorical strategies central to the construction of such an image

are, as Thomas Corns notes, ‘skilful silences’ on ‘the causes of the conflict’ and his role in it, and ‘vagueness about the interests, motivations, fortunes – even the identity – of others’.<sup>34</sup> By avoiding any mention of specific historical facts, and by resting on the abstract languages of ‘freedom’ and ‘reason’, Charles is reconstructed as a transcendent and universal presence of authority in the text. What should be noted here is that there is no rhetorical gesture more effectively partisan than eschewing partisan rhetoric, since to speak for the whole is to claim legitimacy.

This seemingly supra-partisan but actually partisan rhetoric concerning Charles’s self-representation applies to the languages of ‘justice’ and ‘conscience’: ‘the best rule of policy is to prefer the doing of justice before all enjoyments, and the peace of my conscience before the preservation of my kingdoms’ (*EB*, p. 8). This rhetorical strategy in the *Eikon* constitutes a characteristic that cuts across the whole text, and goes on to the last chapter in which he meditates on his death: ‘I am confident the justice of my cause and clearness of my conscience before God and toward my people will carry me as much above them in God’s decision as their successes have lifted them above me in the vulgar opinion’ (*EB*, p. 178). Charles’s words in the last chapter are significant, in the sense that Charles’s construction of his own public image in the languages of ‘justice’ and ‘conscience’ continues to the end. But, more importantly, the words create a tragic effect, in an allusion to the temporal fall of the royal presence as an emblem of universal authority. The hint of the king’s defeat and death in the actual world, in spite of such a universal positioning of the royal presence in it, becomes the means of assigning a persuasive power to the second feature of the king’s self-representation as a martyred king.

Many critics have paid a great deal of attention to the role which *Eikon Basilike*’s emblematic frontispiece played in representing the visual image of Charles’s martyrdom.<sup>35</sup> Within the text of *Eikon Basilike*, the visual image turns into the textual image of martyred king which Charles himself has constructed. And it is quite



understandable, as has just been indicated, that Charles's transformation of his sufferings and political defeat into the myth of martyrdom is deployed around the end of the text. However, it is also embedded in its middle section.

In these two points, the preservation of established religion and laws, I may, without vanity, turn the reproach of my sufferings, as to the world's censure, into the honor of a king of martyrdom, as to the testimony of my own conscience. (*EB*, p. 163)

They knew my chiefest arms left me were those only which the ancient Christians were wont to use against their persecutors – prayers and tears. These may serve a good man's turn, if not to conquer as a soldier, yet to suffer as a martyr. (*EB*, p. 47)

These quotations, in chapter 27, 'To the Prince of Wales', and chapter 10, 'Upon Their Seizing the King's Magazines, Forts, and Navy, and Militia', show well the ideological operation and nature of Charles's self-mythologization as a martyr. In the first quotation, Charles's self-representation as the martyred king, in fact, works to conceal his real meaning as a king who wanted to maintain the prerogatives he had enjoyed in an order buttressed by religious and legal apparatuses. With this concealed, Charles situates himself in a network of new signification in which he identifies himself with Protestant martyrs who were persecuted for their religious beliefs; in this network, he is reconstructed as the martyred king who devoted himself to keeping his religious and legal principles against his enemies and 'the world's censure'. The ideological and rhetorical process by which his real meaning is masked and transformed, in the second quotation, is carried out in the same way. Here, King Charles's real intention is both to plead that he did not start the Civil War and to condemn Parliament for seizing the king's armoury. Instead of betraying the real intention, he converts it into the sense of martyrdom by comparing his own powerless state to a martyr's suffering. Thus Charles's self-mystification as a martyr manages to distort his real intentions. This

works to sustain the monarchy and its supporting values by eliciting an affective response from a readership familiar with Protestant martyrology.

The subsequent *Eikon* series came out of the responses of the Royalists and their opponents to the subjects of the royal authorship, royal word and the textual strategies of *Eikon Basilike*. These were topics of considerable dispute in the *Eikon* series, and the four writers – including Milton – responded to the issues in different ways such as reinforcement, replacement and direct confrontation. If the royalist writers of *The Princely Pellican* and *Eikon E Piste* attempted to reinforce and reaffirm the issues, the anonymous writer of *Eikon Alethine* tried to replace the royal authorship and words with a ghostly writer's authorship and words, and Milton in *Eikonoklastes* took the path of direct confrontation with the issues.<sup>36</sup>

The first tract of the *Eikon* series emerged from the royalist side, not from their opponents, on 2 June 1649. The tract, entitled *The Princely Pellican*, was designed by an anonymous royalist writer to vindicate the authenticity of the king's authorship and his words in *Eikon Basilike* and it was part of his project for confuting the rumor that 'this worke was none of His penning: but one of His *Houshold Chaplaines*'.<sup>37</sup> To achieve this purpose, the royalist writer announces that he has been 'a *Constant Servant* to His *Sacred Person*' (p. 1) for many years. The writer takes a seemingly objective perspective as an intimate observer of King Charles's daily life for the contention that the king is the sole author for his text; and he proposes as evidence a conversation between the king and courtiers concerning the king's own conscience and repentance for the death of Strafford (pp. 5-7). Yet, as has been hinted in his defence, and 'in view of the widespread practice of 'literary borrowing' and the general recognition that royal writings are often ghosted',<sup>38</sup> his reaffirmation of royal authorship can be seen as part of the royalist attempt to boost the ideological power and effect of the king's book. Like Gregory in his elegy and Dr Juxon in his sermon, the writer of *The Princely Pellican* labours to sustain the unconscious sway which the royal name and royal text hold over

the public. There are nonetheless notable differences between them: where Gregory and Dr Juxon offer impassioned praise of the book, the writer of *The Princely Pellican* provides detailed information about the reasons for the king's having written the book and about the king's working hours. Such apparently factual accounts and proofs were useful in diminishing doubts about the king's authorship and therefore enhancing the effectiveness of the book.

The writer's strategy is thus to argue for the truth of the king's authorship and his words on the basis of evidence. But on the other hand he undertakes to reinforce one aspect of the two textual strategies of the king's book: the writer's description of Charles as a figure who is free from 'any predominant passion, or intemperate spleane' (p. 3) is meant to strengthen one aspect of the king's self-presentation as a moderate king who is above partisan politics in *Eikon Basilike*. This textual strategy of reinforcement is, of course, derived from his aspiration to support and disseminate the character of Charles's image constructed in the king's book; but it is also concerned with his rebuttal of the condemnation of Charles as a Man of Blood and a tyrant. Although Charles in *Eikon Basilike* has constructed 'the image of a textual monarch'<sup>39</sup> with modesty and integrity, it is also true that the image has not been safe from the attacks of regicides and their supporters. As was shown in the regicide tracts of Cook and Milton among others, Charles's image as a moderate king could not avoid clashing with the diametrically opposite images which the regicides and their supporters tried to construct after his execution. In his refutation of his enemies, the writer of *The Princely Pellican* takes on the role of a leading apologist for one vital aspect of the king's self-image.

What is remarkable in the writer is that his emphasis on Charles as a moderate king contrasts markedly with other Royalists' attempts to reinforce his second image as a royal martyr through 'a plethora of elegies circulated throughout 1649 in manuscript, printed as broadsides or gathered into collections'.<sup>40</sup> Instead of partaking in disseminating the image of the royal martyr, the writer of *The Princely Pellican*, as his

own distinctive textual strategy, turns to dramatizing another, new image of a Charles who loved writing and books, endowed with judgment, wit and prudence:

In this manner, no lesse fervently then frequently would His Majesty at set times deliver himselfe: and in His recollection of these, returne to His Study: where he usually addressed his happy pen to these pious Devotions. (p. 10)

It is true, what one well observed touching His judgement of Bookes. That they were the best *Councillours*; the best *Companions*. Councillours to advise us in all our conditions. ... Neither to be deluded by a light favourite: nor over-awed by an imperious Command. (p. 22)

In the meantime, the writer of *Eikon Alethine* ([26 August] 1649) takes the textual strategy of totally denying the king's authorship and his words on the supposition that *Eikon Basilike* is the product of 'a notorious Forger, and superlatively cunning Hypocrite'.<sup>41</sup> Behind this strategy of complete denial of Charles's authorship and words made visible in *Eikon Basilike* lies his recognition of the powerful ideological power that royal authoring and royal words have over the public. The writer's epistle to the reader, 'To the Seduced People of ENGLAND', warns readers that they should not be misguided by the ideological manipulation of the royal name and words operating in *Eikon Basilike*:

*What is in this Booke which hath not been in Messages and Declarations which were avowed by the late King, and so in reason might have prevailed more by the Authors authority? You behold those unchanged; why should this Gorgon so metamorphize you? ... shall his words be of more credit then a Parliament, and his bare assertions then those ancient Records of your famous Ancestors so worthy practices in maintenance of your just freedome, which this Hocus pocus would juggle you out of?* (sig. [A3r])

The writer's mention of the Gorgon reveals his penetrating comprehension that the royal authority and word embodied in the king's book will debilitate its deceived readers.

Through the evocation of this figure as well as allusion to magic trickery, the writer of *Alethine* tries to persuade readers that the king's book, the author's authority, and the royal word and image are all the practice of deceit and fraud. Correspondingly, his textual strategy in the main body of the tract for preventing such ideological deception is to displace the king's authorship and words with the figure of a ghostly divine acting the role of king. Hence, *Eikon Basilike* is turned by this writer's skilful capacity into the text of the divine's artful fabrication and falsification rather than a text based on royal authoring and the king's words. Here the writer's textual strategy is extraordinarily ingenious, for it is oriented less toward condemning Charles directly than toward attacking the insolence of the ghostly divine whose appropriation of the king's name and words resulted in the contradictory delivery of Charles's words and so in the false representation of the king: 'By this is discovered the impudence of this Forger, who hath dared to present the late King openly, averring and professing what all understanding men must contradict, or give their consciences the lye, and how villanously he hath dishonoured him' (p. 5).

The writer of *Alethine* presents himself as if he was willing to safeguard the royal name and word from the forger's impudence of marring and distorting them. Yet the writer's strategy is evident: it is designed at once to avoid any antagonism towards the writer himself which his direct attacks on the king might bring about and to weaken the effects of the propagandistic power concentrated in the authority of the royal text and words. This strategy of the writer is accompanied by another: for despite his consistent attempt at substitution, if the readers still believe that *Eikon Basilike* is the king's book, we come to notice the writer subtly unmasking the falsehood and hypocrisy of Charles and his words. What is most remarkable about the writer of *Alethine* is his insightful observations of the ideological nature and operations of *Eikon Basilike* and his choice of textual strategies appropriate to, and effective in, the dismantling of them.

Less than one month after it was published, the *Eikon Alethine* was faced with a counter-attack from a royalist writer in a tract entitled *Eikon E Piste* ([11 September] 1649). *Eikon E Piste* principally takes the form of a riposte to the *Eikon Alethine*; but, as its anonymous writer makes clear in the address to the reader, ‘*To all that love and honour the memory of CHARLES the First*’,<sup>42</sup> it is also an attempt to regain Charles’s text and words from his enemy as a way of preserving and maintaining his memory. Hence, the two textual strategies co-exist in the *Eikon E Piste*, though its main concern is to attack the writer of *Eikon Alethine*. What calls our particular attention with respect to his refutation of *Alethine* is that the writer of *E Piste* anatomizes his adversary’s strategies, as is shown in the figurative comment that ‘his love to the Dead King, is no otherwise, then the love wherewith the Ravens shew their affections to the slaine, when they pick out their eies after death (p. 2). The writer of *E Piste* is also cognizant that his enemy’s attack on the ghostly divine is, in effect, oriented towards Charles himself: ‘I can but blush to see him wound the reputation of a Dead King, through the sides of a supposed Doctor’ (p. 42). The royalist writer, with the purposes of both confuting the textual strategies of the writer of *Alethine* and reclaiming the original authorship of the king’s book, points out the latter’s insufficient proof, and argues that he himself was acquainted with everything relating to Charles’s genuine authorship including his penmanship:

I do not allow that a Doctor made the *Kings Book*, you are to prove it; why did you not? why did not the hand that drew the Curtaine lay hold on him? I take it to be the *Kings Book*, I am sure of it; I knew his hand; I have seen the Manuscript; I have heard him own it; the world believes it; what do you say? (p. 4)

The first strategy of the writer’s rebuttal to *Eikon Alethine* is, indeed, coupled with his second strategy, as the fundamental purpose of his refutation is to argue for the authenticity of Charles’s text and his words. Yet his second strategy keeps his own



idiosyncratic textual and rhetorical characteristics in his attempts to treat the matter in the light of the king's distinctive style and its relation to Charles's character. The writer of *E Piste* asserts that Charles had a kingly style appropriate to his royal status and incomparable with other styles: 'it was the Kings own by the soveraigne stile; which was unimmitable, which was as easie to be known from other stiles, as was his face from other mens' (p. 4). The writer goes on to argue that the king's style and words, as revealed in the king's book, are a reflection of Charles's character and judgment: 'those emanations from his Royall pen, were the sincere extracts of *His* clearest Judgement' (p. 80). And finally he concludes that 'it is the Kings Book, and that he who writ such a Book, could not be otherwise then a good man' (p. 96).

There is no denying that in the strategy of the writer lies his desire to rescue the royal text and words from his enemies and therefore, like other royalist writers, to reinforce their meanings for ideological purposes. Yet what draws our attention here is the unstable semantic position in which the royal presence, royal text and royal words are placed. Although Charles became 'a fixed centre' as 'an *imago dei*', and his text became a rallying point after his death for royalist propaganda, their meanings were never safe from their enemies' attacks.<sup>43</sup> The fervour with which the royalist writers were keen to protect the king's text and words with a variety of their own different textual strategies was a response derived from their consistent efforts to anchor the meanings in the face of their enemies' attempt to undermine them. The enthusiastic but shaky process by which they attempted to preserve, reinforce and reconstruct the meanings finally met an official response from the Rump Parliament.

That response, Milton's *Eikonoklastes*, was published on 6 October 1649, somewhat later than expected. William Riley Parker argues in his biography of Milton that Milton was probably assigned the task of the official refutation to the king's book on around 13 or 15 March 1649 when the revolutionary Council of State offered him the job of Secretary for Foreign Tongues and appointed him as Secretary. Derek Hirst

supports Parker's assertion saying that 'the task of answering 'the king's book' must therefore have been urged on Milton sometime in the spring of 1649'.<sup>44</sup> Milton in *Eikonoklastes* gives his own reason for the gap between the time he was assigned the task and the time of its completion as follows: 'I take it on me as a work assign'd rather, then by me chos'n or affected. Which was the cause both of beginning it so late, and finishing it so leasurely, in the midst of other imployments and diversions' (*CPW*, III.339). This statement gives the impression that Milton was somewhat on the defensive in taking up the task, but what is more important is that he accomplished it in the status of a public figure in the new regime, 'in the behalf of Libertie, and the Common-wealth' (III.338). This implies that Milton's *Eikonoklastes* should be seen in the wider context in which Milton's task was directed towards legitimating the republican government. Milton in the preface reveals his recognition of the wider context in which his task was positioned:

And furdur, since it appears manifestly the cunning drift of a factious and defeated Party, to make the same advantage of his Book, which they did before of his Regal Name and Authority, and intend it not so much the defence of his former actions, as the promoting of thir own future designes, making thereby the Book thir own rather then the Kings, as the benefit now must be thir own more then his, now the third time to corrupt and disorder the mindes of weaker men, by new suggestions and narrations, either falsly or fallaciously representing the state of things, to the dishonour of this present Government, and the retarding of a generall peace, so needfull to this afflicted Nation, and so nigh obtain'd, I suppose it no injurie to the dead, but a good deed rather to the living, if by better information giv'n them, or, which is anough, by onely remerbring them the truth of what they themselves know to be heer misaffirm'd, they may be kept from entring the third time unadvisedly into Warr and bloodshed. (*CPW*, III.338-39)

Milton's appreciation of his status as a public figure justifying the new republican regime in opposition to the Royalists' ideological maneuverings has a considerable impact on determining the basic framework of textual strategies taken in *Eikonoklastes*, the basic framework of direct confrontation with King Charles. Milton, unlike the writer

of *Eikon Alethine*, took the principal mode of outright contest with Charles in terms of authorship, words and textual strategies, in the assumption that *Eikon Basilike* is Charles's book.

The first important issue for Milton, of course, was the matter of authorship. He often gives a hint in some places in his tract that the king's book might have been written with the help of someone else's – an Anglican divine's – hand (III.346, 393, 430). But as far as the matter goes, Milton's basic strategy starts from the presupposition that the book's author is none other than King Charles himself. Milton's acceptance of Charles's authorship at first glance appears to concede the Royalists' persistent assertions of royal authorship; but this acceptance, on the contrary, turns out to be Milton's willingness to dismantle the mechanism in which 'the gaudy name of Majesty' (III.338) embedded in the king's book creates 'a civil kinde of Idolatry' by the public (III.343). Milton discerns how the king's name has served as a means of ideological mystification to the people, and how it still serves as a symbol that enables the civil form of idolatry to continue after the death of Charles. The fact that Milton accepts Charles's authorship, above all, announces that he is willing to participate as an iconoclast in the demystification of royal writing itself.

In *Eikonoklastes*, Milton's work of demystification is largely focused on dismantling Charles's words and his strategies of self-representation. It is particularly characteristic in Milton's text that the matter of words, more than anything else, comes to the fore, due to Milton's awareness of the ideological functions they perform in the king's text with regard to Charles's self-presentation in particular, and due to the fact that they are also a crucial medium in Milton's own undertakings. In Milton's view, Charles's words in *Eikon Basilike* are a tool of dissemination crucial to avoiding his historical responsibility for the Civil War by representing himself as a moderate king through the languages of 'freedom', 'reason', 'conscience', 'justice'. They are also a means of ideological manipulation fundamental to fabricating Charles's false self-image

and, therefore, to deceiving the people into believing that Charles is a martyred king: Charles's 'faire and plausible words' (III.343) are seen by Milton as taking a position of central importance in the ideological operation to 'Martyr him and Saint him to befool the people' (III.343). Milton, more than anyone else, is well aware of the interrelation between Charles's words in the king's book and royalist political interests. To Milton, Charles's 'fair-spok'n words' (III.346) as the vital means of constructing the king as a moderate king and royal martyr are regarded as fundamental to winning over the people to the royalist cause.

Accordingly, the main textual strategy Milton employs in *Eikonoklastes* is to show that the words crucial to Charles's self-representation are totally false and deceitful. To achieve the purpose, Milton turns Charles's words in *Eikon Basilike* against Charles himself, or converts the meanings in the king's context into different meanings in his context, and thus he constructs other images of the king. The following example is typical of Milton's method of appropriation and expropriation of Charles's words, and of the transformation of them to suit his own intentions:

The like amendment hee promises in State; not a stepp further *then his Reason and Conscience told him was fitt to be desir'd; wishing hee had kept within those bounds, and not suffer'd his own judgement to have bin over-borne in some things,* of which things one was the Earl of *Straffords* execution. And what signifies all this, but that stil his resolution was the same, to set up an arbitrary Government of his own; and that all Britain was to be ty'd and chain'd to the conscience, judgement, and reason of one Man; as if those gifts had been only his peculiar and Prerogative, intal'd upon him with his fortune to be a King. When as doubtless no man so obstinate, or so much a Tyrant, but professes to be guided by that which he calls his Reason, and his Judgement, though never so corrupted; and pretends also his conscience. (III.359)

To expose the fiction of Charles's self-representation as a moderate king, the first thing Milton does is to specify the historical events implicit in Charles's use of the languages of 'reason' and 'conscience' as in the case of the execution of Strafford. Secondly,

Milton expropriates the meanings of the languages Charles used in his context and transforms them into other meanings in his. The meanings of the languages of 'reason' and 'conscience' Charles used to highlight the fact that he was supra-partisan and moderate in the Civil War are completely dismantled by Milton and converted into the meanings of one man's rule. In this process Charles is reconstructed in the different guise of a tyrant.

The way in which Milton transforms Charles's self-representation as martyred king is more complex. We could guess for this reason that the powerful ideological effect of the image might have required of Milton the more complicated transformation of the meaning. The distinctive feature of Milton's strategy here is that he is dependent upon figuration as a way of inverting the meaning used in the king's text. As we have seen, in chapter 27 of *Eikon Basilike* Charles represented himself as a martyred king sacrificed for maintaining the established religious and legal traditions. To emphasize that Charles's appeal to martyrdom subverts the real meaning of martyrdom, Milton deploys a variety of figurative parallels to deprive Charles of the meaning and situate it within his own interpretive framework:

But Martyrs bear witness to the truth, not to themselves. If I beare witness of my self, saith *Christ*, my witness is not true. He who writes himself *Martyr* by his own inscription, is like an ill Painter, who, by writing on the shapeless Picture which he hath drawn, is fain to tell passengers what shape it is; which els no man could imagin: no more then how a Martyrdom can belong to him, who therefore dyes for his Religion because it is *establisht*. ... And if to die for an establishment of Religion be Martyrdom, then Romish Priest executed for that, which had so many hundred yeares bin establisht in this Land, are no wors Martyrs then he. Lastly, if to die for *the testimony of his own conscience*, be enough to make him Martyr, what Heretic dying for direct blasphemie, as som have don constantly, may not boast a Martyrdom? As for the constitution or repeale of civil Laws, that power lying onely in the Parliament, which he by the verry law of his coronation was to grant them, not to debarr them, nor to preserve a lesser Law with the contempt and violation of a greater, it will conclude him not so much as in a civil and metaphoricall sense to have di'd a Martyr of our Laws, but a plaine transgressor of them. (III.575-76)

Here, we find Milton quoting a word and a phrase from the king's text, and by his interpretive strategy associating the quoted word and phrase with different meanings: the word, '*establisht*', with popery, and the phrase concerning Charles's appeal to conscience with heterodoxy. This interpretive undertaking is the result of Milton's insistent attempt to force the king's meanings to submit to his intentions; and through this kind of 'interpretive violence',<sup>45</sup> Milton intends to inculcate into readers the new image of Charles as an apostate from Protestant orthodoxy rather than as a martyred king for the Church of England. The process by which Milton expropriates the meaning of Charles's martyrdom operates through a complex mechanism of signification, for it proceeds to move beyond the field of the theological towards the aesthetic and legal. Milton's comparison of Charles to 'an ill Painter' is an attempt to deploy Charles's meaning within the field of aesthetic signification in order to show that Charles's self-possessed martyrdom is far from real martyrdom. On the other hand, in his comparison of Charles to 'a transgressor' Milton labours to redefine Charles's meaning of martyrdom as the meaning of transgression of the law in terms of Parliament's supremacy over the king. Thus, Milton dismantles the meaning of martyrdom operating in *Eikon Basilike* and redefines it in the network of his own signification, which is achieved through the method of working the disparate fields of signification together. What is particularly distinctive about Milton's textual strategies in *Eikonoklastes* is his attempt to weaken the ideological functions and effects of Charles's words by transmuting his adversary's meanings into his own intentions at the various levels of theological, aesthetic and legal signification.

In 1649, *Eikon Basilike* was evidently a critical textual event which made a great impact on the emotions of the people in the aftermath of the regicide. The nature of the event was, above all, associated with the ideological power and effect of the royal name and authority deeply engrained in the king's book and its peculiar rhetorical, textual strategies of royal self-presentation. Disputes in the subsequent *Eikon* series were over



the semantic and ideological nature of the particular textual event. The royalist writers of *The Princely Pellican* and *Eikon E Piste* took great pains to make the king's book a fixed centre of meaning for their royalist cause by strengthening its royal authorship and rhetorical, textual strategies, together with their own textual construction of Charles's image as a book-loving king and good man. The competing texts of *Eikon Alethine* and *Eikonoklastes* attested to the degree to which the authors were acutely aware of the ideological mechanism and operation of the royal text and royal word; hence their corresponding strategies of displacement of authorship and transformation of meaning. The *Eikon* series were a prime illustration of how a particular textual event in 1649 evolved into dialogic conflict over its ideological nature and operation in the regicide controversy of that year.

### **The Struggle over Figurative Signs: Royalists vs Regicide Apologists**

Apart from the conflict as represented in the *Eikon* series, another remarkable feature of the regicide controversy is that figurative signs concerning king, state and regicide were at the centre of a struggle over signification between Royalists and regicide apologists. After the execution of Charles, the Royalists' first and immediate response to the event was to express their shock through the literary genre of the elegy as well as in the form of sermons.<sup>46</sup> Although a few royalist political pamphlets were printed in 1649, their chief cultural strategy was concentrated on the effective use of metaphor and figurative language through the media of elegies and sermons. The image of a martyred king which Charles embedded in his scaffold speech and in his *Eikon Basilike* was a common subject in nearly all of the elegies published after the king's death; and the Royalists showed a remarkable capacity to appropriate for their own political purposes the language of Protestant martyrology ranging from the tradition of Foxe's martyrdom to

the recent cases of Prynne, Bastwick, Burton and Lilburne in the late 1630s. Not only did the Royalists deprive their enemies of the language of martyrdom for their political purposes, they also made full use of their own traditional and conservative figurative signs. For example, they used figurative signs of the king as the father of the people, the king as the sun, and the state as the body politic. In a sense, regicides and their supporters could be said to have been on the defensive, faced with the Royalists' effective appropriation of the Puritan vocabulary as well as with the full use of their own traditional figurative signs. Nevertheless, it is equally true that they also tried to expropriate the meanings of the figurative signs – as has been shown in Milton's attempt to dismantle the image of royal martyr – and to fill them with other meanings in order to justify their resistance to the given order and tradition, or more specifically, to legitimate their political beliefs and values.

For a better grasp of one of several conflicts over figurative signs, it might be helpful to commence by observing Kevin Sharpe's comment on a standard figurative description of the king. Sharpe states that 'The description of the king as the father of his people was a familiar idiom of political discourse from Aristotle's *Politics* to the Victorian age'.<sup>47</sup> The regicide controversy of 1649, however, shows how the traditional figurative sign as pertinent to the representation of the king was in fierce contention for meaning. Indeed, the regicide did not merely present a challenge to royalist ideological beliefs such as the concept of divine-right kingship, but also to the symbolic systems of figuration which had been useful in shoring up the monarchy. In the regicide apologists' challenge to the royalist figurative systems, the symbolic figuration of the king as the father of his people inevitably came under sustained pressure.

In the royalist writing of 1649, we find a variety of instances of Charles described as the father of his people. The first important example is that offered by Charles himself in *Eikon Basilike*: 'As my public relations to all make me share in all my subjects' sufferings, so give me such a pious sense of them as becomes a Christian king and a

loving father of my people' (*EB*, p. 68). This self-presentation of Charles was not only echoed in other royalist writings, especially in the elegies, but more importantly, the metaphor was used as a means of attacking the regicides after the execution of Charles. An anonymous royalist in his elegy, *The Insecuritie of Princes, considered in an occaionall Meditation upon the Kings late Sufferings and Death* ([15 March] 1649), highlights the image of the loving father who chose martyrdom in the face of the regicides' unlawful acts:

And of his Country such a tender Father,  
That, than wrong it, he Martrydom chose rather.  
And thus unto some few mens lawlesse pleasure  
Was sacrific'd three Kingdoms choicest treasure.<sup>48</sup>

Another royalist elegy, *Loyalties Tears flowing after the Blood of the Royal Sufferer, Charles the I* ([25 June] 1649), also underscores the image of Charles as the loving father who has been slaughtered by regicides:

So when a tender *Father*, forc'd to sheild  
Against *rebellious Sonnes* his sacred Right,  
By deare successe obtaines a bloody field;  
His slaughter'd Childrens lamentable sight  
The Warre upon his Bowels doth renew.  
And makes him die for everyone he slew.<sup>49</sup>

Although the authors of the two elegies focus on the relation between the king and the regicides in particular, their use of the image of 'a tender Father' reflects their desire to take advantage of a more general traditional assumption on the relationship between king and people, the assumption that the king develops a patriarchal relationship with his people in the state, just as a father develops the same relationship with his family. For the royalist writers, the use of the figurative sign which presupposes the implicit assumptions of this kind of patriarchal social order in the relationship between the king

and the people had a serious political implication. For they were well aware that the metaphor of 'a tender Father' involved the function of reproducing traditional patriarchal beliefs in the people's attitudes towards their monarchs, and that it also served as a means of containing the potential resistance of the people to them. In the politically defensive circumstances of 1649, the royalist elegists seized upon the traditional and conformist meanings implied in the metaphor; and showed their remarkable capacity for disseminating the perception that the regicide was an unimaginable and reprehensible act against moral law, like the rebellion of sons against their father.

In the meantime, for regicide apologists, the king was no longer regarded as the father of the people, and his position was taken over by Parliament. The author of *Eikon Alethine* argues that 'the Parliament have discovered themselves Nursing-fathers' (p. 66),<sup>50</sup> and Milton also makes the like point in *Eikonoklastes*: 'the Court storm'd, and fretted to see such honour giv'n to them [parliamentarians], who were then best Fathers of the Common-wealth' (III.393). Although the author of *Alethine* and Milton transposed the status of father of the people from the king to Parliament in their estimation of parliamentarians' acts against the king during the Civil War, it is evident that the regicide became the immediate occasion that enabled them to make such a complete replacement of the position of 'the politic father'.<sup>51</sup> This shift from king to Parliament in the figurative representation of the ruler insinuates that although the regicide was carried out in the name of the people, its supporters still perceived the relation of ruler to people as a relation of vertical dominance and protection, not as one of horizontal exchange and equality. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the metaphor of the king as father of the people, which had been accepted as a universalized meaning for a long time and which had been deployed strategically by the Royalists after the regicide, became an arena of the struggle within signification. And in the efforts of supporters of the regicide, the traditional meaning was discarded in order to express a new political relationship between Parliament and people.

Like the figurative sign of the king as the father of the people, the metaphor of the sun was also implicated in the complex process of appropriation in the regicide controversy of 1649. The metaphor of the sun had often been used to represent a king and his glorious power, but the political circumstances of the 1640s and the regicide of 1649 made complicated the representational characteristic of the metaphor. For example, we observe in *Eikon Basilike* that Charles's political confrontation with Parliament in the 1640s generated a subtle change in figurative representation. In other words, Charles's defensive political situations in the 1640s forced him to accept an inevitable decline in his personal power symbolized as the sun's light:

For although I can be content to eclipse my own beams to satisfy their fears, who think they must needs be scorched or blinded if I should shine in the full luster of kingly power wherewith God and the laws have invested me, yet I will never consent to put out the sun of sovereignty to all posterity and succeeding kings, whose just recovery of their rights from unjust usurpations and extortions shall never be prejudiced or obstructed by any act of mine [.] (*EB*, p. 49)

In spite of Charles's unwilling acquiescence in the eclipse of 'the full luster of kingly power', his authority is only in 'enforced darkness and eclipse' (*EB*, p. 49) for the time being. The power is seen by him as something that can be restored and welcomed in the long run, as the eclipse of the sun restores it to shine more brilliantly in time: 'they will at length more esteem and welcome the restored glory and blessing of the sun's light' (*EB*, p. 49).

If the analogy of the sun and its light in *Eikon Basilike* alluded to the temporary loss of Charles's authority and the greater glory of the future, the use of the metaphor by Royalists after the regicide was more dramatic and emotional. For the Royalists, since Charles's death was thought of as no better than a complete collapse of kingship, it is not surprising that the metaphor of the sun as the symbolic analogy of kingship appeared as a major figurative apparatus in the royalist elegies. And it was also useful in expressing

their shock at the king's death and its aftermath. What is most common in some of the royalist elegies is that Charles's death is compared to sunset:

CHARLS *our Dread-Sovereign's murther'd!* – Tremble! and  
View what Convulsions Shoulder-shake this Land;  
Court, Citie, Countrie, nay three Kingdoms run  
To their last Stage, and Set with Him their Sun.<sup>52</sup>

As revealed in this elegy, entitled *Chronosticon Decollationis Caroli Regis* ([11 March] 1649), Royalists do not associate Charles's death just with the fall of his personal power, but further with national disaster. Just as the disappearance of the sun causes disorder in the natural world and its ultimate destruction, so the king's death is portrayed by them as the collapse of the state as the human order. Francis Gregory's elegy also expresses the image of such a breakdown through the analogy of the sunset:

Did You, Yee *Nobles*, envie CHARLS His *Crown*?  
*Jove* beeing fal'n the *Punie-gods* must down:  
Your Raies of *Honor* are eclip'st in Night,  
The *Sun* is set, from whence You drew your *Light*.  
*Religion* Vail's her self; and Mourn's that shee  
Is forc'd to own such horrid Villanie.  
The *Church* and *State* do shake; that Building must  
Expect to fall, whose *Prop* is turn'd to *Dust*.<sup>53</sup>

The image of sunset in these poems is not used to describe Charles's death only, but is subject to wider political purposes: it has the ideological and rhetorical effect of disseminating and strengthening the perception that the king's death could have a necessary connection with complete destruction of the given order and the human world as a whole. We might read the political intentions of these royalist elegists when they highlight the social repercussions of Charles's death in the dramatic rhetorical use of the image of sunset; but it is also important to note that Royalists still retained the metaphor



of the sun rather than that of the sunset as a means of ensuring that their cause remained worthwhile. We find this to be the case in a pamphlet entitled *Majestas Intemerata; or, The Immortality of the King* ([15 August] 1649) whose author was alleged by Thomason to be John Cleveland. This pamphlet, which defends the absolute prerogative of kingship and denounces the current republican regime as infringing on it, draws on the metaphor of the sun so as to emphasize the continuity of kingship which would be embodied in Charles II: 'I am sure, none was ever offered, so compleat, as the heir of holy *Charles* the first, a King whom all Rights Divine and Humane, do as an illustrious Sun, after the curse of a long darknesse, commend'.<sup>54</sup> For Cleveland, the Royalists' present political predicament occasioned by the execution of Charles is counterbalanced by his belief in the eventual restoration of royal power, and here the metaphor of the sun functions as a sign crucial to conveying this political meaning.

Whether royalist writers intensify the dramatic effect of sunset or express their aspiration for the re-emergence of the sun, what is distinctive in their use of the metaphor of the sun is that the present characterized as the absence of the sun is treated as an abnormal phenomenon of nature. By analogy, the present situation without the king is presented as an unnatural social state characterized by the total absence of authority. There is a dual political implication in this natural analogy. On the one hand, it serves to condemn the present commonwealth without a king as aberrant and abnormal; on the other, it imposes the meaning of a cyclical temporality in political history, the meaning that just as sunset must be followed by sunrise, a temporary deviation from the orderly state of society must recover its normality in time, along with the recovery of royal authority. In the face of Charles's death and royalist political defeat, the Royalists seek to evoke and activate the political meanings implied by the natural analogy of the sun.

In this, however, the Royalists were challenged by the regicide apologists. It is natural that the regicide supporters would disallow the semantic privilege which

associated the sign of the sun with royal authority. As with their appropriation of the metaphor of the king as the father of the people, writers like Cook, Milton and the author of *Eikon Alethine* refused to accept the meaning of the metaphor which had been specifically used by the Royalists, and then attempted to attach the sign of the sun to new meanings more in keeping with their beliefs and values. The interesting thing here is that royalist univocity was countered by a multiplicity of regicidal appropriations. Cook suggests in *King Charls his Case*, for instance, that it is not Charles but the High Court that should be associated with the original authority of the sun: ‘Concerning this High Court, to speak any thing of this glorious Administration of Justice, is but to shew the Sun with a candle’.<sup>55</sup> For Cook, the High Court, not Charles, is represented as ‘the Sun of Justice’ which ‘now shines most gloriously’.<sup>56</sup> For the writer of *Eikon Alethine*, ‘the original of all the light’ inheres in the people, not in the king: ‘If then he were any light, it was the Moon, or some Star; for he shined with a borrowed, not an inherent light: and that the people are the Sun from which Kings borrow their lustre, will appear by their magnitude, and influence’.<sup>57</sup>

While Cook and the writer of *Alethine* made the sign of the sun indicate new objects which they identified as the locus of authority or as the origin of sovereignty, Milton connects the metaphor with an abstract value. In *Eikonoklastes*, Milton denies the figurative representation of Charles as the sun and instead presents ‘a peacefull Reformation’ as a value to take the place of the powerful representation of the king:

He bodes *much horror and bad influence after his ecclips*. He speakes his wishes: But they who by weighing prudently things past, foresee things to come, the best Divination, may hope rather all good success and happiness by removing that darkness which the mistie cloud of his prerogative made between us and a peacefull Reformation, which is our true Sun light, and not he, though he would be tak’n for our sun it self. (III.455)

To some extent, Milton's response to Charles's self-comparison with the sun is not as emphatic in *Eikonoklastes* as might be expected. Thomas Corns points out that the 'image density' in *Eikonoklastes* falls when compared with that of Milton's earlier works and other tracts such as *Eikon Alethine*, and that 'his imagery loses the luxuriance that characterized it earlier'.<sup>58</sup> As Corns notes, 'the reasons for the changes in Milton's style must remain the subject of conjecture and hypothesis',<sup>59</sup> but it is true that Milton's effort to convert the effect of the powerful signification of the metaphor of the sun as referring to the king into a new meaning, advantageous to the as yet insecure republican regime, is insufficient and unsatisfactory. Milton emphatically contends in *Eikonoklastes* that parliamentary sovereignty takes precedence over royal supremacy, but he does not depict either Parliament or the people as the sun. The reasons for the difficulties in this figurative depiction must be a matter of speculation, as is the reduction of image density in *Eikonoklastes*. It is understandable that Milton would not describe the people as the sun in view of his disappointment with, and attack on, 'the people's devotion to the old idolatry of kingship',<sup>60</sup> calling them 'an inconstant, irrational, and Image-doting rabble' (III.601); and Milton's failure to do so in his representation of Parliament might have been linked to his defensive rhetorical stance in *Eikonoklastes*.

Notwithstanding Milton's indecisive reaction to the metaphor of the sun, efforts of the regicide apologists to exchange the given meaning of the metaphor with their own meanings could be evaluated as at once revealing and significant. Their efforts are significant in two ways in particular: one is that they were strongly opposed to the fixed signification of the metaphor which had played a key role in the symbolic representation of kingship. Their challenge to the representation of the king as the sun showed that this metaphor could not always signify only the king and royal authority. The *Eikon Alethine* in its attempt to compare the people with the sun is particularly indicative of how the metaphor did not simply symbolize a certain specific person or group in power, but could be used as a figurative expression of popular sovereignty as a whole. The

production of this new meaning in the figuration could be seen as the result of the revolutionary political circumstances of the king's execution and the establishment of the republic in 1649, but on the other hand it was the result of anti-royalist political awareness and efforts to spread and circulate anti-Royalists' own meanings in confrontation with the Royalists.

Another example of this kind is the contested status of the metaphor of the body politic. Before examining how this metaphor became a subject of controversy in 1649, it would be worthwhile to refer to Kevin Sharpe's account of the body politic in order to understand the political and social implications of the analogy in the Renaissance period:

The phrase 'body politic', however, though now emasculated of its analogic force, remains to inform us of an age when the body was not only politicized, but stood as the most familiar of all analogues for the commonweal. The analogue, like that of the family, goes back to pagan, classical times, and to the time of the apostles. But it is in the Renaissance period that the natural, not merely the rhetorical or idealized body, was explicitly analogized to the state, and in that age that the analogy was developed and worked out in detail. ... This analogue of the natural body may tell us much about changing attitudes towards the self and the community: the image realized the multiple forces in man and contained the disparateness of society. It also brought the individual and the polity together. The image was a means of overcoming a metaphysical problem of distance between subject and object. ... In the political realm the image (like the whole world-view) not only unified a fragile state; it elevated and incorporated the person of the king into that larger body of commonweal at a time when the monarch as personal overlord was becoming a monarch as ruler of the nation.<sup>61</sup>

As Sharpe points out, the metaphor of the body politic was commonplace in symbolic representation of the state in the Renaissance period, and at the time it incorporated into it the king as the head and the people as the body. One of the characteristics of the metaphor is that it was a mode of figurative representation which exemplified a variety of aspects such as the status of a sovereign in the state, his relation to the people and the form of government. In other words, like a body, the state had the king as its head and the people as the object of the king's rule, and as the king existed as the head of the body

politic, the form of government implicit in the metaphor was monarchical. As Sharpe notes, ‘The emphasis on the king as the head and the people as the body was traditional and conservative’;<sup>62</sup> and the status of the king, his relation to the people, and the monarchy as a government form embodied in the metaphor were conceived of as natural, if not uncontested, in the Renaissance period.

In 1649, Royalists were eager to reinforce the traditional and conservative meaning implied in the metaphor of the body politic. Dr Warner, Bishop of Rochester, in the sermon entitled *The Devilish Conspiracy and Damnable Murder committed by the Jewes against the Anointed of the Lord, Christ their King* (4 February 1649), argues that it is impossible for the body to destroy the head, and articulates the immutability of the king’s status as the head of the people: ‘suppose the head of a man intoxicated or distracted, should endeavour the hanging or drowning the body; might the body (to preserve it selfe) destroy this head? And the King, in respect of his Subjects, hath the like relation; and therefore is so called both in Gods and our Lawes, *the Head of the People*’.<sup>63</sup> Dr Juxon in his sermon *The Subjects Sorrow* makes a similar point, though his emphasis is placed on the impact of a disorder in the head on the whole body:

The King is the *Head* of the people, there is a sacred and neare relation betwixt them, a disease or paine in the Head causeth a discrasie in the whole body, an indisposition throughout all the members: So the calamity and sufferings of the King affecteth every conscientious man in his Kingdome; this honest zeale and pious sympathy between the Head and the Members, and the King and the people, made our Prophet and the men of *Judah* so passionately bewaile the losse of their good King *Josiah* [.]<sup>64</sup>

Although Dr Warner and Dr Juxon in their sermons make allusive mention of Charles’s death, eschewing direct statements about the event, their excessive emphasis on the king as the head of the people paradoxically shows that the regicide brought about a fissure in the meaning of the metaphor of the body politic which had been regarded as part of the

harmonious order of nature and society. Royalists like Dr Warner and Dr Juxon, however, employ the fissure to their advantage, in reasserting the meaning of the metaphor presumed by them as symbolic of a natural and social order in harmony, or reaffirming the inseparable relation between the head/the king and the body/the people by highlighting their relation of co-existence and the possibility of common destruction occasioned by the head's sufferings. This was a reaffirmation of a hierarchical relation between the head/the king and the body/the people, and it was also an attempt to reconfirm the king's positioning in the body politic in the face of, and in spite of, the king's death.

While the metaphor of the body politic was employed by the Royalists as a means of strengthening this traditional and conservative account, it was also put to use for the purpose of condemning the current republican form of government without the king. Their condemnation was provocative and bitter, as shown by Dr Warner's words: 'no more Monarchy by a King, and Princes of the People; but a pure Democracy, though that the worst, and the basest of all Governments; it is like the *Acephali*, which have faces of men in their breasts, but without a head; such a Monster it is'.<sup>65</sup> While Dr Warner attends to the monstrosity of the body without a head, John Quarles in his elegy, *Regale Lectum Miseriae* ([18 April] 1649), condemns the repulsive sight of the many-headed monster engendered in Charles's absence:

But he was gone; and in his roome was plac'd  
A many-headed *monster*, that disgrac'd  
The very place: they vanish'd, then appear'd  
A *large-pretending rout*, as well be-ear'd  
As *Balam's Asse*, methoughts they did excell  
The *Asse* in *eaes*, but could not speak so well.<sup>66</sup>

Payne Fisher in his elegy, *Chronosticon Decollationis Caroli Regis*, also conveys a similar feeling about the abhorrent metamorphosis of the body politic:



CHARLS *our Dread-Sovereign's Murther'd at His Gate!*  
 Fell Fiends! dire *Hydra's* of a Stiff-neck't-State!  
 Strange *Bodie-Politick!* whose *Members* spread,  
 And, Monster-like, swell bigger then their *Head*.<sup>67</sup>

To royalist eyes, the current 'democratic' form of government exemplified the aggressive, deformed growth of a state characterized by the expansion of the body without a head; and it featured the destruction of a stable differentiation of the body politic in which it was assumed that a head and members should occupy their own arranged places.

The traditional and conservative meaning which Royalists were bent on fixing in their interpretation of the metaphor of the body politic and the aim which they sought to achieve by attacking the new form of government as an anomaly of the body, of course, could not pass unnoticed by anti-Royalists. In response, regicide apologists tried to present different interpretations, as we can see in John Canne's argument that 'The King is but a part or member of the Kingdom', and 'the whole, or greatest part in all politick or natural bodies is of greater power and jurisdiction, then any one particular member'.<sup>68</sup> In Canne's alternative interpretation of the body politic, the special status of the king as the head of the body politic is denied, and instead the body as a whole, comprising all the members of the body politic, is conceived of as more important than the head. This interpretation of the body politic was a radical interpretive challenge to the traditional assumptions that the king was the head of the people, and that the rise of a large number of members to power in the body politic was a violation of the natural order of the commonwealth.

The radicalism of Canne's interpretation on the relation between the head and the members is not simply confined to redefining the relation from a new perspective, but serves to justify the regicide in naturalistic terms. In Canne's judgment, it is natural and

necessary that if a member of the body politic is contagious, it should be cut off in the interest of the whole body: 'The cutting off of a contagious member, that by a Gangreen would corrupt the whole body is well warranted by nature and reason: for the safety of the whole is to be preferred before a part'.<sup>69</sup> This justification of the regicide based on the metaphor of the body politic is not only identified in Canne's argument but achieves more dramatic expression in John Goodwin: 'to leave the head still upon the body, what would it be, but to render Justice, the comeliest of all virtues, as a ridiculous and deformed Monster?'.<sup>70</sup> In a statement which seems to have been a rhetorical response to the royalist condemnation of the deformity of the body politic, and reversing royalist interpretations, Goodwin argues for the legitimacy of removing the contagious member of the body politic, the tyrannous and wicked king. These interpretations by the regicide supporters of the metaphor of the body politic demonstrate well how the same metaphor was used as a means of justifying the regicidal act, and how it was subject to different and competing meanings at the heart of the regicide controversy of 1649.

As has been shown in the different uses and interpretations of a variety of metaphors, the major figurative signs such as the king as the father of the people, the sun and the body politic were not in any way uncontested in the regicide controversy of 1649. Both Royalists and regicide apologists strove to appropriate the metaphors for their political ends, and their attempt to make their meanings their own was staunch as well as an indication of their respective loyalties. It is difficult to deny that royalist use of the metaphors was a threat. Nonetheless, it is also difficult to deny that regicide supporters also devoted themselves to disrupting the effect of metaphors which were traditionally regarded as having been in the possession of the Royalists. The significance of their contest, above all, was their enthusiasm for transforming the accepted meanings of figurative signs into the meanings suited to their political ideals, values and beliefs, and into the radical and revolutionary meanings suited to the new political circumstances of 1649. This was a process of transformation which necessarily insisted on two but not

always easily associated emphases: that figures could be persuasive or convincing in themselves, but that they were nonetheless just figures, and therefore open to whichever persuasive purposes might animate them.

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 Notes

1. Sean Kelsey, *Inventing a Republic: The Political Culture of the English Commonwealth, 1649-1653* (Manchester, 1997), p. 8.
2. *A Perfect Narrative of the Proceedings of the High Court of Justice in the Tryal of the King* (20 January 1649; E 54 (19)), p. 6.
3. Derek Hirst, *Authority and Conflict: England 1603-1658* (London, 1986), p. 291. It seems likely that there is general agreement among historians on the distinct lack of an organized revolutionary ideology or programme in the Independents' radical political actions and their subsequent establishment of the English republic. See Kelsey, 'Introduction', in *Inventing a Republic*; Sarah Barber, 'Introduction', in *Regicide and Republicanism: Politics and Ethics in the English Revolution, 1646-1659* (Edinburgh, 1998), p. 6. For details of the events of Pride's Purge, the trial and execution of Charles I, and the establishment of the republic, see Hirst, *Authority and Conflict*, chaps. 9 and 10; Barber, *Regicide and Republicanism*, chap. 5; Blair Worden, 'Introduction', in *The Rump Parliament: 1648-1653* (Cambridge, 1974), pp. 15-6.
4. Norbrook, *WER*, p. 194; Martin Dzelzainis, 'Introduction', in *idem*, ed. Claire Gruzelier, trans. *John Milton: Political Writings* (Cambridge, 1991), xi.
5. Norbrook, *WER*, p. 201.
6. On the Levellers' programmes of democratic reform, see Andrew Sharp, 'Introduction: the English Levellers, 1645-1649', in *idem*, ed. *The English Levellers* (Cambridge, 1998), xiii-xvi.
7. Elizabeth Skerpan, *The Rhetoric of Politics in the English Revolution*, p. 117.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 116.
9. John Cook, *King Charls his Case; or an Appeal to all Rational Men concerning his Tryal* (February 1649; E 542(3)), sig. [A2v]
10. Patricia Crawford, 'Charles Stuart, That Man of Blood', in *The Journal of British Studies* 16 (1977), 47, 50-53.
11. David Loewenstein, 'The king among the radicals: Godly republics, Levellers, Diggers and Fifth Monarchists', in Thomas N. Corns, ed. *The Royal Image: Representations of Charles I* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 97.
12. Skerpan, *The Rhetoric of Politics in the English Revolution*, p. 137; Gilman, *Milton's Rhetoric*, p. 101; Merritt Y. Hughes, *CPW*, III, p. 106.
13. Although Skerpan appears to make some reservations on the matter of *The Tenure's* genre, in fact she is oriented towards categorizing it into forensic rhetoric, or into the 'mixing of deliberative and forensic rhetoric' (p. 137). This categorization stems from part of her project to show how the generic differences Royalists and Independents adopted in 1649, epideictic genre *versus* deliberative and forensic rhetoric, derived from differences in their perceptions of the reader, and how the differences made a significant impact on the reader. But, in fact, as Nigel Smith points out, 'it is hard to find such a rigorous division in practice', and, as I showed in the analysis of Cook's rhetorical modes, Cook did not focus on Charles's legal cases only, nor was he unaware of the reader. Furthermore, Milton's *Tenure* indeed does not fit in exactly with any of the genres laid down by classical rhetorical tradition. See Skerpan, chaps. 5 and 6, especially pp. 137-8; Smith, *LR*, p. 40.
14. See Dzelzainis, 'introduction', in *John Milton: Political Writings*; see also Corns, *UV*, pp. 198-200.
15. On this point, see Glenn Burgess, 'The Impact on Political Thought: Rhetorics for Troubled Times', in John Morrill, ed. *The Impact of the English Civil War* (London, 1991), p. 74
16. John Canne, *The Golden Rule, or Justice Advanced* (February 1649; E 543(6)), sig. [A2v].
17. For detailed accounts of the principle of the divine right of kings, see Skerpan, chap. 4.
18. John Gauden, *The Religious & Loyal Protestation of John Gauden against the Purposes of the Army and others* (January 1649; E 538(11)), sigs. [A4r-v].
19. [Anthony Ascham], *The Original and End of Civil Power* (May 1649; E 554(16)), sig. [A3v].
20. John Goodwin, *The Obstructours of Justice; or, a Defence of the Sentence passed upon the late King* (May 1649; E 557(2)), p. 10.

21. Henry Parker, *Observations Upon Some of His Majesties Late Answers and Expresses*, in Howard Erskine-Hill and Graham Storey, eds. *Revolutionary Prose of the English Civil War* (Cambridge, 1983), p. 37.
22. Several hands, *An agreement of the people for a firm and present peace upon grounds of common right and freedom*, in Andrew Sharp, ed. *The English Levellers*, p. 97.
23. Burgess, 'The Impact of Political Thought', p. 78.
24. Philip A. Knachel, 'Introduction', in *idem*, ed. *Eikon Basilike: The Portraiture of His Sacred Majesty in His Solitudes and Sufferings* (Ithaca, New York, 1966), xi.
25. On Gauden's involvement in the composition of *Eikon Basilike* and the disputes over its authorship in the 1690s, see Robert Wilcher, 'What was the King's Book for?: The Evolution of *Eikon Basilike*', *The Yearbook of English Studies* 21 (1991), 218-28; see Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'Eikon Basiliké: the Problem of the King's Book', *History Today* 9 (1951), 7-12; see Knachel, 'Introduction', xxv-xxxii.
26. [Francis Gregory], 'On the MARTYRDOM of His Late MAJESTIE, &c', in *Vaticinium Votivum: or Palæmon's Prophetick Prayer* (March 1649; E 1217(2)), p. 69. Nearly all of the elegies contained in this book are anonymous, but Robert Wilcher identifies the writer of the elegy as Francis Gregory. See Robert Wilcher, *The Writing of Royalism 1628-1660* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 296. Another thing to note is that the same elegy was printed on 16 June with a different title called 'An Elegie upon the Death of our dread Sovereign Lord, King Charles the Martyr'. See Thomason Tracts, 669.f.14 (42).
27. Dr Juxon, Bishop of London, *The Subjects Sorrow; or Lamentations upon the Death of Brittaines Josiah, King Charles, unjustly put to Death by His owne people* (March 1649; E 546(16)), p. 23.
28. Sharpe, *REME*, pp. 143, 127.
29. Richard Helgerson, 'Milton Reads the King's Book: Print, Performance, and the Making of a Bourgeois Idol', *Criticism* 29 (1987), 3. On James I's awareness of the importance of the printed word as a way of expressing royal authority and his royal authoring of his own books, see Helgerson, 3-5; Sharpe, *REME*, pp. 134-42.
30. Lois Potter, *Secret Rites and Secret Writings: Royalist Literature, 1641-1660* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 170.
31. Knachel, 'Introduction', xii.
32. Sharpe, *REME*, p. 147. See also pp. 147-48.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 147.
34. Corns, *UV*, pp. 81, 82. On detailed accounts of polemical strategies in *Eikon Basilike*, see *idem*, pp. 81-91.
35. See David Loewenstein, *Milton and the Drama of History*, pp. 52-5; Corns, *UV*, p. 91; Knachel, xii.
36. Two leading critics who have paid attention to the *Eikon* series are Lois Potter and Marshall Grossman. While Potter discusses how the controversy over the authenticity of the *Eikon Basilike* progressed in *The Princely Pellican*, *Eikon Alethine*, *Eikon E Piste* and Milton's *Eikonoklastes*, Grossman analyzes the *Eikon* series (*The Princely Pellican* excluded, and *Eikon Aklastos* published in 1650 included) in terms of their frontispieces, titles and sub-titles. Grossman argues that the *Eikon* series may be divided into two groups, one with engraved frontispieces and similar layouts of titles and sub-titles – *Eikon Basilike*, *Eikon Alethine* and *Eikon E Piste* – and the other without frontispieces – *Eikonoklastes* and *Eikon Aklastos*. These critics' concerns are basically different from mine, because my studies are more focused on the ideological nature and operation of royal authorship, royal words and textual strategies in *Eikon Basilike* and different responses of the writers of the *Eikon* series to the issues. See Potter, *Secret Rites and Secret Writings*, pp. 176-83; Marshall Grossman, 'The Dissemination of the King', in David L. Smith, Richard Strier and David Bevington, eds. *The Theatrical City: Culture, Theatre and Politics in London, 1576-1649* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 262-65.
37. Anon., *The Princely Pellican. Royall Resolves presented in sundry choice Observations, extracted from His Majesties Divine Meditations* (June 1649; E 558(1)), p. 24. Robert Wilcher suggests that this tract might have been ascribed to John Ashburnham, a groom of the bedchamber. See *The Writing of Royalism*, p. 292.
38. Potter, *Secret Rites and Secret Writings*, p. 172.

39. James Loxley, *Royalism and Poetry in the English Civil Wars: The Drawn Sword* (Basingstoke and London, 1997), p. 170.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 180.
41. Anon., *Eikon Alethine. The Portraiture of Truths most sacred Majesty truly suffering, though not solely* (August 1649; E 569(16)), sig. Ar. The author of *Eikon Alethine* seems to have been one of the Levellers as we observe him reminding the Levellers of the power of the Royalists, despite his opposition to Presbyterians and Independents: 'Religion lies at the stake, as well as Liberty, and though we could be content to be slaves to Man; yet let us abhor a vassage to the Devill. The Presbyter and Independent in this cause are like Hypocrates twins, they must live and die together; Yea, let our Levellers call to minde, how the Curiatti standing close together were too strong for the three adverse combatants, but when by unwarinesse they were divided in the encounter, they proved all three too weak for one of their enemies' (sig. [A4r]).
42. Anon., *Eikon E Piste. Or, the faithfull Portraicture of a Loyall Subject, in vindication of Eikon Basilike* (September 1649; E 573(11)), sig. A3r.
43. Loxley, *Royalism and Poetry in the English Civil Wars*, p. 181. See also *idem*, pp. 183-84.
44. William Riley Parker, *Milton: A Biography, vol. I, The Life* (Oxford, 1968), p. 360; Derek Hirst, 'John Milton's *Eikonoklastes*: The Drama of Justice', in David L. Smith, et al., eds. *The Theatrical City: Culture, Theatre and Politics in London, 1576-1649* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 250.
45. Loxley, *Royalism and Poetry in the English Civil Wars*, p. 170.
46. For a detailed analysis of royalist elegies and sermons published in 1649, see Wilcher, *The Writing of Royalism*, chap. 11; For an account of the elegies alone published in 1649, see Potter, *Secret Rites and Secret Writings*, pp. 184-92; For the relationship between royalist elegies and royalist politics in 1649-50, see Derek Hirst, 'The Politics of Literature in the English Republic', *The Seventeenth Century* 5 (1990), 42-43; For a detailed account of the relation between royalist elegies and royalist partisan politics during the Civil War, see Loxley, *Royalism and Poetry in the English Civil Wars*, pp. 192-201; For a broad account of the elegiac genre, see Dennis Kay, *Melodious Tears: The English Funeral Elegy from Spenser to Milton* (Oxford, 1990), and also see Morton W. Bloomfield, 'The Elegy and the Elegiac Mode: Praise and Alienation', in Barbara Keifer Lewalski, ed. *Renaissance Genres: Essays on Theory, History, and Interpretation* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1986), pp. 147-57; For a detailed account of royalist sermons published in 1649, see Helen W. Randall, 'The Rise and Fall of a Martyrology: Sermons on Charles I', *HLQ* 10 (1946-47), 135-67.
47. Sharpe, *REME*, p. 104.
48. Anon., *The Insecuritie of Princes, considered in an occasionall Meditation upon the Kings late Sufferings and Death* (March 1649; E 546(25)), p. 3.
49. Anon., *Loyalties Tears flowing after the Blood of the Royal Sufferer, Charles the I* (June 1649; E 561(15)), p. 2.
50. The original page number of this quotation is p. 70, and this kind of mispagination is often found in other pamphlets. In my opinion, it is seen as an indication of the unstable state of typography at the time.
51. Sharpe, *REME*, p. 105.
52. [Payne Fisher], *Chronosticon Decollationis Caroli Regis, in Vaticinium Votivum: or Palaemon's Prophetick Prayer* (March 1649; E 1217(2)), p. 49. Norbrook identifies the author of this elegy as Payne Fisher, see Norbrook *WER*, p. 232, no. 106.
53. Gregory, 'On the MARTYRDOM of His Late MAJESTIE, &c', pp. 72-3.
54. [John Cleveland], *Majestas Intemerata; or, The Immortality of the King* (August 1649; E 1347(1)), sigs. [A8r-v].
55. Cook, *King Charls his Case*, p. 41.
56. *Ibid.*
57. Anon., *Eikon Alethine*, p. 59.
58. Thomas N. Corns, *The Development of Milton's Prose Style* (Oxford, 1982), p. 101. See also p. 94.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 120.
60. Norbrook, *WER*, p. 204.



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61. Sharpe, *REME*, p. 111.
  62. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
  63. Dr Warner, Bishop of Rochester, *The Devilish Conspiracy and Damnable Murder committed by the Jewes against the Anointed of the Lord, Christ their King* (February 1649; E 550(16)), p. 28.
  64. Dr Juxon, Bishop of London, *The Subjects Sorrow*, p. 11.
  65. Dr Warner, Bishop of Rochester, *The Devilish Conspiracy and Damnable Murder*, p. 24.
  66. John Quarles, *Regale Lectum Miseriæ; or, A Kingly Bed of Miserie* (April 1649; E 1345(1)), p. 4.
  67. [Payne Fisher], *Chronosticon Decollationis Caroli Regis*, p. 49.
  68. Canne, *The Golden Rule*, pp. 25, 26.
  69. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
  70. John Goodwin, *The Obstructours of Justice*, p. 63.

## Chapter Four: The Republican Controversy in the Cromwellian Protectorate, 1653-1656

### Modes and Problems of Legitimation in Republican Pro-Protectoral Prose:

#### Milton's *Second Defence* and Nedham's *True State*

The year 1653 saw two serious events in English political history: the dissolution of the Rump Parliament on 20 April and the establishment of the Cromwellian Protectorate on 16 December. The events of 1653 – the inauguration of Cromwell as Lord Protector in particular – created a considerable degree of criticism and attack from all sides, ‘from the royalists and religious Presbyterians on the one side, from disillusioned Independents and sectaries on the other’.<sup>1</sup> The most cardinal political implication of the Cromwellian Protectorate, however, was a fundamental shift in government form, from the republic of parliamentary rule after the regicide to a new form of government established by the Instrument of Government. Although the Instrument laid down the principles of division and balance of power between legislative and executive bodies, it was obvious that Cromwell’s powerful status as supreme power in the two bodies as well as his other prerogatives raised doubts about his single-person rule similar to those provoked by monarchical rule. In particular, strong opposition from those fearful of a return to monarchy occasioned what is called the republican controversy, and the matter of republicanism became a controversial issue between pro- and anti-Cromwellians during the Protectorate.

One of the factors that make the so-called republican controversy in the Cromwellian Protectorate a thorny question is that there is little agreement amongst historians and literary scholars over what constitutes republicanism and how republicans

such as Milton and Marchamont Nedham could reconcile their values with the single-person rule of the Cromwellian regime. Perez Zagorin, the historian of English political thought, defines republicanism negatively as ‘a doctrinaire antagonism to all forms of kingship’ or ‘any rule by a single person’, and positively as ‘the quest for a free commonwealth in which the sovereignty of the people would be untrammelled by any species of royal rule, under whatever guise or conditions’. Correspondingly, Zagorin’s estimation of Milton’s commitment to the Cromwellian regime is that Milton, unlike the republicans who parted company with the regime, was not a determined republican in 1654 when he published his *Second Defence*.<sup>2</sup> Another historian, Blair Worden, who agrees with Zagorin’s definition of republicanism on the whole but is more concerned with investigating the common characteristics of republican thought shared by a group after the regicide of 1649, makes a different judgment on the career and writings of Milton and Nedham during the Protectorate. In his view, Milton and Nedham during the Protectorate maintained their republican ideas and preoccupations whose cultivation and expansion were made possible by their shared experience of the English republic in the late 1640s and the early 1650s, which led to their veiled criticism of the new Cromwellian regime they were, on the surface, supporting in their writings.<sup>3</sup>

While historians have been mainly keen to connect the creation and development of English republicanism with the birth of the English republic as a specific constitutional form, albeit with their contrasting accounts of the nature of Milton’s or Nedham’s republicanism in the Cromwellian regime, literary scholars are more interested in the broad sense of republicanism than in specification as a precise set of constitutional arrangements. More exactly, literary scholars are concerned with the ways in which themes of classical republicanism such as ‘citizenship, public virtue and true nobility’<sup>4</sup> moulded the perceptions and values of those involved or interested in public life, and the extent to which such themes permeated their writings during the seventeenth century. From this perspective, Milton is seen as a consistent republican

who was keen on, and committed to the realization of republican values from the period of his intervention in the episcopacy controversy of 1641-42 to the period of his writing *Paradise Lost*; and his support for the Cromwellian Protectorate is seen as reflecting his belief in the possibility of experimenting with forms of government compatible with republican values.<sup>5</sup>

Whatever the extent to which historians and literary scholars are in disagreement about the nature of republicanism and the character of Milton's or Nedham's republicanism, it needs to be noted in the first place that the concept of republicanism, especially that of English republicanism, concerns constitutional arrangements for, or ideas about, a political system without a king and a government by representatives of the people. Secondly, as for the question of Milton's and Nedham's republicanism, historians and literary scholars have all paid little attention to the similarities and differences in the ways by which Milton and Nedham in 1654 legitimized the change of the constitutional fabric into the new Cromwellian Protectorate and its concomitant change of power structure from their republican perspectives. Many writings about the character of Milton's and Nedham's republicanism in the Cromwellian regime tend to focus on the question of whether they were supporting or not supporting the regime. This focus often prevents us from fully understanding the rhetorical modes and strategies by which Milton and Nedham in 1654 did not merely support the regime but participated in establishing its interests as broadly acceptable. Furthermore, it fails to take serious consideration of the problems brought about in their attempt to accommodate their republican outlook to a new political situation characterized as Cromwell's ascendancy to supreme power.

In the spring of 1654, some months after the establishment of the Cromwellian Protectorate, Milton and Nedham declared their support for the new regime in public in their respective Latin and vernacular writings: Milton, in *A Second Defence of the English People* (May 1654) and Nedham, in *A True State of the Case of the*

*Commonwealth* (February 1654). Milton's *Second Defence* and Nedham's *True State* draw our particular attention in comparison with other pro-Protectoral writings published in the first half of 1654, on the grounds that these two writers were among the most prominent ideologues who devoted themselves to establishing the legitimacy of the English republic and its rulers after the execution of Charles I.<sup>6</sup> As we have seen in chapter 3, one of Milton's central theses in justifying the regicide in *The Tenure* was the principle of popular sovereignty, and he defended parliamentary sovereignty over royal supremacy in *Eikonoklastes* as a way of legitimating the republican government. Milton in his *First Defence* (February 1651) reaffirmed 'The power of Parliament, which is actually and truly the supreme power of the people joined together in that council' (*CPW*, IV:I.488), and went on to make the point of the superiority of the republican system of government over the monarchy by marshalling the examples of biblical and Roman republics. In a series of editorials for *Mercurius Politicus* in 1651-52 and *The Excellency of a Free State* ([29 June] 1656) in which the editorials were brought together as a treatise, Nedham also took on the task of legitimizing the excellence of the republican form of government based on the people's consent and rights over the king's single-person rule and tyranny in a monarchy. If this is the case, it is not difficult to imagine that this republican discourse by Milton and Nedham would have been influenced by the shift in political system from parliamentary to Protectoral rule and the related transfer of their allegiances; that their pro-Protectoral treatises in 1654 would have entailed change in the traits of their republican discourse in one way or another.

What is noticeable in Milton's *Second Defence* and Nedham's *True State* in the first place is that they show considerable differences in the choice of topics and rhetorical genres. Nedham's *True State*, which appeared less than two months after the establishment of the Protectorate, is an official articulation of the legitimacy of the change of government form, whereas Milton's *Second Defence* is a somewhat belated rebuttal to *The Cry of the Royal Blood to Heaven Against the English Parricides*, a tract

written in 1652 in condemnation of the regicides and of Milton, who earned international attention for his slanderous attacks on Salmasius in the *First Defence*. On the level of the overall formal structure, the two tracts follow the six-part structure of classical rhetoric despite the fact that in the case of Milton's *Second Defence*, *divisio* and *refutatio* are not rigorously separated, and the role of digression is conspicuous in two parts, one in his eulogy of Christina, Queen of Sweden, and the other in his accounts of his family, his education and his writings. But when it comes to the question of rhetorical genre, Nedham's treatise comes close to the genre of forensic rhetoric, while in Milton's deliberative and epideictic rhetoric are frequently in use.

Although Nedham's *True State* is not oriented towards the legal court, its generic form is similar to that of forensic rhetoric: its main purpose is to accuse former regimes of illegitimacy and also to defend both the necessity of the dissolution of the two Parliaments and the legitimacy of the institution of the new Cromwellian regime. We have already seen in chapter 3 the characteristic modes in which Cook's forensic rhetoric in *King Charls his Case* was linked to the ideological functions of legitimation and delegitimation. Nedham's forensic rhetoric in *A True State* involves a similar ideological function and mode.

Of particular concern to us here is the ways in which Nedham, who had been a republican ideologue of the Rump Parliament, argued for the legitimacy of the new Cromwellian government through criticism of that Parliament. In Nedham's view, one of the main problems in the Rump Parliament was the entire concentration of power around the Parliament and its inevitable corollary, corruption and tyranny, and a solution to it was the separation of legislative and executive powers:

it was found at length by experience, that a standing Parliament was it self the greatest Grievance; which appeared yet the more exceedingly grievous, in regard of a visible designe carried on by some among them, to have perpetuated the Power in their own Hands, insomuch that they never made any the least shew of a new Representative or Parliament, till they understood that the Army were



resolved to end their sitting. ... placing the *Legislative* and *executive Powers* in the same persons, is a marvellous In-let of Corruption and Tyranny: whereas the keeping of these two apart, flowing in distinct Channels; so that they may never meet in one (save upon some transitory extraordinary occasion) there lies a grand Secret of Liberty and good Government.<sup>7</sup>

Denouncing the legitimacy of the Rump Parliament in its entirety, Nedham assumes that the present government is a republican government based on the complete separation of legislative and executive powers. Furthermore, he tries to distinguish the differences between Protectorship and kingship through the contention that unlike kingship, Protectorship is elective and its power originates from the people: 'the Government now is to be managed by a Person that is *elective*, and that Election must take its rise originally and virtually from the People, as we shall fully evince by and by, in particular, and shew that all power both *Legislative* and *Executive*, doth flow from the Community; than which there cannot be a greater Evidence of publike Freedom' (pp. 28-9). What is remarkable about Nedham's interpretation of the Lord Protector is that he attempts to confine the office to the head of administration assisted by a Council in the principle of the absolute divorce of administration from legislation: 'in the present Constitution, the *Legislative* and *Executive Powers* are separated; the former being vested in a constant succession of Parliaments elective by the People, the latter in an elective *Lord Protector* and his Successors by a Council' (p. 51). Nedham's attempt to legitimate the recently established government and Protectorship through his delegitimation of the Rump Parliament is, above all, well summed up in the figurative sign of the body politic:

Now it cannot in reason be imagined, that because the great Body of the People may sometimes abound with ill humors and distempers, therefore it should be perpetually under the hands of it's Physicians: This may sooner kill than cure. The ordinary preventive physick in a State against growing maladies, is execution and administration of Law and Justice, which must be left to its Officers. (p. 23)

Although Nedham's use of the metaphor of the body politic looks like that of the Royalists, the crucial difference is that there is no place for a king as the head of the body politic in Nedham's version. To make a clear-cut distinction between the status of Protector and that of king, Nedham consciously avoids mention of the head of the body politic as a symbolic representation of a king; instead, he emphasizes the importance of administrative officers – Lord Protector included – as a means of preventing ailments of the state as a body.

Nedham's emphasis on the separation between legislative and executive powers, the reduction of the station of Lord Protector to the office of administration, and the distinction between the Protectorate and the monarchy primarily derives from his own interpretations of the Instrument of Government. The important thing to note is that these serve to legitimate the recent change of form of government by offering an interpretation as advantageous as possible to the interests of the government, and that central to this work of legitimation is Nedham's endeavour to present the new government as republican in form but with a better political system than before. Though Nedham underscores the structural supremacy of the new government over the Rump Parliament on the basis of its break with the former political system, he does not disavow any connection with the basic principles of republicanism as an official ideology of the Rump Parliament; they are, rather, basic to Nedham's rhetorical strategy of legitimation. That strategy stresses the continuity of the new government with the previous republican government. Justifying the similarities of the two political systems in the light of republican tenets, Nedham writes that 'it will appear the Government is sufficiently popular' (p. 29) and 'that the exercise of this Sovereign Power [the *Enacting*, and *the altering or annulling of Laws*] by the People, may not by any means be avoided' (p. 30). This attention to the popular and parliamentary foundation of the new government is fundamental to Nedham's rhetorical strategy to republicanize the government; and if there is any difference from the former republican form of

government except in its principles, it is, according to him, only the introduction of the office of Lord Protector and the separation between legislative and executive bodies for administrative efficiency and the prevention of parliamentary tyranny and corruption. Hence Nedham's statement: 'though the Commonwealth may now appear with a new face in the outward Form, yet it remains still the same in Substance, and is of a better complexion and constitution then heretofore' (p. 28).

Despite Nedham's rhetorical move to contain the new Cromwellian government in his republican interpretive framework, difficulties remained. The first difficulty was that Nedham's attempt to restrict the office of Lord Protector to that of head of the administration conflicted with the real power of Lord Protector laid down in the Instrument of Government. Clauses I and II of the written constitution clearly stipulated the Lord Protector's supreme authority to be overarching both in the legislative and executive bodies.<sup>8</sup> Nedham in *A True State* took very great pains to swerve away from the perplexing question in his rhetorical gesture of focusing on the republican nature of the new government. Notwithstanding Nedham's denial of the Protector's inordinate power in *refutatio*, a question still remained as to whether the power of Cromwell as a *de facto* ruler could, in reality, be held in check, as revealed in the dissolution of the first Protectorate Parliament by Cromwell on 22 January 1655, an earlier date than the minimum of five months' sitting stipulated in clause VIII of the Instrument.

The second problem was that the similarity between the Protectoral system and the monarchy was not entirely eliminated in Nedham's republican language. For instance, Nedham states that 'it was the wisdom and care of our Ancestors, so to temper the Government of our Nation in time past, that they left the Supreme *Law-making Power* among the people in Parliament, to sit at some times, and be-trusted the *Execution of Law*, with the mysteries of Government, in the hands of a single person and his Council' (pp. 10-11). There seems no doubt that this statement is Nedham's republican reinterpretation of the traditional English political system in its approval of mixed

government. But it is also hard to deny that it is reminiscent of the old days of the monarchy by blurring the borderline between the present government and the monarchy. In spite of Nedham's decisive rhetorical posture to distinguish between the Protectorate and the monarchy from his republican perspective, his language in *A True State* sometimes oscillates between monarchist and republican.<sup>9</sup> This oscillation in Nedham's language can be seen as a failure in his rhetorical strategy of anchoring the new Cromwellian regime to the terms of republicanism, but on the other hand, it demonstrates the degree to which Nedham both as a republican and a Cromwellian faces a serious dilemma in reconciling his republican positions with the ostensibly semi-monarchical Cromwellian Protectorate.

Milton faces a similar dilemma in *A Second Defence*, but with different subject matter and rhetorical genres. He appears to a considerable degree to be still tied up with the former events of the regicide and the establishment of the English republic, but this time oriented towards European readers as in *A First Defence*. In terms of rhetorical genre, much of Milton's *Second Defence* adopts classical deliberative rhetoric, as he assumes that he is delivering his 'speech' to 'the entire assembly and council of all the most influential men, and cities, and nations everywhere' (*CPW*, IV:I.548, 554). But epideictic rhetoric also constitutes a crucial generic form in the *Second Defence*, when he praises the founders of the English republic such as John Bradshaw, Sir Thomas Fairfax and Oliver Cromwell. In particular, the epideictic rhetoric Milton uses in his *peroratio* to eulogize Cromwell is not only an index to the changed political situation of the rule of the Protectorate, but has an immediate connection with the ideological function of legitimating the rule. As mentioned briefly above, Milton's attitude towards the Cromwellian regime in the *Second Defence* is a subject of disagreement amongst historians and literary scholars. On the one hand, it is argued that Milton expressed reservations about, or conducted a veiled criticism of, the Cromwellian regime, but on the other hand, it is argued that he had no intention of criticizing the regime he had still

served. Laura Lunger Knoppers, a critic taking the latter standpoint, argues that a recent critical tendency focusing on a republican Milton has contributed to strengthening the position of the former, and suggests instead that the ‘Protestant ideals’ they shared led Milton not to criticize Cromwell, but to defend him from his opponents’ attacks.<sup>10</sup> Although it cannot be denied that Knoppers’ case does have some validity, it ignores the point that Milton as a republican politician did have a reason to support Cromwell and his government, on the grounds that Milton saw the Cromwellian Protectorate as a viable republican alternative to the problematic former governments.

Like Nedham, Milton claims the legitimacy of the Protectoral rule, dependent on the delegitimation of the former Rump and Nominated Parliaments. Yet whereas Nedham is concerned with justifying the necessity of the change of political system, or a constitution, focusing on the structural drawbacks especially of the Rump, Milton is more interested in establishing the legitimacy of Cromwell’s dissolution of the Rump, pointing up the ex-Rumpers’ pursuit of personal interests:

When you saw delays being contrived and every man more attentive to his private interest than to that of the state, when you saw the people complaining that they had been deluded of their hopes and circumvented by the power of the few, you put an end to the domination of these few men, since they, although so often warned, had refused to do so. (IV:I.671)

In addition to the short critique of the ex-Rumpers’ preoccupations with their own private interests, Milton, like Nedham in *A True State*, paradoxically stresses the continuity between the new Cromwellian Protectorate and the former republican government. Yet if Nedham, as we have seen, sought to establish the republican continuity between two political systems on the basis of the principle of popular sovereignty, Milton tries to do so by blurring the distinction between the two. The evidence is found in Milton’s panegyric of John Bradshaw and Sir Thomas Fairfax in the *Second Defence*. At first glance, Milton’s encomium seems to be intended to pay

tribute to the heroes of the old days of the Commonwealth in accordance with his polemical purpose of rebutting Alexander More's *The Cry of the Royal Blood*.<sup>11</sup> And his particular tribute to Bradshaw, who became a staunch republican opponent of Cromwell's rule after the dissolution of the Rump, can be seen as an attempt to reconcile him with the Cromwellian Protectorate. But on the other hand, the summoning up of the republican heroes of the former government has the effect of obscuring the recent change in form of government and therefore reinforcing the republican similarity between the former and the present government.

This mode of republicanizing the present government by neglecting its difference from its predecessors turns to enthusiastic support of Cromwell and his regime in his *peroratio*. Milton's *peroratio* in the *Second Defence* mainly consists of two parts – his long panegyric of Cromwell and advice to the English people – but his naming or commemoration of the councillors should be noted as well. Most of the counsellors to whom Milton paid tribute in the *peroratio* were already on the list of Protectoral Council members, and they were also conservatives of gentry origin.<sup>12</sup> Milton takes part in securing the legitimacy of the present Protectoral system operated by Cromwell and his Council, and is concerned with the maintenance and rebuilding of the English republic by these governing groups: 'If the republic should miscarry, so to speak, and as quickly vanish, surely no greater shame and disgrace could befall this country' (IV:I.673). This primary concern of Milton's is accompanied by his conscious avoidance of mentioning the principles of parliamentary and popular sovereignty. Unlike Nedham, Milton's address to the English people is mainly focused on the moral issues of the people's self-discipline as a necessary condition of their achievement of liberty rather than on the political ones of the people's participation in the process of government. Sarah Barber, who has seized upon the shift of 'the nature of Milton's republican discourse' in the *peroratio*, only points out that Milton's republican discourse shifted in emphasis from concerns with the state to Cromwell's fitness for rule.<sup>13</sup> But Milton's statements about



Cromwell, the councillors and the English people in the *peroratio* indicate the wholesale change in his perceptions of what a republican framework should be.

This shift in Milton's republican discourse is sharply marked when Cromwell is dubbed 'the father of your country' (IV:I.672). We have already seen in chapter 3 a conflict within the field of signification surrounding the figurative sign of 'the father of the country'; and that at the time Milton in *Eikonoklastes* tried to replace the meaning designating King Charles I with that of Parliament. It is suggested that Milton's naming Cromwell 'the father of your country' in the *Second Defence* is his implicit approval of 'the ideological proximity' between Protectorship and kingship,<sup>14</sup> but he draws a clear demarcation between them: 'The name of king you spurned from your far greater eminence, and rightly so' (IV:I.672). Notwithstanding the distinction between Protectorship and kingship, Milton does not try to find any appropriate term to define the status of Lord Protector. He avoids referring to Cromwell by the title of Lord Protector, instead favouring the figurative appellation 'the father of the country': 'you assumed a certain title very like that of father of your country' (IV:I.672). This anxiety about the name 'Lord Protector' as much as about that of 'king' does weaken the effectiveness of the work of legitimating the present government and its ruler. His optional choice of the figurative title 'father of your country' is also problematic, since it is a politically fraught word smacking of royalist appropriation. This problem of naming exemplifies the striking change in Milton's republican discourse, but on the other hand it demonstrates how difficult it was for a republican Milton to establish in language the legitimacy of Cromwell's status and authority as distinct from kingship.

This difficulty is increased when the deployment of the figurative title is circumscribed by another labeling for designating Cromwell, 'the greatest and most illustrious citizen' (IV:I.672). For Milton, Cromwell is the father of the country, and, at the same time, a citizen of the English republic. Milton's identification of these seemingly contradictory statuses of Cromwell reflects the extent to which Milton's

language, like Nedham's, remained unsettled in either direction, republican or monarchist; Milton, like Nedham, encountered a very awkward predicament when he sought to adjust his republican positions to the new political circumstances of Cromwellian rule. This linguistic uncertainty originated from the difficulty of anchoring firmly the meaning of Cromwell within their republican terms, and could be seen as revealing the difficulty of legitimating the Protectorate from their republican perspectives.

### **Legitimation in Poetry:**

#### **Marvell's *First Anniversary* and Wither's *Protector***

If the year 1654 saw rhetorical modes and problems in legitimizing the Protectorate exemplified in republican pro-Cromwellian prose by Milton and Nedham, the year 1655 witnessed the appearance of two poems undertaking similar ideological functions from similar republican perspectives: Andrew Marvell's *The First Anniversary of the Government under His Highness the Lord Protector, 1655* and *The Protector* by George Wither. These texts have much in common with Milton's *Second Defence* and Nedham's *True State* in terms of their ideological function of legitimation, but we need to be wary of the fact that they were written in different political circumstances – and in the characteristic forms of poetic legitimation. Marvell's *First Anniversary* was probably written in December 1654, and Thomason recorded its publication on 17 January 1655, while the first edition of Wither's *Protector* was alleged by Thomason to have been published on 6 July 1655, followed by its enlarged second edition on 29 August 1655. This period saw the summoning of an elected Parliament as laid down in the Instrument of Government, deepening conflicts between Cromwell and Parliament surrounding the revision of the written constitution, and the eventual dissolution of this first Protectorate

Parliament, by Cromwell, without its consent. The poems by Marvell and Wither were, in one way or another, connected to the changing political situation when the two poets were seeking to legitimate the Protectorate and Cromwell's rule.

Marvell's *First Anniversary*, as its title illustrates, is an occasional poem celebrating the first anniversary of Cromwell's Protectorate, but the poem embraces Marvell's complex meditation on the constitutional issues embodied in the Instrument of Government.<sup>15</sup> The Instrument of Government – one of the main motifs of the poem – was considerably controversial from the time of the meeting of the first Protectorate Parliament, which functioned not merely as a legislative body but as 'a kind of constitutional convention' for the review and revision of the constitution.<sup>16</sup> Discussions about the revision of the Instrument were in difficulty from the outset, not least because of republicans' challenge to 'the very foundations of the Protectorate and the authority of the Protector', which led to Cromwell's demand for the 'recognition of the government' – a kind of engagement oath which forbade all parliamentarians to alter the government by a single person and Parliament – and to the exclusion of staunch republicans who refused to sign it from the sitting of Parliament.<sup>17</sup> While bitter wrangles over the Instrument of Government continued in Parliament, outside Parliament the Protectorate system met with strong opposition in late 1654 and early 1655 from Army republicans such as Thomas Saunders, John Okey, and Matthew Allured, who signed *The Petition of several Colonels of the Army* ([8 October] 1654), and Edmund Ludlow, who was involved in the circulation of copies of the colonels' petition and *Some Momentos for the Officers and Souldiers of the Army* ([19 October] 1654) in Ireland.<sup>18</sup>

Marvell's *First Anniversary* presents a different picture of the Instrument, in spite of these great disputes surrounding it in and outside Parliament:

Such was that wondrous order and consent,  
When Cromwell tuned the ruling Instrument,  
While tedious statesmen many years did hack,

Framing a liberty that still went back,  
 Whose numerous gorge could swallow in an hour  
 That island, which the sea cannot devour:  
 Then our Amphion issues out and sings,  
 And once he struck, and twice, the powerful strings.  
 (ll. 67-74)<sup>19</sup>

The Instrument of Government, in actuality, was an unstable, conflicted sign – a sign in discord; but the discordant and political sign is by Marvell’s poetic conceit given the musical value of harmony. Marvell assumes that the Instrument was instituted on the basis of ‘order and consent’, but as Warren Chernaik points out, ‘it was precisely consent which was lacking to the proposed Cromwellian constitutional settlement’.<sup>20</sup> Although we don’t know whether with the publication of this poem Marvell had the specific aim of prompting parliamentarians to endorse the Instrument, what is evident is that he sought to legitimate the Protectorate system and its constitutional foundation – the Instrument of Government – by erasing the traces of cacophony surrounding the Instrument and, furthermore, by transforming the meaning of the conflicted sign into that of musical concord. This distinctive mode of Marvell’s poetic legitimation is strengthened by the analogy between Cromwell and Amphion. Just as Amphion erected ‘the Theban tower’ (l. 60) with a golden lyre which the god Hermes gave him, so Cromwell is represented by Marvell as a powerful musician who has contributed to founding a new state with the Instrument.

The new state founded by Cromwell, in Marvell’s view, is not a monarchy but a republic, as the following line demonstrates, ‘The Commonwealth then first together came’ (l. 75). But Marvell’s mode of legitimating the new republic shows a marked difference, in one respect, from that of Milton and Nedham. Whereas Milton and Nedham went to great lengths to emphasize the republican continuity between the former government and the Protectorate, Marvell lays more focus on the break with the former republican government and the new republican character of the Protectorate.

Marvell denounces the former Rumpers as 'tedious statesmen', and line 75, by implication, evokes the disunity and conflicts of the former republican government. Marvell's resort to these negative aspects of the former government and its politicians, by contrast, produces the rhetorical effect of giving prominence to the birth of the new republic and its relative merits in terms of order and harmony.

A related element in Marvell's poetic legitimation is his depiction of the new republic as an architectural structure:

The Commonwealth does through their centres all  
 Draw the circumference of the public wall;  
 The crossest spirits here do take their part,  
 Fastening the contignation which they thwart;  
 And they, whose nature leads them to divide,  
 Uphold this one, and that the other side;  
 But the most equal still sustain the height,  
 And they as pillars keep the work upright,  
 While the resistance of opposèd minds,  
 The fabric (as with arches) stronger binds,  
 Which on the basis of a senate free,  
 Knit by the roof's protecting weight, agree.  
 (ll. 87-98)

In the current ideal republic envisioned by Marvell there are 'centres' and 'circumference' each composed of distinctive groups in function and kind. The groups at the centre are 'the most equal' citizens, a free Parliament and Lord Protector, each of whom functions as pillars, foundation and roof of the republican structure; and the groups at the circumference are the 'crossest spirits' and 'opposèd minds' placed in the outer wall or at each side of arches. These two groups are basically different in kind: whereas the first groups in their necessary places contribute to establishing the unity and harmony of the republican frame, the other groups seek not only to deviate from those at the centres but also to ferment division and conflict. This present republican structure does not exclude opposing interests from its whole structure, but acknowledges them as

its necessary elements.<sup>21</sup> In Marvell's imagined republican structure, an almost paradoxical combination of centrifugal and centripetal forces holds it all together; opposition here is both necessary and limited in its effects. In a sense, the republic is being managed in a situation of complex conflict and tension between centre and circumference.

Particularly noteworthy is the position of Lord Protector in this republican structure. Marvell presents the Lord Protector as only one element or one part of the centres in the structure. Although the Protector holds a function and role different from the others, Marvell's architectural figure suggests that he is no more or less than other citizens and parliamentarians, and is just a constitutive part of the whole building as 'the roof's protecting weight'. As Joad Raymond says, 'Marvell puts the Protector in control of the process of building but gives him neither absolute sovereignty nor autonomy. He is a roof'.<sup>22</sup> Marvell's assertion of the Protector's equal status with other members of the republican building is made in another line: 'At home a subject on the equal floor' (l. 390). But the problem is that *The First Anniversary* permits a complex tension and conflict in the representation of the positions of Cromwell as the Lord Protector. In Marvell's analogy between Cromwell and Amphiion the Protector has been described as a powerful leader, the legislator of a new republic, and yet here Cromwell is represented as a subject on an equal footing with other members of the republic. Marvell's representation of these two positions of Cromwell's in the republic gives rise to a suspended tension and conflict.

More problematic still is Marvell's representation of Cromwell through traditional royalist metaphors:

Cromwell alone with greater vigour runs,  
(Sun-like) the stages of succeeding suns ...

When for his foot he thus a place had found,



He hurls e'er since the world about him round,  
 And in his several aspects, like a star,  
 Here shines in peace, and thither shoots in war,  
 While by his beams observing princes steer,  
 And wisely court the influence they fear.

(ll. 7-8, 99-104)

Marvell's appropriation, of course, transforms such commonplaces of royalist discourse. Cromwell is compared to the only Sun superior to ordinary suns which could signify hereditary kings, and also to a star over the sea whose beams guide the direction of inactive and slothful kings. Thus the metaphors of the sun and a star are bound to Marvell's semantic reconstruction so as to illustrate the fact that Cromwell is a presence more vigorous and magnificent than 'heavy monarchs' (l. 15) or slothful princes. The process of this signification is both strategic and ideological, for it involves Marvell's intention of making a clear-cut distinction between the presence of Cromwell and that of kings, and, therefore, of legitimating the dynamic character of Cromwell's rule. But the problem here is that such an appropriation of kingly metaphors makes it difficult to insist on a clear demarcation between Protectorship and kingship. As we saw in the regicide controversy, the metaphor of the sun was put to new uses in such various ways as to symbolize the High Court of Justice, the people and a peaceful Reformation, rejecting the exclusive representation of kingly power. During the period of the Rump Parliament, the 'once royal image of the sun', as Derek Hirst points out, 'figured uncontroversially in rhetoric about republican government'.<sup>23</sup> It appears that Marvell's use of the metaphor moves back to referring to the authority and power of 'one-person', recalling the king's rule. It is not to say that Marvell's figurative representation is used as a means for making Cromwell more kingly than kings. The point is that it entails the possibility of making univocal the 'social *multiaccentuality*'<sup>24</sup> of the figurative sign that emerged fully in the aftermath of the regicide and the new political experiment of the republican government. In other words, Marvell's exploitation of the metaphor is in

danger of returning it to the original royalist meaning of the ruler's authority and glory, excluding other semantic possibilities.

The question is whether this figurative justification of the presence of Cromwell could be compatible with the meaning of Cromwell as a subject of the English republic. Marvell's investment of the more elevated meaning than the authority of kings in Cromwell, on the one hand, could leave room for the misreading of the poem as 'an argument that Cromwell should accept the English crown and institute a new dynasty of kings'.<sup>25</sup> Yet, on the other hand, it demonstrates that like Milton in 1654, Marvell as a Cromwellian republican was faced with a difficult dilemma in relation to the positioning of Cromwell. If the dilemma is evinced in Milton's *Second Defence* as an unresolved conflict about Cromwell's status as both a citizen of a republic and the father of the country, it is represented in Marvell's *First Anniversary* as a semantic conflict between a subject circumscribed by the constitution and a heroic ruler with might and authority far surpassing kings. Conal Condren writes,

The word subject, *subdites* or the Tuscan *soggetto* referred universally to membership of a polity, specifying a legally and ethically subjected status. A subject was thus anyone whose ruler (King, Prince, Parliament, Queen or Sovereign) had an unequivocal right to expect submission. If this was expressed in *nominal* terms, a subject was definitionally subjected, nothing more or less.<sup>26</sup>

This poem, written at a time when the question of sovereignty was heatedly debated in Parliament, invests the oppositional meanings of subject and ruler in a nominal definition in the one person of Cromwell. The mutually contradictory, and so conflicting, specifications of Cromwell's status, in fact, remain unresolved in Marvell's poem, which makes the work of positioning Cromwell in a republican structure problematic.

If Marvell's *First Anniversary* registers such a potential tension and conflict between the two meanings in Cromwell's status, Wither's *Protector* is oriented towards stressing Cromwell's supreme power. This tendency is identified in the epistle

dedicatory to Oliver Cromwell: ‘To the High and Mighty, *OLIVER*, By the grace of God, of the Commonwealth of *England, Scotland, France and Ireland*, with the Isles and Dominions thereof. Imperial *PROTECTOR*’.<sup>27</sup> The primary concern of his poem, however, is not with Cromwell’s personal power or his individual merits but with the office and title of Lord Protector. Wither makes it manifest in his title page, ‘The Protector. A Poem Briefly illustrating the Supereminency of that Dignity; AND, Rationally demonstrating, that the Title of *PROTECTOR*, providentially conferred upon the *Supreme Governour* of the *British Republike*, is the most Honourable of all Titles, and that, which, probably, promiseth most Propitiousness to these *Nations*; if our *Sins* and *Divisions* prevent it not’, and he also declares it in his prefatory poem to the readers: ‘*The Subject of my Muse, is now a TITLE*’ (sig. Br). This examination of the office and title of Lord Protector necessarily embraces Wither’s wider concerns with the constitutional structure of the Protectorate, the relationship between the Instrument of Government and Lord Protector, and Cromwell as the first office holder of Lord Protector.

Like Marvell, Wither conceives of the Protectoral system as a republican form of government, as he calls it ‘the *British Republike*’; and at the heart of the British republic is its supreme governor, that is, Lord Protector. The first noticeable mode in which Wither legitimates the British republic and its governor is through his reflection on the relationship between things and names and his opposition to the name of a king and its meanings:

But, I heed, that, when *Things* and *Names* agree,  
 And, that, when joyn’d by *Providence* they be,  
 There’s somewhat in it, of more *Consequence*  
 Then all men, at first sight, collect from thence:  
 Especially, when *old Names*, may obstruct  
 Th’*effects*, which changing of a *Name* product,  
 As in this present case; which, some, that have  
 More *Wit* then *Grace*, do well enough perceive.

Why, then, should we desire again that *Thing*,  
 Which, formerly, these *Nations* call'd a *King*?  
 Or, so much as the *Name* of that retain,  
 To which, we long in bondage did remain?  
 As if it had bewitch'd us, still, to bear  
 Some *mark* of that, whereby inthral'd we were?  
 And, which did by *relapse* (do what we could)  
 Corrupt, still, into what it was of *Old*?  
 Why should we court it now? whilst on us lies  
 The heavie burthens, which their *Tyrannies*  
 Occasion'd? and, before the wounds are cur'd,  
 Which, we, in casting off those Chains, endur'd?  
 (pp. 3-4)

A basic premise in Wither's system of signification is his belief in the possibility of congruence between things and names, that is, between things and signs. The change of a thing, according to his argument, should be accompanied by a change of sign. The sign of a king, he argues, is a sign of the old order whose meanings involve tyranny and bondage, and whose effects impede the creation of a new signification. In the eyes of Wither, the sign of Lord Protector is fundamentally different from that of a king, since it is closely bound up with the new process of signification:

This glorious *Title*, hath in it exprest,  
 No stamp of *Self-relation*, like the rest;  
 But, marks forth *One*, (as if from heav'n sent down)  
 Who seeks his *Peoples* weal, more then his *own*. ...

It is a *Name* of *mercy* and *affection*,  
 Which, not alone engageth to *Protection*,  
 But, likewise to a strenuous *Opposition*  
 Of *Tyrants*, *Tyrannies*, and all *Oppression*.  
 (p. 14)

Wither invests the sign of Lord Protector with a variety of positive meanings – its pursuit of the people's well-being, its association with emotional faculties such as mercy,

affection and protection, and its tenacious opposition to tyranny and oppression – as anathema to the meanings of the sign ‘king’. There is no denying, of course, that this attempt to produce a new signification in the sign of Lord Protector is, in the first place, associated with the political purposes of legitimating Cromwell’s rule by alluding to an implicit relation between the sign and the present ruling power; secondly, it is concerned with Wither’s rhetorical effort to convince Cromwell’s opponents, especially those of republican principles, that Protectorship is fundamentally different from kingship. Here, Wither does offer an explicit account of the role of naming or signification in political processes, but it is doubtful that his attempt to legitimate Protectoral rule in the direct link between the name ‘Protector’ and its new meanings is properly successful. For Wither himself is uncertain about the possibility of Cromwell’s taking the name of king and therefore of returning to the old order of monarchy:

Why by the name of *King*, should we now call him,  
 Which is below the *Honours*, that befall him;  
 And makes him to be rather *less* then *greater*,  
 (As in himself) and rather *worse* then *better*  
 As to his *People*? For, it renders voyd  
 The *Dignity* confer’d; and, now enjo’d.  
 At best, it mixeth with it, but as *Clay*  
 With *Iron*, which, both takes the *strength* away,  
 And *value* of it: adding thereunto,  
 Nothing, but what that *structure* may undo.  
 It cracks the *Instrument*, which doth invest  
 Him in his *Pow’r*; and lames his *Interest*:  
 Yea, and disables him, to prosecute  
 That *Duty*, whereto, it did him depute.  
 (pp. 4-5)

When Charles I was executed in 1649, the ‘thing King’ was eliminated but ‘the name was nonetheless appropriated to procure both respect and disrespect’.<sup>28</sup> As we have seen in chapter 3, the name of king constituted a central part of the semantic conflict between Royalists and regicide apologists, with the former devoted to endowing the name with

its traditional and authoritative meanings and the latter with the meanings of tyranny and oppression. For Wither, that Cromwell is called ‘the name of *King*’ signifies the revival of the ‘thing King’, its office, and the detestable meanings attached to the name. Wither’s rhetorical question reveals his misgivings and apprehensions about the material and semantic consequences of Cromwell being called ‘the name of *King*’, which unsettles the foundations of his strategies for legitimation and persuasion. In fact, Wither’s anxiety about naming was not irrelevant to the sweeping changes towards the monarchist direction after the failure of compromise between Cromwell and Parliament. As Kevin Sharpe notes, ‘During 1654 and 1655, as the failure of parliaments signalled the broader failure to settle, royalists and others called for a return to monarchy and urged Cromwell to be the instruments for the restoration of the Stuarts’.<sup>29</sup> Faced with the drift towards monarchism, Wither tries to emphasize the republican implications of the name ‘Protector’ and its meanings, and therefore to contain the Lord Protector within the boundary of a republican structure and its constitutional basis, the Instrument of Government. Even though we acknowledge Wither’s attention to the significance of naming the Lord Protector as stemming from his desire to counter this trend towards monarchism, it is true that the anxiety about naming makes his republican justification of the Protectorate vulnerable. In a sense, his invaluable insight into the role of naming in the work of legitimation reduces its value to an attempt to close down the unpredictable possibility of the conversion of Protectorship into kingship.

David Norbrook has attended to ideas and imagery shared by Marvell and Wither in *The First Anniversary* and *The Protector*: their opposition to kingship, their combination of religious and secular languages, and their use of architectural and astronomical imagery.<sup>30</sup> When it comes to the question of the relation between the constitution and Lord Protector, however, their differences are as evident as their similarities. Although Marvell in his poem has not altogether resolved the contradictory fissure between Cromwell swaying ‘the ruling Instrument’ (l. 68) and Cromwell as ‘a



subject on the equal floor' (l. 390), nevertheless he tries to define the position of Cromwell as a subject equal to others. By contrast, Wither does not show such a perception of Cromwell's position. To Wither, Cromwell is represented as none other than the Instrument of Government: 'it is *He / Who*, was that happie *Instrument*' (p. 31). And whereas Marvell leaves the question of sovereignty unanswered, Wither leaves no doubt as to the question. To Wither, it is Cromwell who is the holder of sovereignty or supreme authority, and he urges obedience to the sovereign:

If we expect a *Blessing*, let us, too,  
 Without *Hypocrisie*, our duties do,  
 To those in *Pow'r*: To him, partic'larly,  
 That, over us, hath now the *Sov'raignty*;  
 With true obedience, not in shew, or word,  
 Ascribing, what our hearts do not afford [.]  
 (p. 26)

The difference between their attitudes towards the question of sovereignty may be relevant to the political circumstances of the time when *The First Anniversary* and *The Protector* were written or published. As Wilbur Cortez Abbot points out, during the sitting of the first Protectorate Parliament, 'the real issue was, in fact, whether the Protector or the Parliament should be the "supreme authority" in the British Isles'.<sup>31</sup> Marvell leaves the question unresolved in his poem, but Wither, in contrast, writing after Cromwell dissolved the Parliament and became the absolute ruler of the British Isles, suggests rather a definite answer. Whatever the impact of the changed political circumstances on their perceptions of Cromwell's position in the state, it should be noted that Wither tries to legitimate Cromwell's Protectorate in his explicit endorsement of Cromwell's supreme power and his implicit demand for obedience to it. This is not, of course, to claim that there is no conflict over the meaning of the title 'Lord Protector' in the poem. When Wither in his poem refers to the Protector as 'our *Chief*' and

'*President*' (p. 11), the name has something in common with the sense of the administrative head of the republic, as Nedham tried to define it in *A True State*. Yet when he writes that 'our PROTECTOR is ... that, which to his *Highness* doth derive, / As absolute, and as *Supreme a Pow'r* / As that of *Kingship*, or of *Emperour*' (p. 6), the name involves the sense of a ruler's absolute authority or power. Notwithstanding the collision of the two meanings of the Protector, the poem's prevailing tone approximates to reinforcing the meaning of the latter.

In that respect, it is no wonder that Wither's legitimation of the Protector's supreme power is made in the figurative representation of the Protector. To begin with, Wither likens the Lord Protector's greatness to the sun: 'your *Sun* / Wants not my *Candle*, nor needs this be done' (sig. [A3r]). What is more revealing than the analogy of the sun in *The Protector*, however, is the presentation of the Protector as the northern star. This analogy appears in the poem twice, once in the dedicatory address to Cromwell, and twice in the main text:

*LORD, of the noblest of all Sovereign Stiles,  
Of BRITAN's Empire, Providence, and Isles:  
Bright Load-star of the North ...*

(sig. A2r)

*Thou, who art now, the worlds new Northern Star,  
Let, in thine Orb, no Course irregular  
(Oblique or Retrograde) divert thee from  
Those motions, which, thy Circle best become [.]*

(p. 25)

Wither's comparison of the Lord Protector to the lodestar suggests that Cromwell is at the heart of a British imperialism. Like Marvell, Wither also appropriates the royalist metaphor of a star, but in his case the meaning of the metaphor with the added modifiers 'the worlds new *Northern*' is transformed to convey a specific political implication, the

political implication that Cromwell is a central figure in the expansion of the British Empire. In Wither's poetic representation, Cromwell is not merely an absolute ruler with supreme authority in domestic politics, but further a leading figure in world politics. The period between 1654 and 1655 marked a major advance in England's imperial policy, which, led by Cromwell in the Western Design, was 'a determined attempt to occupy and settle permanently a stable base in the West Indies'.<sup>32</sup> According to Derek Hirst, many people at the time yearned for the 'imperial greatness' of Britain, and George Wither was among them.<sup>33</sup> We can then safely assume that the figurative association of Cromwell with the northern star would have originated from Wither's rhetorical and ideological strategy of connecting the legitimacy of the Cromwellian Protectorate to the expansion and greatness of the British Empire which many people hankered after. And this could be seen as Wither's strategic consideration to escape from a political predicament deriving from the lack of legitimacy of the Protectorate in domestic politics by turning his attention to yearnings for imperial expansion. But the danger is that this figurative strategy may have increased classical republicans' 'fear of the conventional Roman typology, wherein empire represents the vicious declension from republican virtue into hereditary monarchy, with citizens transformed into subjects, and the state driven into attenuating expansionism and ultimate collapse'.<sup>34</sup>

*The Protector* contains Wither's deliberation on, and specification of, the meaning of the title of Lord Protector within the conceptual frame of republicanism, but his figurative and rhetorical strategies make its meaning more unstable. Wither's intention to establish novel meanings in the sign of the Protector clashes with his investment in the sign of another meaning of submission to absolute power; his appeal to the British republic in his praise of the presence of the Protector contributes to legitimating Cromwell's imperial ambition and the regime's proclivity towards conservatism, which is seen as far removed from the promotion of republican virtue.

The rhetorical modes which Wither has taken show how difficult it was for a Cromwellian republican to legitimate the Protectorate and its supreme governor, the Protector, in republican terms. The difficulty was also observed in other Cromwellian republicans such as Nedham, Milton and Marvell, albeit with the differences of rhetorical modes and strategies for legitimation which were influenced by the changing political circumstances in one way or another. The central problem shared by these four writers is that they could not offer a lucid formulation of the republican meaning of the Protector and its first office holder, Cromwell. This is not to deny that republicans such as Nedham and Wither provided a conceptual foundation which led to defining the Protector as head of the administration or president in a modern sense. In spite of this definition, they failed to anchor its meaning in republican terms by the inflation of republican and monarchist languages. It seems to me that this linguistic oscillation was a crucial factor undermining the work of the republican legitimation of the Protectorate.

### **Conflict in Signification:**

#### **The Concept of Civil Liberty in Pro-and Anti-Cromwellians**

It is true to say that there was no other concept so often used but so problematic in signification as that of 'liberty' or 'freedom' during the English Revolution. The following various questions raised as to the relationship between the concept of freedom and the English Revolution by R. C. Richardson and G. M. Ridden show the extent to which the concept involved competition and conflict in the process of signification during the period:

'Freedom' and 'the English Revolution' thus seemed to become inextricably joined, and their connection, largely undisputed though variously explained, has become one of the commonplaces of historical discourse. ... Was there in fact a unifying and singular concept of freedom in these years, or, if to think in terms of

plurals seems more realistic, how central were different and perhaps competing ideas of freedom to the participants in the events of the 1640s and to the literary figures of the time? ... What was the significance of individuals as contrasting as Prynne, Lilburne and Winstanley? What happened in the 1650s? With the King and episcopacy safely removed, with the Levellers and Diggers defeated, with a new censorship in force, and with a centralized, heavy-handed military régime in being, did the debate on freedom suffer an enforced eclipse?<sup>35</sup>

If it is the case that the concept of liberty had different and competing meanings throughout the English Revolution, it was no exception in the republican controversy of 1653-56. To begin with, it needs to be noted that the word 'freedom' used in the writings of the English Revolution was a term embracing the religious and political spheres in general, but that when it related to the question of civil liberty, it signified political liberty in a strict sense, that is, 'the relationship between the freedom of subjects and the powers of the state'.<sup>36</sup> The concept of civil liberty as signifying political liberty was also a point of disagreement between pro-and anti-Cromwellians in the period 1653-56. This was chiefly because of their different perceptions of the character of the Protectorate and of Cromwell's status in that system. The most contrasting semantic conflict of the concept issued from two groups: one from pro-Cromwellian monarchists who tried to look upon the Protectorate as something similar to a monarchy or semi-monarchy and to elevate Cromwell to the position of a prince or an Emperor, and the other from anti-Cromwellian republicans who emphasized the importance of free and successive Parliaments in opposition to the Cromwellian Protectorate's semi-monarchical character and the inordinate concentration of power in Cromwell.

The central figure of the former posture was Michael Hawkes who gave a relatively systematic, logical account of the concept of civil liberty in a treatise entitled *The Right of Dominion and Property of Liberty* (January 1656). Hawkes asserts in the treatise that civil liberty primarily means 'the Liberty of the Subject'.<sup>37</sup> But the liberty of

the subject, when it relates to the power of the state, which for him is represented as a prince, signifies the right of the subject to be protected under a good prince:

A Prince ... if good, hath a pastoral care of his Subject: and ... defendeth the Liberty of the Subject, and property of their substance, as his own: And this kinde of Government is called by *Aristotle* ... Civil ...; and as *Buchanan* [says], *est niter liberos principatus* a principality among Freemen: and is therefore called Civil Liberty, or the Liberty of the Subject by which the right and liberty of the Subject is protected, and preserved [.] (p. 104)

Hawkes's notion of civil liberty bears a resemblance to the concept of 'negative liberty' of Hobbesian line.<sup>38</sup> The concept of liberty defined by Hobbes, according to Quentin Skinner, is a negative one by which liberty simply means 'absence of interference' and so 'maximizing the area within which we can claim 'immunity from the service of the commonwealth''.<sup>39</sup> Though Hawkes brings Aristotle into his account of civil liberty, his view of 'the Social and Civil Liberty, free onely from Service, Rapine, and Injury' (p. 106) is founded less on the Aristotelian idea of 'positive liberty' than on the Hobbesian concept of 'negative liberty'.<sup>40</sup> Hawkes's emphasis on the protection of a prince is seen as a kind of variant of the Hobbesian definition of negative liberty.

Hawkes's concept of civil liberty is particularly problematic due to the fact that its signification involves the specific ideological motive of strengthening Cromwell's single-person rule. Even more problematic, however, is the fact that the signification is not simply concerned with legitimating Cromwell's rule in the Protectoral system, but further with encouraging the return to a monarchy. Hawkes's inclination towards monarchism is made manifest not only in his statement that 'as Monarchy was the first Government, so all other Governments are derived of it, and returne to it, as the principles of things to one cause, and the rivers to one Sea' (p. 94), but also in his Augustan defence of Cromwell that 'such an one is our Prince, a *Caesar* for valour, *Augustus* for fortune, and for prowesse and prudence second to neither' (p. 86). With the



rumours that Cromwell would be declared Emperor, the connection between Cromwell and Augustanism indeed emerged as one of the cardinal features of representation of Cromwell among Cromwellian monarchists. Its paradigmatic example was Edmund Waller in *A Panegyrick to My Lord Protector* (May 1655):<sup>41</sup>

As the vext world to finde repose at last  
It self into *Augustus* Arms did cast:  
So *England* now, doth with like toyle opprest,  
Her weary head upon your bosome rest.<sup>42</sup>

If Cromwell is compared to Augustus in Waller's poem, he is compared to the powerful Emperor Caesar in an anonymous pamphlet, *The Unparalleled Monarch* (September 1656).<sup>43</sup> Whether Cromwell is compared to Augustus or Caesar, or both of them, this tangible drift towards monarchy does have a significant bearing upon the concept of civil liberty. For Cromwellian monarchists, the concept is interpreted as conformity to the supreme power embodied in Cromwell. In other words, the political liberty of subjects for them is reduced to meaning subjects' submission to the *de facto* ruler, Cromwell, who guarantees peace, safety and property.

On the opposite side from these Cromwellian monarchists, there were anti-Cromwellian republicans who countered such a conservative signification of the concept. For them, the concept of civil liberty was closely connected with their demand for 'free successive Parliaments, who will have a just Authority to settle the Government'.<sup>44</sup> In their view, the achievement of civil liberty was made possible only by 'free successive Parliaments' each as a representative body in which all citizens could express their political and economic interests, and in which they could take part in the political process of electing them. They argued that the Parliaments thus settled should have the freedom to discuss and enact laws without the interference of any single person, as it was made clear in the petition of three colonels: 'a full and truly free Parliament may

without any imposition upon their Judgments and Conscience, freely consider of those *Fundamental Rights and Freedomes* of the Commonwealth'.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, this kind of the concept of civil liberty is nothing new, for it was already brought forth in numerous arguments for parliamentary and popular sovereignty throughout the period of civil wars and after the execution of Charles I. Its novelty is the use to which it was put as a discourse oppositional to the Cromwellian Protectorate, and the extent to which it articulated a meaning different from that promoted by Cromwellian monarchists.

A more elaborate account of the concept came from James Harrington's *The Commonwealth of Oceana* (September-November 1656), a text of implicit criticism of the Cromwellian Protectorate.<sup>46</sup> According to Harrington, the fundamental law of Oceana is composed of 'the agrarian and the ballot'.<sup>47</sup> The agrarian law which prohibits the inheritance or possession of landed estates over £2000 presupposes that 'equality of estates causeth equality of power, and equality of power is the liberty not only of the commonwealth, but of every man' (p. 20). Harrington regards the equal distribution of estates as one of the key factors in acquiring and maintaining the political liberty of citizens. Another factor is the political practice of 'the free election or suffrage of the people' (p. 33) by ballot. These basic premises in achieving civil liberty are made possible, in Harrington's view, only through the institution of his ideal republican form of government not mediated by the will of any single person. It is apparent that Harrington's republican ideas of civil liberty – the visions of a free state and all citizens' participation in the political process – were in semantic conflict with the ideas of Cromwellian monarchists who promoted subjection to the Cromwellian regime along the Hobbesian line of 'negative liberty'.

As far as the concept of civil liberty is concerned, this patent, semantic confrontation between pro-Cromwellian monarchists and anti-Cromwellian republicans took on a more complicated coloring, due to the position of pro-Cromwellian republicans such as Nedham, Milton, Marvell and Wither. We have seen above the

tensions and problems these pro-Cromwellian republicans revealed in the legitimation strategies of the Cromwellian Protectorate, which were particularly clear in the treatment of the question of the concept. Understandably, all these writers acknowledged the role of Cromwell in securing civil liberty, but their approach to the question was considerably different in emphasis.

Nedham in *A True State* shares with anti-Cromwellian republicans the 'republican' concept of liberty,<sup>48</sup> in emphasizing the exercise of sovereign power by the people through their representatives and their participation in the political process of electing them. Yet unlike them, Nedham legitimizes the significance of Cromwell as a supreme magistrate crucial to redeeming the liberty of the people: 'as touching the Person, whom the Lord hath now advanced and set over us to be our Supreme Magistrate, ... only we believe even the enemies will confess, that he is every way worthy to Rule, whom God hath been pleased to use as his Instrument in that Glorious Work of Redeeming the Liberties of his People' (p. 47). In addition, he defends the present Protectoral system as the embodiment of a free state: 'we are bold to say (weighing all circumstances together) that this Nation was never really Free, nor in a way of enjoying its Freedom so fully as now' (p. 47). Nedham's appreciation of the present form of government as a free state contrasts sharply with that envisioned by Harrington. Harrington's republican government model has as the necessary conditions of a free state reforms of agrarian law and the balloting system, and bicameral legislatures which 'constitute the sovereign power or parliament of Oceana' (p. 118). In this vision of a free state there is no place for a supreme magistrate, and furthermore the people's participation in the process of political decision-making necessarily follows from the republican system. In contrast, Nedham's justification of the present state as a free state cannot do without certain tension. For it remains an open question how much Cromwell with a power equal to or exceeding that of a king will devote himself to guaranteeing the people's political liberty in an appropriate balance and division of legislative and executive powers.

If Nedham's treatment of the republican concept of liberty is in a subtle tension with the degree of Cromwell's power, Milton's reaction to the question in *A Second Defence* is different in emphasis. When Milton calls Cromwell 'the liberator of your country, the author of liberty, and likewise its guardian and savior' (*CPW*, IV:I.672), he justifies the role of Cromwell in achieving and establishing the liberty of a republic. Milton also assigns the task of sustaining the liberty to the Protectoral council members: 'To these most illustrious and honored citizens it would beyond doubt be appropriate for you to entrust our liberty. Indeed, it would be hard to say to whom that liberty could more safely be committed' (IV:I.678). Milton's legitimation of the rule by 'so few' elites 'among the guardians and watchdogs of liberty who either knew how to enjoy, or deserved to possess, it' (IV:I.683) contrasts strikingly with his skepticism about the people's ability to exercise their political liberty. In his advice to the people, Milton demands 'piety, justice, temperance, in short, true virtue' (IV:I.680) as preliminary requirements of their political liberty. Milton writes to his 'fellow countrymen', 'your own character is a mighty factor in the acquisition or retention of liberty' (IV:I.680). He even looks upon their freedom to vote with suspicion, if it is the case that they are not equipped with such moral virtues: 'why should anyone then claim for you freedom to vote or the power of sending to Parliament whomever you prefer?' (IV:I.682). The contrast between his emphasis on the few 'fit guardians of liberty' (IV:I.683) and his suspicion of the people's political decision-making faculties suggests a radical modification of his republican frame, which leads to his radical reconsideration of what is a republican concept of liberty.

If Milton's legitimation of the rule by Cromwell and his councillors leads to a relative devaluation of the people's right to political liberty, Marvell's idea of civil liberty maintains a contradictory tension in *The First Anniversary*. Marvell, like Nedham and Milton, underscores the significance of Cromwell in securing and framing liberty, when he depicts Cromwell as a musician who 'tuned the ruling Instrument ... / Framing

a liberty that still went back' (ll. 68, 70). And as shown in his description of the republican structure, Parliament functions as 'the basis of a senate free' (l. 97) and Cromwell as 'the roof's protecting weight' (l. 98). The 'senate free' can be interpreted as denoting the Parliament which is elected freely by the people and which has the freedom to discuss or enact laws as the people's representative. Cromwell is portrayed as a presence who protects the republican basis. Marvell's acknowledgement of the political liberty of the people as represented in Parliament, however, clashes with another message which he conveys in the poem:

'Tis not a freedom, that where all command;  
 Nor tyranny, where one does them withstand:  
 But who of both the bounders knows to lay  
 Him as their father must the state obey.  
 (ll. 279-82)

In these lines Marvell conveys the allusive message that he asks for subjection to Cromwell who knows the limits of 'freedom' and 'tyranny'. This message of subjection to 'one with highest power' (l. 132) suggests that as there is a dispute between Parliament and Cromwell, the parliamentary interest can be curtailed in favour of Cromwell's interest. By extension, the message entails the implication that the political liberty of the people can be reduced in the case of the rule of a supreme power with 'sober spirit' (l. 230) and 'healthful mind' (l. 232).

While Marvell transmits the contradictory messages of freedom and subjection, Wither avoids mention of political liberty itself in *The Protector*. Instead, Wither demands conformity to the present supreme power:

... To him, let us *submit*,  
 Whom, GOD, hath rais'd up, on the *Throne* to sit.  
 Let us conform, unto that *Pow'r*, which IS ...  
 (p. 23)

Wither's extreme stress upon submission to Cromwell's supreme power undercuts the idea of citizens' active political participation. For all his trajectory of legitimating the Cromwellian Protectorate in the republican direction, Wither's understanding of civil liberty ironically bears a resemblance to that of Cromwellian monarchists. This similar recognition of civil liberty between a Cromwellian republican Wither and Cromwellian monarchists not only made the republican justification of the Cromwellian regime vulnerable, but prompted depreciation of the republican value of civic virtue.

Indeed, the four Cromwellian republicans did not provide a descriptive account of the concept of civil liberty. Nonetheless, their dissimilar views on the question of the concept show how the formation and development of the Cromwellian Protectorate complicated the concept in a political sense. To the extent that they adopted different rhetorical and figurative modes in their attempts to legitimate the Cromwellian Protectorate, they revealed different perceptions of the political liberty of citizens. The signification among these writers was not monolithic and unifying.

Recent research on republicanism tends to underestimate the extent to which the concept of civil liberty was in the state of semantic conflict during the period of the Cromwellian Protectorate. For instance, Quentin Skinner in his book, *Liberty before Liberalism*, attempts to demonstrate how a group of 'neo-roman theorists' in the 1650s sought to link the pursuit of the liberty of an individual citizen with the constitution of a 'free state', that is, a republican form of government, and how they preferred a state governed by the will of citizens to one governed by the will of any single person. Insofar as Skinner's analysis is focused on the common ideas of civil liberty and rights in a free state shared by neo-roman writers such as Nedham, Milton and Harrington as notable figures, and Wither as a lesser writer, it pays little attention to their different views of these in the years 1654-56.<sup>49</sup>



We have observed a picture of dialogic conflict over the concept of civil liberty between Cromwellian monarchists and anti-Cromwellian republicans during the period 1654-56. What made the picture of dialogic conflict more complicated was that there were pro-Cromwellian republicans with divergent views of the question, from Nedham closer to anti-Cromwellian republicans to Wither nearer to Cromwellian monarchists. Milton and Marvell also did not offer identical opinions upon the question: whereas Milton's skepticism about the people's faculty for political decision-making did not necessarily lead to his argument for their subjection to a ruling power, Marvell's message oscillated between freedom and subjection. Here, it needs to be noted that their practical approval of Cromwell's role in framing civil liberty created conflict and tension within the semantic sphere of civil liberty. Also, the main problem brought about in the process of legitimating the Cromwellian Protectorate – the vacillation between republican and monarchical languages – was intimately related to their failure to elicit a clear-cut definition of the concept in republican terms. The result was that the concept of civil liberty was subjected to a complex division and conflict in signification.

The republican controversy during the period 1653-56 shows clearly that the concept of civil liberty did not necessarily have the same meaning among the four pro-Protectoral republican writers or between Cromwellian monarchists and anti-Cromwellian republicans. This demonstrates that the concept of civil liberty was at the crux of semantic conflict, chiefly due to the conflicting views among the various groups. More importantly, the controversy shows how even the republican concept of liberty – the possibility of citizens' participation in the political process as active carriers of 'rights as well as duties' and as 'independent of a person or persons assuming ruling status'<sup>50</sup> in a free state – was implicated in the conflict of signification at that particular period. The crucial point here is that the emergence of the Cromwellian Protectorate and the problems of legitimation strategies by Cromwellian republicans became decisive in making the concept problematic. Although pro-Cromwellian republicans of 1654-55 did

not confront the staunch republicans of the time or implicit republican opponents of the Protectorate such as Harrington, there seems little doubt that there was semantic conflict regarding the political and republican concept of liberty between the two camps, mainly because of their different perceptions of the relationship between the Protectorate and civil liberty.

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 Notes

1. John Morrill, 'Cromwell and his contemporaries', in *idem*, ed. *Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution* (London and New York, 1990), p. 268.
2. Perez Zagorin, *A History of Political Thought in the English Revolution* (London, 1954), pp. 146, 116.
3. Blair Worden, 'Marchamont Nedham and the Beginnings of English Republicanism, 1649-1656', in David Wootton, ed. *Republicanism, Liberty, and Commercial Society, 1649-1776* (Stanford, 1994), pp. 45-81; *idem*, 'Milton and Marchamont Nedham', in *MR*, pp. 156-80. Rather than examine republican opposition to the Cromwellian regime as Zagorin did, Worden in these essays tries to show how Milton in the *Second Defence* (1654) and Nedham in *The Excellency of a Free State* (1656) conducted an implicit criticism of the regime from inside. Yet the questions raised here are whether when considering the writings of Milton and Nedham in 1654, it is appropriate to focus on their criticism of the new government rather than on their legitimation of it, and whether Worden's willingness to view Milton and Nedham as unwavering republicans may have led to this interpretation. This standpoint of Worden's results in him paying no attention to the similarities and differences between the two writers in the modes of legitimating the new Cromwellian regime, and to the problems brought about in their attempt to accommodate their republican values to the new political situation of the Cromwellian Protectorate.
4. Markku Peltonen, *Classical Humanism and Republicanism in English Political Thought 1570-1640* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 5. Strongly opposed to the views held by Zagorin and Worden that there was no viable room for republican thought in England before the regicide, Peltonen attempts to show how the themes and languages of classical republicanism combined with classical humanism had an impact on English political discourse in the late sixteenth and earlier seventeenth centuries. Although Peltonen is not a literary scholar, the republican themes explored in his book, in my view, seem to be shared as a common interest by literary scholars who are concerned with the seventeenth-century English republican political and literary culture. See Norbrook, *WER*, and Martin Dzelzainis, 'Milton's classical republicanism', in *MR*, pp. 3-24.
5. For the relationship between Milton and republicanism from this perspective, see Janel Mueller, 'Contextualizing Milton's Nascent Republicanism', in P. G. Stanwood, ed. *Of Poetry and Politics: New Essays on Milton and His World* (Binghamton, New York, 1995), pp. 263-82; Annabel Patterson, chap. 7, 'The Good Old Cause', in *Reading Between the Lines* (London, 1993), pp. 210-75; Dzelzainis, 'Milton's classical republicanism', in *MR*, pp. 3-24; and Norbrook, *WER*, especially pp. 326-37 for his account of Milton's support for the Cromwellian Protectorate in 1654. It is true that there is disagreement as to the character of Milton's republicanism amongst literary scholars. For instance, Thomas Corns, like Zagorin and Worden, views the emergence of Milton's republicanism as a development after the event of the regicide. See Thomas N. Corns, 'Milton and the characteristics of a free commonwealth', in *MR*, pp. 25-7.
6. For an account of the career and writings of Milton and Nedham as republican ideologues who participated in constructing republicanism as a state ideology in the early 1650s, see Smith *LR*, pp. 182-91.
7. [Marchamont Nedham], *A True State of the Case of the Commonwealth, in reference to the late established Government by a Lord Protector and a Parliament* (February 1654; E 728(5)), pp. 9-10.
8. S. R. Gardiner, ed. *The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution, 1625-1660* (Oxford, 1906), pp. 405-6.
9. Norbrook, *WER*, p. 328.
10. For the position of the former, see Austin Woolrych, 'Milton and Cromwell: "A Short but Scandalous Night of Interruption"?', in Michael Lieb and John T. Shawcross, eds. *Achievements of the Left Hand*, pp. 192-94; Worden, 'Marchamont Nedham and the Beginnings of English Republicanism, 1649-1656', p. 75, 'Milton and Marchamont Nedham', pp. 174-78 and 'John Milton and Oliver Cromwell', in Ian Gentles, John Morrill and Blair Worden, eds. *Soldiers, writers and statesmen of the English Revolution* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 253-61; David Armitage, 'John Milton: poet against empire', in

- MR, p 214. For the position of the latter, see Robert Thomas Fallon, 'A Second Defence: Milton's Critique of Cromwell?', *MS* 39 (2000), 167-83. Laura Lunger Knoppers, *Constructing Cromwell: Ceremony, Portrait, and Print, 1645-1661* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 93.
11. The real author of *The Cry of the Royal Blood* was Peter Du Moulin.
  12. For detailed accounts of the Protectoral Council members, see Wilbur Cortez Abbot, *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, vol. III (Cambridge, Mass., 1945), pp. 142-43; Christopher Hill, *God's Englishman: Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution* (Harmondsworth, 1970), p. 139.
  13. Sara Barber, *Regicide and Republicanism*, p. 207.
  14. Corns, 'Milton and the characteristics of a free Commonwealth', pp. 35-6.
  15. For a detailed account of the relationship between Marvell's *First Anniversary* and the Instrument of Government, see Joad Raymond, 'Framing Liberty: Marvell's *First Anniversary* and the Instrument of Government', *HLQ* 62 (1999), 313-50.
  16. Abbot, *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, vol. III, p. 433.
  17. *Ibid.*, pp. 446, 463, 467.
  18. Barbara Taft, 'The Humble Petition of Several Colonels of the Army: Causes, Character, and Results of Military Opposition to Cromwell's Protectorate', *HLQ* 42 (1978-79), 15-41; and for Ludlow's association with *The Humble Petition and Some Momentos*, see John H. F. Hughes, 'The Commonwealthmen Divided: Edmund Ludlowe, Sir Henry Vane and the Good Old Cause 1653-1659', *The Seventeenth Century* 5 (1990), 57; Derek Hirst, '"That Sober Liberty": Marvell's Cromwell in 1654', in John M. Wallace, ed. *The Golden & the Brazen World: Papers in Literature and History, 1650-1800* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1985), p. 45.
  19. Andrew Marvell, *The First Anniversary of the Government under His Highness the Lord Protector, 1655*, in Elizabeth Story Donno, ed. *Andrew Marvell: The Complete Poems* (London, 1996). Citations of Marvell's *First Anniversary* follow this edition.
  20. Warren Chernaik, 'Every conqueror creates a muse': Conquest and Constitutions in Marvell and Waller', in Warren Chernaik and Martin Dzelzainis, eds. *Marvell and Liberty* (Basingstoke and New York, 1999), p. 206.
  21. On Marvell's acknowledgment of 'resistance and opposition' in the new republic, see Norbrook, *WER*, p. 345.
  22. Raymond, 'Framing Liberty', 330.
  23. Hirst, '"That Sober Liberty"', p. 28.
  24. V. N. Voloshinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, p. 23.
  25. John M. Wallace. *Destiny His Choice: The Loyalism of Andrew Marvell* (London, 1968), p. 108.
  26. Conal Condren, *The Language of Politics in Seventeenth-Century England* (Basingstoke and London, 1994), pp. 92-3.
  27. George Wither, *The Protector. A Poem Briefly illustrating the Supereminency of that Dignity* (July 1655; E 1565(2)), sig. A2r.
  28. Joad Raymond, 'The King is a Thing', in Graham Parry and Joad Raymond, eds. *Milton and the Terms of Liberty* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 77.
  29. Sharpe, *REME*, p. 256.
  30. Norbrook, *WER*, pp. 353-55.
  31. Abbot, *The Writings and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, vol. III., p. 596.
  32. Hill, *God's Englishman*, p. 152. On Cromwell's Western Design and its relationship to the imperial moment of the British republic, see Hill, *God's Englishman*, pp. 152-5 and David Armitage, 'The Cromwellian Protectorate and the Languages of Empire', *The Historical Journal* 35 (1992), 531-55.
  33. Derek Hirst, 'The English Republic and the Meaning of Britain', *Journal of Modern History* 66 (1994), 469.
  34. Armitage, 'The Cromwellian Protectorate and the Languages of Empire', 532.
  35. R. C. Richardson and G. M. Ridden, 'Introduction', in *idem*, eds. *Freedom and the English Revolution: Essays in history and literature* (Manchester, 1986), p. 6.
  36. Quentin Skinner, *Liberty before Liberalism* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 17.

37. Michael Hawkes, *The Right of Dominion and Property of Liberty. As also the necessity of his Highness acceptance of the Empire* (January 1656; E 1636(1)), p. 2.
38. For a comment on the Hobbesian character of Hawkes's treatise, see Armitage, 'The Cromwellian Protectorate and the Languages of Empire', 545.
39. Quentin Skinner, 'The republican ideal of political liberty', in Gisela Bock, Quentin Skinner, and Maurizio Viroli, eds. *Machiavelli and Republicanism* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 295. For Skinner's similar arguments about Hobbes's concept of negative liberty, see Skinner, 'The idea of negative liberty: philosophical and historical perspectives', in Richard Rorty, J. B. Schneewind, and Quentin Skinner, eds. *Philosophy in History: Essays on the historiography of philosophy* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 195, and *Liberty before Liberalism*, pp. 5-10.
40. On Aristotelian concept of 'positive liberty', see Skinner, 'The republican ideal of political liberty', p. 296.
41. For a more detailed account of 'Protectoral Augustanism' and its connection with Edmund Waller, see Norbrook, *WER*, pp. 299-309; see also Knoppers, *Constructing Cromwell*, pp. 102-4.
42. Edmund Waller, *A Panegyrick to My Lord Protector, of the present Greatness and joynt Interest of His Highness, and this Nation* (May 1655; E 841(2)), p. 10.
43. Anon., *The Unparalleld Monarch; or, The Portraiture of a Matchless Prince, exprest in some shadows on His Highness My Lord Protector* (September 1656; E 1675(1)), sig. [A5v].
44. Anon., *Some Momentos for the Officers and Souldiers of the Army* (October 1654; E 813(20)), p. 8.
45. Thomas Saunders, John Okey, and Matthew Allured, *To his Highness the Lord Protector, &c., and our General. The Petition of several Colonels of the Army* (October 1654; 669f.f.19(21)).
46. On the point that Harrington's *Oceana* is a critical text on the Protectorate, see Jonathan Scott, 'The English Republican Imagination', in John Morrill, ed. *Revolution and Restoration: England in the 1650s* (London, 1992), p. 46; Blair Worden, 'Harrington's 'Oceana': Origins and Aftermath, 1651-1660', in *Republicanism, Liberty, and Commercial Society*, pp. 111-38.
47. James Harrington, *The Commonwealth of Oceana*, in J. G. A. Pocock, ed. *The Commonwealth of Oceana and A System of Politics* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 100.
48. Chernaik and Dzelzainis, 'Introduction', in *Marvell and Liberty*, p. 6.
49. Skinner, *Liberty before Liberalism*, esp. chaps. 1 and 2.
50. Condren, *The Language of Politics in Seventeenth-Century England*, p. 94.

## Chapter Five:

### ***Paradise Lost*: The Politics of Genre and Signs in Conflict**

#### ***Paradise Lost* and the Politics of Genre**

As we have seen in the preceding chapters, the problem of legitimation was one of Milton's main preoccupations in his career as a political polemicist and revolutionary ideologue. Although the problem came to the fore particularly after the regicide not least because of the need to justify a series of unprecedented political circumstances, throughout the English Revolution Milton was concerned to legitimate the positions of the parties he supported as well as his own, concomitantly delegitimizing opposing positions. As legitimation was a matter of great urgency in the political writings produced in his commitment to the revolutionary cause, so it was also pivotal in shaping his poetic strategies in *Paradise Lost*. And just as classical and biblical sources played a crucial role in legitimating his political viewpoints during the revolutionary period, they also occupy a pivotal place in the legitimation strategies pursued in his literary work. *Paradise Lost*, of course, is a literary text and is therefore distinct from the political tract at the level of genre. In view of their generic differences, if Milton's political tracts frequently employ classical and biblical sources in the framework of classical rhetorical structure as a means of corroborating his cases or confuting opposing positions, *Paradise Lost* makes them serve as crucial elements which determine its literary form and content.

Milton criticism has paid much attention to the two primary sources – specifically classical epics and biblical stories – embedded in *Paradise Lost* in as various areas as genre, subject-matter, imagery, syntax, diction and narrative structure. As Christopher Kendrick sums up well, in Milton criticism there have been 'two basic trends' in



attempts to clarify the poem's generic character: one classifying *Paradise Lost* as 'a classical epic', focusing on its association with classical epic traditions, and the other defining it as 'a Biblical or theological epic', attending to its similarity to a hexameral epic about the Christian story of the six days of creation. Kendrick, strongly contesting 'the overriding tendency, common to both these critical trends, to posit an effortless relation between a monolithic Christian content and dominantly classical form', instead emphasizes 'the division between form and content, epic and hexameron, in *Paradise Lost*'.<sup>1</sup> I agree with Kendrick that in *Paradise Lost* there is a sharp rift between the classical form and the biblical content, the classical and the hexameral epic genres.<sup>2</sup> My emphasis in this section, however, falls upon the ways in which Milton establishes the legitimacy of a biblical or Christian epic as his own poetic project in *Paradise Lost*. This project, in my view, is achieved through Milton's complex handling of the classical epic genre as a hegemonic form, or more precisely, through Milton's appropriation of, negotiation with, and challenge to, the classical tradition; and this also involves Milton's contestation with royalist appropriations of the tradition. Examination of this politics of genre in *Paradise Lost* is also an examination of the processes involved in Milton's legitimation of the Christian epic.

In order to understand Milton's complex relations to the classical epic as a specific genre, it would be useful, in the first place, to take as a starting point discussions of genre theory and the relationship between genre and tradition. In his magisterial research on genre theory, Alastair Fowler reminds us that the essential concern of the theory is not simply with functional classification but with 'principles of reconstruction and interpretation and (to some extent) evaluation of meaning'.<sup>3</sup> In Fowler's judgment, a genre is not a fixed entity enshrined in a permanently classified generic order; but rather, it is 'in a continual state of transmutation'<sup>4</sup> and has its significance in relation to similar or different genres at the synchronic and diachronic levels. This relational and transmutative character of a genre makes it possible for us to interpret and evaluate how

a work deviates from and alters 'its generic conventions', and therefore to reconstruct its meaning in relation to 'literary tradition', that is, 'a sequel of influence and imitation and inherited codes connecting works in the genre'.<sup>5</sup> The ideas of interpretation, evaluation and reconstruction of a genre and its relation to tradition may hold not only for genres of similar groups but for genres belonging to different categories, albeit with a slight difference. An exemplary instance of the latter may well be Bakhtin's comparative study of the novel and epic.

In 'Epic and Novel', an essay intended to present a methodology of the novel as a genre, Bakhtin makes a clear-cut distinction between the novel and epic in terms of their generic characteristics. According to Bakhtin's distinction, the epic deals with 'the absolute past' separated from 'contemporary reality', while the novel deals with 'the spontaneity of the inconclusive present'.<sup>6</sup> Besides the difference in the temporality of narration, the dissimilarities between the two are formulated by Bakhtin as somewhat dichotomous – official and unofficial, closed and open, monologic and dialogic – characteristics. Bakhtin's comparison between the novel and epic may exemplify the ways in which the meaning of a genre – the novel – is interpreted and evaluated in relation to a different genre – the epic. Bakhtin also points out the intimate relationship between the epic as a form and tradition: 'a reliance on tradition is immanent in the very form of the epic'.<sup>7</sup> This appraisal of the epic's immanent relation to tradition entails Bakhtin's assumption that the epic as a traditional form is hierarchical, closed and therefore monologic. In its Bakhtinian sense, monologism does not designate the one-sided direction of speech 'in the ordinary sense of the term', but signifies the distinction 'between different forms of expression'.<sup>8</sup> In other words, the epic is monological, since it is a form expressing conformity to the traditional values of the authoritarian and hierarchical past and its rulers. At this juncture, it is pertinent to ask whether his general estimation of the epic is totally tenable and whether it is applicable to Milton's epic. For *Paradise Lost* does not focus on the temporality of the past only, but encompasses all

temporal events of the past, the present and the future.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, it is not a monological form voicing an unconditional acceptance of the values of the past; but rather, it displays a complex relationship between dialogic negotiation and conflict with its pre-existing traditions and the contemporary literary milieu.

Milton's prefatory note on 'The Verse' will be the first evidence in *Paradise Lost* to illustrate the ways in which Milton's epic enters into dialogic negotiation with its canonical classical traditions. Milton announces that:

The measure is English heroic verse without rhyme, as that of Homer in Greek, and of Virgil in Latin; rhyme being no necessary adjunct or true ornament of poem or good verse, in longer works especially, but the invention of a barbarous age, to set off wretched matter and lame metre; graced indeed since by the use of some famous modern poets, carried away by custom, but much to their own vexation, hindrance, and constraints to express many things otherwise, and for the most part worse than else they would have expressed them. ... This neglect then of rhyme so little is to be taken for a defect, though it may seem so perhaps to vulgar readers, that it rather is to be esteemed an example set, the first in English, of ancient liberty recovered to heroic poem from the troublesome and modern bondage of rhyming. (*PL*, pp. 54-55)

This prefatory material did not appear in the early issues of the first edition of *Paradise Lost*, 1667; it was added in the fourth issue of 1668 for the specific purpose of justifying Milton's use of blank verse in response to his readers' surprise at finding a heroic poem without rhyme.<sup>10</sup> The material, however, points beyond its immediate context of accounting for the poem's metrical structure, in that it deals implicitly with the wider issues of the poem's genre and its relation to its precedents. Milton proclaims that the genre of the poem is 'heroic verse without rhyme', that is, the epic without rhyme whose paradigmatic precedents he finds in those of Homer and Virgil. What is telling here is that Milton intentionally summons up the models of canonical tradition in the history of epic genre rather than those of 'a second canonical status' in its history such as Lucan's model whose associations with Milton's epic recent Milton scholarship has sought to

bring out.<sup>11</sup> This evocation of the epic tradition of Homer and Virgil can be seen as having some bearing upon Milton's work to establish the legitimacy of his poem's literary form along the lines of their influential authorities. Milton strategically appropriates and negotiates with the canonically monumental authorities, and thus he strives to situate his heroic poem without rhyme in the safe genealogy of the honoured epic tradition.

Milton's exploitation of the dominant authorities as a way of guaranteeing the legitimacy of his poem's generic distinctions arose from his response to Restoration literary and cultural milieu; and it has been argued that it was a deliberate act by which Milton tried to voice his disapproval of royalist-oriented appropriation of the classical traditions, particularly of the Virgilian epic form. Barbara Lewalski suggests that 'royalists had appropriated the Virgilian heroic mode both before and after the Restoration', noting in particular John Dryden's vigorous post-Restoration defence of the 'new model of a heroic poem based on contemporary events and serving royalist interests.'<sup>12</sup> In his two essays published in 1667 and 1668, the years when Milton published the first edition of *Paradise Lost* and then added his prefatory note, Dryden did not make a direct comment upon the necessity of rhyme in heroic poetry; however, the two essays suggest that Dryden makes an implicit connection between rhyming and good heroic verse, rhyming and its Virgilian tradition. In the preface of *Annus Mirabilis*, his 'historical' poem, which appeared in January 1667 and of which he said he had 'chosen the most heroic subject, which any poet could desire', Dryden enumerates the advantages of rhyme in the poem treating that heroic subject: 'I have chosen to write my poem in quatrains, or stanzas of four in alternate rhyme, because I have ever judged them more noble, and of greater dignity, both for the sound and number, than any other verse in use amongst us'.<sup>13</sup> In his essay *Of Dramatick Poesie* which was registered on 7 August 1667 but which appeared somewhat late in 1668, Dryden suggests that rhyming

is a poetic skill indispensable to a good poet and that such a skill is associated with Virgil's poetic practice:

A good poet never concludes upon the first line, till he has sought out such a rhyme as may fit the sense, already prepared to heighten the second: many times the close of the sense falls into the middle of the next verse, or farther off, and he may often prevail himself of the same advantages in English which Virgil had in Latin.<sup>14</sup>

Milton, in challenging this assumption, raises questions about the ways in which Virgilian tradition is employed in privileging rhyme in heroic verse. Milton considers Dryden's claim for 'rhyme as the distinguishing excellence of modern poets', with its Virgilian resonances, as relevant to the debased Restoration 'court culture and royalist politics'.<sup>15</sup> In that respect, Milton's mention of Virgil in his prefatory note can be seen as an attempt to counter this royalist literary and cultural climate, while at the same time making it serve to legitimate his own literary form. It is noteworthy, in the first place, that the mode of Milton's intervention here in the contemporary literary convention resembles that of the dual structure of his ideological rhetoric exemplified in the major controversies of the revolutionary period, that is, the structure of legitimation and delegitimation. As matters of legitimation and delegitimation in Milton's rhetorical strategies always went hand in hand at that period, so they characterize his reactions to Restoration debates on literary form. Secondly, authoritative traditions become once again the object of appropriation. Milton, opposing Dryden's appropriation of the Virgilian epic tradition and its endorsement by royalist court culture, seeks to establish in the prefatory note the authenticity, within a generic tradition, of his epic without rhyme. With this appropriation, Milton redefines rhyme as the mark of bad heroic verse and 'troublesome and modern bondage'. By this inversion, Milton himself becomes the rightful heir to the heritage of 'ancient liberty': the norms of epic form become a means to establish a political entitlement.

It ought to be noted at this point that Milton's own legitimation through classical authority is belied in the text of *Paradise Lost* itself, because Milton appeals there to another authority. Milton's first invocation in Book 1 is a clear manifestation of his basing his poem's authority on a divine rather than a classical ground:

Sing heavenly Muse, that on the secret top  
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire  
That shepherd, who first taught the chosen seed,  
In the beginning how the heavens and earth  
Rose out of chaos: or if Sion hill  
Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flowed  
Fast by the oracle of God [,] I thence  
Invoke thy aid to my advent'rous song,  
That with no middle flight intends to soar  
Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues  
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.  
And chiefly thou O Spirit that dost prefer  
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,  
Instruct me, for thou knowst ...

(1.6-19)

The nature of Milton's 'heavenly Muse' and its identification with the Spirit of God invoked in line 17 have long been disputed among Milton critics. John Steadman, one of the participants in this controversy, prefers to make a distinction between the two, in the assertion that Milton's invocation to the Muse is a kind of literary device and his invocation to the Spirit is a Christian prayer asking for 'internal illumination and moral elevation' for his poem. In his reckoning, Milton's reference to the Muse is no more than the observance of a literary convention:

Though the poet might observe the pretense of imploring divine aid from his Muse, his real motives were to follow classical precedent, to imitate the invocations of Homer, Virgil, and their epic successors, and to emphasize the more important elements in his own poem.<sup>16</sup>



Steadman's separation between Milton's Muse and Spirit, it seems to me, is founded on the assumption that we need to distinguish the origins of the literary and the theological in the proem to Book 1, in which Milton's invocation to the Muse is only a literary imitation of classical precedent. Yet it is hard, in actuality, to find such a strict division between the heavenly Muse and Spirit, the literary and the theological in the proem, and moreover Milton's relation to classical traditions is more complex than Steadman assumes. As we have seen, Milton sought legitimacy for his own epic form in his strategic alliance with the established traditions; his invocation to the 'heavenly Muse' associated with God's Spirit intimates that he aspires to overgo classical authority by justifying his epic's reliance on the higher divine power and inspiration. Milton's aspiration could indeed be read as the announcement that his 'advent'rous song' would be a challenge to classical epic, as made manifest in his intention to 'soar / Above the Aonian mount'. This challenge to the classical epic is made more obvious in the proem to Book 9, before Milton deals in earnest with the Fall of Adam and Eve.

... sad task, yet argument  
 Not less but more heroic than the wrath  
 Of stern Achilles on his foe pursued  
 Thrice fugitive about Troy wall; or rage  
 Of Turnus for Lavinia disespoused,  
 Or Neptune's ire or Juno's, that so long  
 Perplexed the Greek and Cytherea's son ...  
 Not sedulous by nature to indite  
 Wars, hitherto the only argument  
 Heroic deemed, chief mastery to dissect  
 With long and tedious havoc fabled knights  
 In battles feigned; the better fortitude  
 Of patience and heroic martyrdom  
 Unsung; or to describe races and games,  
 Or tilting furniture, emblazoned shields,  
 Impreses quaint, caparisons and steeds;  
 Bases and tinsel trappings, gorgeous knights  
 At joust and tournament; then marshalled feast  
 Served up in hall with sewers, and seneschals;  
 The skill of artifice or office mean,

Not that which justly gives heroic name  
 To person or to poem. Me of these  
 Nor skilled nor studious, higher argument  
 Remains, sufficient of itself to raise  
 That name ...

(9.13-19, 27-44)

Milton singles out the main episodes and themes of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid* with a view to negating the meaning of the 'heroic' rehearsed in them; and he summons up the wrath, wars, races, games and feasts of heroic figures described in Homeric and Virgilian epic only to refuse them as virtually anti-heroic. This refusal is commonly called in a technical term '*recusatio*, a literary 'refusal'' as 'one of the most important means for redirecting a poetic tradition'.<sup>17</sup> The most important feature of Milton's *recusatio* is the particular attention given to the meaning of 'heroic name'. In Milton's estimation, the name 'heroic' in classical epic is chiefly tied to the outer semantic values of heroic figures or events exemplified in tales of war. Milton endeavours to remove from the name its traditional semantic values and instead endow it with a new meaning, the meaning of the inner values of mind such as 'the better fortitude / Of patience and heroic martyrdom'. Milton is keen to appropriate the meaning of heroic poetry from his classical masters. This appropriation of the word 'heroic' comprises a central component of Milton's challenge to classical epic.

The ultimate aim of Milton's challenge to the central meaning of classical tradition is to underwrite the legitimacy of his own Christian epic. Milton's *Paradise Lost*, aside from its generic influence from classical epic, comes close to the hexameral genre which originally dealt with the story of the six days of creation but which, as Kendrick points out, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was 'expanded to accommodate the whole Christian myth of origins, the celestial cycle of angelic and human creation and fall'.<sup>18</sup> Kendrick's more elaborate account of the hexameral genre is also worth noting, to the

extent that it invites us not only to reflect on its comparison with the nature of Milton's Christian epic but to scrutinize what kind of Christian epic Milton seeks to legitimate:

Hexameral literature is didactic, conveying theological truth to an audience familiar with, yet in need of such truth. The Dark Age hexamera are homilies, and the hexameron never breaks free from its original homiletic construction even in its grandest flights. Hexameral theology is thus integrated with, or appears to absorb, a definite and unquestioned body of received (homiletic) wisdom. This means that the doctrine presented in this genre is never merely personal but rather natural and collective by its very form. Hexameral narration constructs a definite theology for its audience, drawing it forth from the sacred texts as a preexisting entity or system which need make no claim, no explicit reference, to the social order because it corresponds to that collectivity in representing it as an order of things.<sup>19</sup>

Milton's Christian epic does not fit with the general features of the Christian hexameral genre, and it is far removed from the traditional, theological meaning implied in it. As has been mentioned briefly above, Milton's Christian epic is a poem about the inner values of mind, which has already been alluded to in his invocation to the Holy Spirit in Book 1: 'And chiefly thou O Spirit that dost prefer / Before all temples the upright heart and pure, / Instruct me' (1.17-9). So the Christian epic Milton aspires to justify can be reckoned as an epic of subjectivity,<sup>20</sup> or more precisely, as an epic of subjective interpretation of Christian truths, or what Marvell called 'sacred truths'.<sup>21</sup> Milton announces in the proem to Book 1 that his poem is aiming to 'assert the eternal providence, / And justify the ways of God to men' (1.25-6); here Milton's justification of God's ways could be read as establishing the legitimacy of his interpretation of God and of men's relation to God. Milton's Christian epic is thus concerned with the intersection between legitimation and interpretation rather than with a reaffirmation of the Christian doctrine normally presupposed by the hexameral genre.

Milton's concern with matters of legitimation and interpretation in his text clearly shows the effects of the English Revolution. Religion in the period, as Fredric Jameson

notes, was a shared ‘master code in which issues [were] conceived and debated’,<sup>22</sup> and the Bible was at the centre of conflicting interpretations between contending sides, as we saw in chapter 1. God’s providence was also a conflicting sign implicated in the rhetorical acts of antagonistic political parties for the legitimation of their political actions, as argued in chapter 3. After the failure of the Revolution, these political, religious and linguistic experiences of division and conflict must have stimulated Milton to present his own interpretation on the rightfulness of God’s ways to men. It was Christopher Hill and Andrew Milner who first devoted their critical attention to the relationship between the problem of the failure of the Revolution and *Paradise Lost*. According to the two scholars, *Paradise Lost* is Milton’s reflection upon the misinterpretation of ‘God’s cause’ and ‘the problem of the fall of man’ as the root cause of its defeat: the responsibility lies in the condition of the original fall of man, but not in God’s providence.<sup>23</sup> Looked at from this perspective, it could be said that Milton’s Christian epic involves his own interpretive representation of the legitimacy of divine providence. The problem is that an interpretive act engaged in legitimating something is prone to the kind of conflict in signification that we saw in earlier chapters – the same dialogic nature of the sign which allows its capture by a particular interest also prevents it from being securely held. Milton makes a strenuous effort to legitimate God’s ways or to fix their meaning along the lines of his interpretation, an effort displayed in his frequent interventions in narratives in the form of an authorial voice. Yet in spite of this attempt at closure of meaning, *Paradise Lost* as a text registers conflicts of, and contests for, authority over the sign.

This reading of *Paradise Lost* is at odds with Stanley Fish’s contention in his recent book that ‘it is wrong to regard his poetry as the site of conflicting loyalties and impulses or as the reflection of a tension in him between the absolute demands of a monist theology and the multiform appeal of a variegated nature’. In Fish’s view, Milton’s poetry as a whole maintains ‘a homogenous structure’ revealing ‘an

acknowledgement of, and a determination to serve, a benevolent and all-powerful deity', and *Paradise Lost* is no exception.<sup>24</sup> Fish's emphasis on Milton's commitment to God from rather an orthodox theological viewpoint seems to be bound up with his refusal to see the complex ways in which Milton's Christian epic alludes to the theological and political conflicts of the English Revolution and represents the linguistic conflicts of the period. I am not arguing, of course, that Milton's text is an immediate reflection of the conflicts of the period; rather, I would suggest that the conflicts are played out in a literary and rhetorical form, that is, in the configuration of the poem's characters and their linguistic structures. This reading of *Paradise Lost* shows that Milton created a new form of Christian epic which is an epitome of the conflicts of interpretation, signs and their meanings; and this means that Milton's Christian epic is moving beyond the two generic traditions handed down from the past, the hexameral and classical epic genres. In this way we can understand *Paradise Lost*, in Marshall Grossman's words, as 'a literary historical event' exemplifying the dismantling of 'immediate semantic values of the old inherited orders of classical and Christian iconography and genre'.<sup>25</sup>

### **Milton's Arianism: Divided Deity, Sovereignty and Meaning**

We have seen the significance of the proem to Book 1 in presenting the character of Milton's Christian epic as distinct from classical and hexameral epic genres; but the proem is also of crucial importance in that Milton from the outset proposes a heretical interpretation challenging the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity.<sup>26</sup> According to traditional Trinitarianism, God exists in the three distinct persons of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but these three persons are one in essence: the three persons are equally united in one Godhead and are also eternally divine. The unity of the Trinitarian God is undermined from the outset in *Paradise Lost*, in part because Milton refers to the Father, Son and

Holy Spirit as discrete entities, and in part because he casts doubt upon the Son's absolute divinity as retaining the same essence as God. Milton in the proem mentions the Son first of all as 'one greater man' (1.4), as a human being who is to redeem humankind from the consequences of the Fall of Adam and Eve; and then he introduces the Holy Spirit as the ground of divine inspiration and inner illumination for his Christian epic, whereby he seeks to achieve his ultimate aim of justifying the ways of God as distinct from the Son and the Holy Spirit. The initial references smacking of anti-Trinitarianism in *Paradise Lost* might have a radical destabilizing effect upon the meaning of God's unity in the Trinity, but it is Milton's Arian heresy that has the wider and lasting impact on the poem as a whole. For whereas the Holy Spirit associated with the heavenly Muse is mentioned largely in Milton's invocations of Books 1, 3, 7 and 9, Milton's Arian belief regarding the relation between the Father and the Son has a significant influence upon the poem's main narrative structure, and further, upon the division of the meanings of God's unity and sovereignty at the theological and political level.

Milton's relation to the Arian heresy seems to have been a considerably controversial issue for a long time among Milton scholars, and recent writers, in opposition to attempts to identify Milton as a Trinitarian and anti-Arian, tend to insist that Milton really is an Arian and *Paradise Lost* embodies his heterodox Arian views. These scholars take great pains to corroborate their claims at once by taking heed of the similarity between Milton's definite Arian views in *De Doctrina Christiana* and those in *Paradise Lost* and by presenting the evidence that early readers of the poem were suspicious of his Arian heresy.<sup>27</sup> In fact, the ceremonial song of angels in Book 3 of *Paradise Lost* mirrors almost exactly Milton's Arian formulations as presented in *De Doctrina*:



Thee Father first they sung omnipotent,  
 Immutable, immortal, infinite,  
 Eternal king; thee author of all being,  
 Foundation of light, thyself invisible  
 Amidst the glorious brightness where thou sitst  
 Throned inaccessible, but when thou shad'st  
 The full blaze of thy beams, and through a cloud  
 Drawn round about thee like a radiant shrine,  
 Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear,  
 Yet dazzle heaven, that brightest seraphim  
 Approach not, but with both wings veil their eyes.  
 Thee next they sang of all creation first,  
 Begotten Son, divine similitude,  
 In whose conspicuous countenance, without cloud  
 Made visible, the almighty Father shines,  
 Whom else no creature can behold ...  
 (3.372-87)

As is usual with Arian heterodoxy, Milton regards the Father and the Son as two discrete persons who have different essential attributes. Milton enumerates the Father's unparalleled attributes – omnipotent, immutable, immortal, infinite, invisible and inaccessible – of which he implicitly assumes the Son does not have his share. The essential difference between the Father and the Son in Milton's Arian interpretation, above all, is that whereas the Father is the author of the Son, the Son is a begotten presence. The Son is begotten at a certain specific moment in time, while God exists in eternity in the state of unbegottenness.<sup>28</sup> Thus the eternal Father and the time-bound Son are divided into a subject and an object in terms of literal production. Furthermore, the 'Begotten Son' is not so much God itself as 'divine similitude', a person who shares certain attributes of God.

Of course, this is not to say that Milton entirely denied the Son's basic divinity in *Paradise Lost*. In Book 3 of the poem, God the Father makes a comment on the Son's divinity as well as his manhood: 'Here shalt thou sit incarnate, here shalt reign / Both God and man, Son both of God and man' (3.315-16); and in the narrative frame the Son

also emerges as an agent of God the Father, endowed with divine nature and power: 'Heaven of heavens and all the powers therein / By thee created, and by thee threw down / The aspiring dominations' (3.390-92). With the divine powers bestowed by the Father, the Son participates in creating the universe and subduing the rebellion of Satan and his followers in battle. Yet in spite of this acknowledgement of the Son's divinity, Milton's adoption of the Arian heresy and its concomitant divorce in essence between the Father and the Son in *Paradise Lost* invite us to think about the ways in which the sign of God is subject to an interpretive schism in its meaning. In view of orthodox, theological signification, the Father and the Son are one in the nature of Godhead and they are never separable from each other. The Son's co-equal and co-substantial presence with the Father was a Christian dogma formulated as an orthodox position at the Council of Nicaea in 325,<sup>29</sup> and it still constituted an undeniable orthodoxy in the semantic field of theological thinking in Milton's time. Milton's challenge to this traditionally-held theological dogma caused the semantic division of the unified Deity, shaking the foundation of its traditional signification.

This heretical interpretation of God could be seen as the inevitable consequence of Protestantism's encouragement of the individual's interpretation of Scripture and as issuing from Milton's sympathy with contemporary religious radicals' engagement in subjective interpretations of it.<sup>30</sup> Milton's challenge to the orthodox tenet of unified Godhead in *Paradise Lost*, however, reminds us of the specific rhetorical modes at the intersection of legitimation and delegitimation as played out in his prose writing. In the same manner as in his revolutionary pamphlets, Milton here attempts to delegitimize the dominant conception of God as two persons integrated into one God, while legitimizing his own interpretative stance on one God, not one-in-two. Milton's declaration justifying the ways of God, in effect, entails a complex process in which he seeks to establish the legitimacy of his own theological interpretation in his delegitimation of the traditional

interpretive authority. This process bears testimony to Milton's attempt to constitute the authority of his own Christian epic on a new semantic basis, not on a conventional one.

Milton's Arian separation between the Father and the Son in *Paradise Lost* provides the immediate occasion of semantic conflict over the unified Godhead, but it also becomes the cause of the conflict over the concept of sovereignty at the level of political signification. Milton writes in *De Doctrina Christiana*, 'In scripture there are two senses in which the Father is said to have begotten the Son: one literal, with reference to production; the other metaphorical, with reference to exaltation' (*CPW*, VI.205). The Father's decree which Raphael recounts to Adam in Book 5 is a literary representation of Milton's statement in *De Doctrina*:

Hear all ye angels, progeny of light,  
Thrones, dominations, principedoms, virtues, powers,  
Hear my decree, which unrevoked shall stand.  
This day I have begot whom I declare  
My only Son, and on this holy hill  
Him have anointed, whom ye now behold  
At my right hand; your head I him appoint;  
And by myself have sworn to him shall bow  
All knees in heaven, and shall confess him Lord:  
Under his great vicegerent reign abide  
United as one individual soul  
For ever happy: him who disobeys  
Me disobeys, breaks union, and that day  
Cast out from God and blessed vision, falls  
Into utter darkness, deep engulfed, his place  
Ordained without redemption, without end.  
(5.600-15)

As is indicated in *De Doctrina*, the above lines show that the Father has created and elevated his only Son at the same time at a particular moment of time ('This day'). If in *Paradise Lost* the first meaning of the Father's having begotten the Son – that of literal production – is to do with the schism in the nature of Godhead, its second metaphorical

meaning – ‘the Son’s exaltation above the angels’ and ‘making him a king’ (*CPW*, VI. 207) – is to do more with the division of heavenly sovereignty and its political aftermath. Understandably, some scholars exhibit a critical awareness of the political implication of the Father’s exaltation of the Son. Mary Ann Radzinowicz reads the episode as grounded on the Son’s merit rather than on his ‘hereditary right’ and as ‘God’s calculated relinquishment of power’. Like Radzinowicz, David Norbrook also underlines the Son’s merited elevation, but he interprets it less as God’s eventual abdication than as an epitome of the ‘principle of divine reduction’. From a slightly different perspective, Robert Thomas Fallon views it as ‘a like pattern of power-sharing’ which, he argues, Milton probably found in the circumstances of the French court while in public office.<sup>31</sup> From a different approach to the episode, I am more concerned with the ways in which it gave birth to the schism of political sovereignty and its meaning in Heaven and further to the conflict surrounding the sign ‘political sovereignty’ derived from Satan’s rebellion. From the perspective, I would suggest that the symbolic event of God’s elevation of the Son is an illustration of the complex intersection between Milton’s Arian heresy and his political experience at the level of the conflict over the sign and its meaning.

Before the Father’s having begotten the Son, the meaning of heavenly sovereignty was entirely united in the immutable, eternal, invisible only Sovereign God. With the Father’s declaration of the Son’s elevation, however, the unified sovereignty undergoes a radical change in meaning. The Father does assume ‘the high supremacy of heaven’ (3.205), but on that particular day he attempts to divide – or share – it with his Son by appointing him both as head of ‘angels’ and as God’s ‘vicegerent’. Several times in the poem we observe the Father address the Son as such: in Book 3, the Son is addressed as ‘Anointed universal king’ (3.317) and ‘head supreme’ (3.319), and in Book 6 as ‘heir / Of all things’ (6.707-8) and ‘king / By sacred unction’ (6.708-9). These titles hint that heavenly sovereignty is divided and that its meaning is double: in relation to angels the Father and the Son are co-sovereigns, but in relation to each other the Son is the Father’s

heir and representative. This shared but divided sovereignty ultimately suggests that it is impossible to imagine in Heaven the conception of unbroken sovereignty which God enjoyed alone.

Here, first of all we need to look carefully at the way that heavenly sovereignty is divided between the Father and Son. Given the viewpoint of political sovereignty, what matters is indeed more the difference in roles between the Father and the Son than their difference in essence, although these are not mutually exclusive. Milton assigns different roles to each of them in the text: the Father issues his decree or expresses his will and the Son brings it into effect. We find the most notable cases of their divided political sovereignty in the war in Heaven and in the creation of the universe. On the third day of the war in Heaven, the Father declares that ‘All power [has been] on him [the Son] transferred’ (6.678) in order to end a war which has been dragging on for two days:

Two days are therefore past, the third is thine;  
 For thee I have ordained it, and thus far  
 Have suffered, that the glory may be thine  
 Of ending this great war, since none but thou  
 Can end it.

(6.699-703)

Likewise, the Father enjoins the Son to create the universe and the Son puts it into practice:

And thou my Word, begotten Son, by thee  
 This I perform, speak thou, and be it done ...  
 So spake the almighty, and to what he spake  
 His Word, the filial Godhead, gave effect.

(7.163-64, 174-75)

In political terms, the Father’s role seems to be close to that of a legislature while the Son’s is similar to that of an executive.<sup>32</sup> To put it a different way, the Father in the

poem is portrayed as the initiator of law-making, while the Son is represented as an agent actualizing it. This difference of their roles also includes the difference of their authority, since the Son exercises an authority derived or delegated from the Father's original authority. Milton would suggest here that the difference between the Father and the Son in their roles and authority is a clear manifestation of divided political sovereignty in Heaven. What is striking is that Milton does not look upon the evidence as unfavourable; rather, in his eyes, it is an ideal and original meaning of the nature of political sovereignty, since it is moving towards the state of unity in division. It is likely that this meaning of divided sovereignty in Heaven pertains to his critical reflection on the controversies surrounding political sovereignty which remained unresolved in conflict throughout the revolutionary period. As has been seen in previous chapters, the issue was among the most strongly debated by rival forces during the period, whether between Charles I and Parliament in the 1640s or Cromwell and Parliament in the 1650s. Despite Milton's intention to conduct both a wholesale re-evaluation of the debates which fanned the flames of division in the period and a critique of each party's exclusive claims to sovereignty, his recognition of law-making as superior, it seems to me, entails the implication that Parliament's authority in law-making should be regarded as superior to an individual magistrate's executive authority.

In *Paradise Lost* it is Satan that raises a question about the meaning of divided sovereignty in unity or shared sovereignty in division in heavenly politics. Satan envisions the Father's exaltation of the Son as a request that he should serve two sovereigns, as the meaning of the Father's unfair decree is unacceptable and incomprehensible to him:

... by decree  
 Another now hath to himself engrossed  
 All power, and us eclipsed under the name  
 Of king anointed, for whom all this haste



Of midnight march, and hurried meeting here,  
 This only to consult how we may best  
 With what may be devised of honours new  
 Receive him coming to receive from us  
 Knee-tribute yet unpaid, prostration vile,  
 Too much to one, but double how endured,  
 To one and to his image now proclaimed?  
 (5.774-84)

Satan's questioning of – and implied judgment on – the elevation exemplifies the conflict of meaning to be found in the sign of sovereignty. On the part of the Father, the sovereignty being shared with his Son means that he revokes his absolute rule over heavenly angels, practising the principle of reduction of his own power. The Father's principle of divided but shared sovereignty can be said to be a necessary corollary of his political decision to embody the value of his 'sacrifice for the general good'.<sup>33</sup> Whereas God's notion of sovereignty is thus oriented toward giving up his private interests for the general good, Satan's is thoroughly power-oriented. Satan interprets the sign of sovereignty as meaning a sovereign's absolute rule over his subjects. In his estimation, sovereign should be one or, better, none – 'Too much to one, but double' – and another sovereign's mediation between God and angels is seen as a duo of power to which he and the angels are in total subjection.

In this way, Satan appropriates the sign of sovereignty in God's politics in order to subject it to his own power-oriented meaning. Satan singles out 'the name / Of king anointed' to separate the name from its referent, the Son. The Son is an embodiment of God the Father's intention to divide his absolute sovereignty, signifying the predominance of the public good over personal interests. Satan's stress on the name serves not only to exclude the object to which the name refers but also to devalue the authentic meaning the Father has tried to embody through the Son. By doing so, he associates the name with another meaning, that of the relationship between rule and subjection, as illustrated in the words 'Knee-tribute yet unpaid, prostration vile'. Satan's

attention to the name is a paradigmatic case revealing his reliance upon a ‘nominal’ mode of definition rather than upon its ‘real’ mode. Conal Condren outlines the two forms of definition often observed in the seventeenth-century language of politics as follows: ‘nominal definitions focused on the relational dimension of meaning while real definitions gained plausibility as part of the reference function of language’.<sup>34</sup> The sign of ‘king anointed’ in Satan’s nominal definition presupposes the relational meaning of the king as ruler and angels as subjects. By contrast, in the Father’s real definition, the name refers to the presence of the Son and his meaning in the empirical world of Heaven. In other words, to the Father, the sign denotes its specific referent – the Son – and the real meaning of divided sovereignty in Heaven – his regard for the public good. *Paradise Lost* represents the clash of the two definitions of the sign ‘king’; and further it presents a vivid picture of Satan’s replacement of the Father’s real definition with his nominal definition. Here, Satan’s skill as rhetorician stands out clearly, not least for his rhetorical ability to expropriate the Father’s definition and to recast it in his own interests.

The conflict over the sign of sovereignty and its meaning in *Paradise Lost* recalls one of numerous struggles over signs and their meanings during the revolutionary period; Satan’s alternative notion of sovereignty is particularly revealing, for it is reminiscent of Hobbes’s theory of sovereignty in *Leviathan* published in 1651. Of course, this is not to say that Satan in the poem presented the concept of sovereignty in the same way as Hobbes did; for he did not look upon the relationship between God and angels as ‘a *contractual* relationship’, nor did he ultimately acknowledge the absolute obedience of angels to God’s protection.<sup>35</sup> It seems more likely that the parallel between the two lies with the semantic structures of viewing sovereignty both as absolute and indivisible and as the relationship between dominance and subjection. According to Hobbes’s theory of sovereignty, sovereignty should be defined nominally as the state of absolute unity in which a sovereign and subjects form a relationship of domination and

subjection, whether the sovereign is a single person or an assembly. One of Hobbes's main points about sovereignty is his nominal definition of it: in his nominal view, when the unity of sovereignty is broken, 'when it [a sovereign] is not obeyed, [it] ceases definitionally to be a sovereign'.<sup>36</sup> Satan's definition of sovereignty in *Paradise Lost* bears a considerable resemblance to Hobbes's. When sovereignty in Heaven is divided between the Father and the Son, Satan does not acknowledge their sovereign authority in the mode of its real definition. In his nominal definition, heavenly sovereignty should be unified in the sense of God's – not the Son's – absolute rule over angels: 'the work / Of secondary hands, by task transferred / From Father to his Son? Strange point and new!' (5.853-55). As with Hobbes, to Satan divided sovereignty in Heaven is not congruent with the original sense of sovereignty in its nominal definition; and it becomes the main reason for his rebellion against the meaning of the divided sovereignty.

Satan's alternative notion of sovereignty based on its nominal definition stands in striking contrast to the meaning which Milton seeks to present in the concept of divided sovereignty in *Paradise Lost*. The Father and the Son in their distinct roles, for all Satan's rebellion against them, are still co-sovereigns in the real definition of the word. The ground for their sovereign authority, Milton suggests, is that they place the public good before private interests, as in the case of the Father's reduction of power and the Son's offer to sacrifice himself on humankind's behalf. What Milton wants to deliver in the concept of divided sovereignty seems to be such a meaning rather than the Hobbesian meaning of rule and subjection.

Milton's drift towards Arian heterodoxy left its traces upon *Paradise Lost* in complex ways. Milton's poetic project of justifying God's ways to men was conducted in his dismantling of the orthodox dogma of the unified Godhead, and this theological radicalism generated the semantic division of the nature of God in the poem. Besides, Milton's Arian views of the relationship between the Father and the Son had a more profound and lasting political implication. Milton's representation of a series of episodes

leading to the Father's elevation of his Son and Satan's resistance to it was in a sense his literary reflection on the meaning of sovereignty, a moot question in the revolutionary period. *Paradise Lost* did not give any hint of the concept of popular sovereignty which he had proposed once in *The Tenure*. Instead, he offered a dramatic rendition of the conflict between the two definitions of sovereignty witnessed in the revolutionary period. It is at this point that we observe the intersection of Milton's radical Arian heresy with the political and linguistic structure of dialogic conflict Milton experienced during the revolutionary period, which led him to the representation of semantic division and conflict in divinity and sovereignty.

### **Words Mightier than Arms: The Satan-Abdiel Controversy**

The representation of Satan as a skilful political rhetorician in *Paradise Lost* has received so much attention from scholars that it has long been a cliché of Milton criticism. One of the most salient features of the critical reception is that Satan's rhetoric is an archetypal example of fallen rhetoric, characterized by fraud, deception, dissimulation and illogic. The example is, it is argued, typical of a wily tyrant's rhetoric or a Machiavellian rhetoric of fraud and deceit.<sup>37</sup> This epistemological view of Satan's political rhetoric as fallen and false is certainly inseparable from Milton's evaluation of Satan's words as 'words replete with guile' (9.736), as 'high words, that bore / Semblance of worth not substance' (1.528-29). The dichotomy between false and true rhetoric implied in viewing Satan's rhetoric as false could be read as an unavoidable result of the evil committed by Satan already inherent in the biblical story. In spite of this, however, Milton's text surprisingly shows that Satan's words are not simply an extreme example of false or illogical rhetoric but are an exemplary case of ideological functions and modes of rhetoric. In particular, the controversy between Satan and Abdiel

in Books 5 and 6, in addition to the characteristics of Satan's rhetoric, shows that the two characters were formidable rivals in appropriating and expropriating the signs used within the same linguistic milieu.

Satan's speech in the rebellion scene of Book 5 is a reference point in investigating the characteristics of the ideological functions and modes of Satan's rhetoric. Satan addresses one-third of the angels who have gathered in the north of Heaven in compliance with his orders:

But what if better counsels might erect  
 Our minds and teach us to cast off this yoke?  
 Will ye submit your necks, and choose to bend  
 The supple knee? Ye will not, if I trust  
 To know ye right, or if ye know yourselves  
 Natives and sons of heaven possessed before  
 By none, and if not equal all, yet free,  
 Equally free; for orders and degrees  
 Jar not with liberty, but well consist.  
 Who can in reason then or right assume  
 Monarchy over such as live by right  
 His equals, if in power and splendour less,  
 In freedom equal? Or can introduce  
 Law and edict on us, who without law  
 Err not, much less for this to be our lord,  
 And look for adoration to the abuse  
 Of those imperial titles which assert  
 Our being ordained to govern, not to serve?  
 (5.785-802)

This scene recapitulates almost all the skills of Satan's rhetoric and its ideological functions. Satan's speech is an example of deliberative rhetoric, and it aims to persuade the gathered angels to consent to the legitimacy of his rebellion against God.<sup>38</sup> Satan's attempt to persuade them of the legitimacy of his rebellion, as is usual with the dual structure of this kind of rhetoric, goes hand in hand with his attempt at the delegitimation of a new political order in Heaven instituted by God. Bearing in mind the

intersecting ideological functions of deliberative rhetoric, we need to interrogate closely Satan's distinctive rhetorical modes in the process of securing the angels' consent to rebellion. To begin with, Satan's rhetoric is characterized by his effective use of figurative language for increasing the emotional appeal of his arguments. The word 'yoke' was one of the biblical metaphors frequently used in the political writings of the 1640s and 1650s as a symbolic expression of political oppression.<sup>39</sup> Along with the word, lines 787-88 illustrate the fact that Satan resorts to the metaphorical use of words for reminding the convened angels of their enslaved state and thus for arousing a desire to escape it.

Secondly, Satan's rhetoric reveals the artful operation of logical reasoning. It is often argued that Satan's rhetoric abounds with illogical lies,<sup>40</sup> but the above passages show how Satan is faithful to his own inferential rationalization. Satan's presentation of seemingly contradictory notions of liberty and equality builds upon the fusion of the idea of Christian liberty and the principle of inequality in the secular sphere. The Protestant doctrine of Christian liberty derived from the Reformation, originally from such reformers as Luther and Calvin, makes it clear that all Christians are supposed to have the liberty of conscience to defend their beliefs and faiths from the oppression of secular laws and institutions. Although all believers are free and equal at the spiritual level of their consciences, they are unequal in the secular realm of 'orders and degrees'.<sup>41</sup> Satan's concepts of liberty and equality are a logical application of this compatibility of spiritual liberty and secular inequality. In fact, this idea of the compatibility of spiritual liberty and secular inequality was one which Milton himself did not deny in his political writings and which Presbyterians such as Prynne actively endorsed in their emphasis on secular authority and rank, as we saw in our account of the struggle between Prynne and the Levellers in chapter 2. A distinctive feature of Satan's logical rhetoric is that he throws into stark relief the Protestant thesis of Christian liberty and then links it with the claim that he and the angels are in the state of 'freedom equal' with the Son in Heaven.

In Satan's logical structure, the 'Law and edict' that God appointed his Son as their Lord are recognized as restrictions on their right to be free equally, and the Son is thus regarded as one of their equals. This logical argument added to his effective use of metaphorical language enables him to win over his audience – except Abdiel – to the cause of their rebellion against God:

Thus far his bold discourse without control  
 Had audience, when among the seraphim  
 Abdiel, than whom none with more zeal adored  
 The Deity, and divine commands obeyed,  
 Stood up, and in a flame of zeal severe  
 The current of his fury thus opposed.  
 (5.803-8)

Abdiel's first reaction to Satan's rhetorical use of both figurative and logical language is focused on Satan's argument: 'Oh argument blasphemous, false and proud!' (5.809). In terms of the exploitation of the rhetorical power of figurative language, Abdiel, it is true, is not an equal contestant with Satan, in spite of God's compliments on Abdiel's linguistic ability in Book 6: 'Servant of God, well done, well hast thou fought / The better fight, who single has maintained / Against revolted multitudes the cause / Of truth, in word mightier than they in arms' (6.29-32). Rather, Abdiel's ability resides in his combative readiness to expropriate the meanings of the notions of liberty and equality in Satan's terms and then to redefine them in his own context, in his capability to be authoritative rather than simply persuasive. Abdiel confutes Satan's argument:

Words which no ear ever to hear in heaven  
 Expected, least of all from thee, ingrate  
 In place thyself so high above thy peers.  
 Canst thou with impious obloquy condemn  
 The just decree of God, pronounced and sworn,  
 That to his only Son by right endued  
 With regal sceptre, every soul in heaven  
 Shall bend the knee, and in that honour due



Confess him rightful king? Unjust thou sayst  
 Flatly unjust, to bind with laws the free,  
 And equal over equals to let reign,  
 One over all with unsucceeded power.  
 Shall thou give law to God, shall thou dispute  
 With him the points of liberty, who made  
 Thee what thou art, and formed the powers of heaven  
 Such as he pleased, and circumscribed their being?  
 ... But to grant it thee unjust,  
 That equal over equals monarch reign:  
 (5.810-25, 831-32)

Abdiel's strategy in the war of words is to appropriate Satan's words, pointing out the unequal status between the Son and angels and, conversely, to apply the meaning of the sign 'inequality' in a different context, that of Satan's unequal relation to the assembled angels. Abdiel's reiteration of this meaning of the sign constitutes a useful rhetorical strategy. Although Satan mentioned an inequality in rank and order, his focus was less on the unequal relation between him and the rebel angels than on the legitimacy of their liberty to convert an unequal relation between them and the Son to an equal one. In Abdiel's understanding, however, the Son and angels are fundamentally unequal, since their different qualities and rank are the necessary nature of heavenly laws decreed by God; and to him, Satan's resistance to the just God's laws is conversely thought of as his desire to perpetuate the asymmetrical power-relation of 'One over all with unsucceeded power' (5.821). Although they use the same words denoting inequality, they attempt to secure the meaning of the words within their discrete accounts of heavenly laws and politics and their rhetorical designs for establishing the authority of their different standpoints.

In a similar fashion, the sign of 'liberty' is also subject to conflict over its meaning in the Satan-Abdiel controversy in Book 5. Satan interprets the sign politically, as a liberation from the shackles of Heaven's unfair laws and unequal power relations, and in so doing attempts to persuade the other angels of the legitimacy of their resistance to

God. Abdiel's strategy this time focuses on redefining the sign after taking it from Satan's context. What is significant in Abdiel's redefinition is the different ontological status of God and the angels, with God as creator and angels as his creatures. According to Abdiel, this difference determines not only the ontological status of creatures but also their essential limits in which they cannot argue for their own independent liberty in relation to God. In other words, the presence of God as creator essentially makes it impossible for his creatures to enter into discussions about 'the points of liberty' (5.823); and they are not allowed to engage in the epistemological questioning of its meaning. To them, the word 'to be free' paradoxically finds its meaning in their obedience to God; hence Abdiel's redefinition of Satan's argument for liberty as 'disobedience' (5.888). The dispute on liberty between Satan and Abdiel shows how they are placed on different semantic levels, Satan on the level of secular, political principle and Abdiel on that of divine principle. It seems to me that their attempts to secure legitimation on these different bases are responsible for most of the conflict around the sign 'liberty'.

The first round of the dispute between Satan and Abdiel in Book 5 results in Satan's victory, in spite of Abdiel's strenuous efforts both to show Satan's words as revealing his ambition to rule and to redefine them within a theological interpretive framework. As Milton describes, even though neither did he 'swerve from truth, [nor] change his constant mind / Though single' (5.902-3), it is apparent that Abdiel has turned out to be a loser in the war of words. For all of the assembled angels, at the latter stage of their first verbal battle, give their full consent to Satan: 'He said, and as the sound of waters deep / Hoarse murmur echoed to his words applause / Through the infinite host' (5.872-74). We might carefully ask, then, why Abdiel was destined to lose the verbal dispute. One of the reasons could be found, as Abdiel indicates in Book 6, in Satan's 'potent tongue' (6.135), the rhetorical abilities with which he could sway the audience's emotions with tropes and figures. The more crucial point than the outcome of the verbal encounter, however, was the process of their logical investments devoted to

securing the legitimacy of their words with a rationally grounded authority. The debate aimed at legitimation, as we have seen, was characterized by a dialogic conflict between different frames of reference, between Satan's politically oriented semantic frame and Abdiel's theological one. This difference between their frames of reference, more than anything else, was the main reason for their disagreement over the meaning of the signs 'liberty' and 'equality'.

The Satan-Abdiel controversy does not stop there, but resumes for a second round in Book 6, just before they embark on a military conflict in Heaven. The second round of their controversy is an extension of the first, since Satan brings up the subject of freedom again. But the paired words 'liberty' and 'equality' (or the word 'inequality', which was not explicit but was more important in the first round of their controversy) are displaced in favour of 'freedom' and 'servility':

At first I thought that liberty and heaven  
 To heavenly souls had been all one; but now  
 I see that most through sloth had rather serve,  
 Ministering spirits, trained up in feast and song;  
 Such hast thou armed, the minstrelsy of heaven,  
 Servility with freedom to contend,  
 As both their deeds compared this day shall prove.  
 (6.164-70)

Satan's reference to the word 'servility' alludes to the identification of liberty with obedience to God. Satan redefines not only the meaning of the sign 'freedom' in Abdiel's allusion as that of a subservience indicative of the baseness of the angels' character, but assimilates the sign itself to that of 'servility'. Thus the same sign 'freedom' takes on totally opposite meanings on either side of the controversy; and what is remarkable is that Satan goes so far as to coin a new word in order to establish the authority of his definition more securely. Abdiel's counter-attack to Satan's attempt at substituting one sign with another is also arresting:

Unjustly thou deprav'st it with the name  
 Of servitude to serve whom God ordains,  
 Or nature; God and nature bid the same,  
 When he who rules is worthiest, and excels  
 Them whom he governs. This is servitude,  
 To serve the unwise, or him who hath rebelled  
 Against his worthier, as thine now serve thee,  
 Thyself not free, but to thyself enthralled;  
 Yet lewdly dar'st our ministering upbraid.  
 (6.174-82)

Abdiel declines to take up the word 'servility' from Satan's accusation of the angels, and instead replaces it with another word, 'servitude'. It is appropriate here that we examine the semantic difference between 'servility' and 'servitude' and the reason why Abdiel has attempted to exchange the first term with the second. Indeed, these questions were already raised in critical comments on *Paradise Lost* by eighteenth-century scholars. Richard Bentley, one of the scholars of the period, made a distinction between the two notions, stating that 'Servitude may be a Necessity from outward Force: but *Servility* is a Compliance from an inward meanness of Soul'; and then he came to the conclusion that Abdiel should have used the word 'servility' in line 175. In response to Bentley, Zachary Pearce asserted that '*M.* [Milton] intended to make Abdiel use the word *Servitude*, and not *Servility*: the good Angel perhaps was not willing to make the worst of the Reproach, nor car'd to repeat what carried so severe a charge upon his Fellows.'<sup>42</sup> John Leonard, the twentieth-century Milton scholar who takes a keen interest in the question, in essence agrees with Pearce's point, but he is more concerned with the linguistic turmoil caused by Satan's rebellion and with Abdiel's reaction to it:

Faced with a situation of linguistic upheaval such as Satan's rebellion has unleashed, both Satan and Abdiel feel the need to settle the meanings of words ('This is servitude ...'). This kind of semantic struggle is a familiar feature of any political conflict. (We shall soon see that Milton himself was a veteran of such

battles.) What makes the case so interesting in Heaven is the sudden proliferation of Satan's neologisms. This proliferation raises questions not only as to *what* a word should mean, but as to whether it should exist at all. In changing Satan's word, Abdiel attempts to define a limit to the evils which are assuming names for the first time. He 'softens the term into *Servitude*' (Pearce) so as to keep Satan's vocabulary out of Heaven's language.<sup>43</sup>

Leonard's study of the Latin origin of the term 'servility' and its meaning in Milton's *Paradise Lost* is of great help in grasping both the reasons for Abdiel's change of the word and its effects in the poem. According to Leonard, the Latin adjective *servilis* 'from which both 'servile' and 'servility' derive' is a term originally denoting 'social rank, not character'. The term undergoes 'semantic extension' in sixteenth-century English usage in such a way as to include the meaning of character; and so it acquires its apparent meaning denoting 'baseness of character' in Milton's usage in the poem.<sup>44</sup> Leonard's identification of the meaning in Milton's poem is intended to demonstrate how Satan's rebellion brought about confusion of semantic order in Heaven and how Abdiel's change of the word was an attempt to safeguard the order by carrying out a check on the evil of Satan's neologism. On Leonard's judgment, Abdiel's semantic struggle against the evil in *Paradise Lost* resembles that of Milton in *Eikonoklastes*: 'Milton in *Eikonoklastes*, like Abdiel in *Paradise Lost*, tries to close the door against a new word which misnames a virtuous cause'.<sup>45</sup>

What is not fully elaborated in Leonard's study or in Bentley's and Pearce's accounts is the political connotation of the term 'servitude'. The *OED* identifies its political sense as wide currency in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English usage: 'The condition of being politically enslaved; subjection to a foreign power or to oppressive rule. ... The state of being under the yoke of (a tyrant, a conqueror)' (*OED* 1c). For me, Abdiel's substitution of the word 'servitude' for 'servility' is seen as arising from a rhetorical gesture to generate a political discourse capable of defining Satan's rebellion. While Satan appears to retreat from the political message by reproaching

Abdiel's fellow angels for their 'sloth' and 'baseness', Abdiel steps up his onslaught against him by reactivating the political connotation Satan deployed in the first round of their controversy. Indeed, it is difficult to grasp the reason why Abdiel was willing to choose the term 'servitude' in the phrase 'Unjustly thou depriv'st it with the name / Of servitude to serve whom God ordains' (6.174-75), if we fail to take into consideration their political disputes in the first round. Abdiel not only attempts to articulate the meaning of political subjection Satan introduced in justifying his rebellion by using the word 'servitude', but makes effective use of the word in order to display the meaning of Satan's rebellion and his rule that will follow it. From this perspective, Abdiel's choice of the word is a political slur on Satan's rebellion.

Whereas Abdiel invests a political import in the change of the word, his appropriation of the concept of Satan's 'freedom' seems to be working at the level of theological signification. Abdiel takes great pains, in the first place, to redefine its meaning in Satan's usage as 'a deformation of subjectivity', or, as a misdirection of Satan's self-referential sign that does not fail to point 'beyond itself to the Creator',<sup>46</sup> as demonstrated in the phrase 'Thyself not free, but to thyself enthralled' (6.181). And then he makes it manifest that the real sense of freedom does not lie in Satanic self-enslavement but in obedience and service to God: 'let me serve / In heaven God ever blest, and his divine / Behests obey, worthiest to be obeyed' (6.183-85).

The controversy between Satan and Abdiel in Books 5 and 6 with which I have been dealing so far has recently been addressed from the perspective of republicanism. Roger Lejosne, the first critic to elaborate such a perspective, says that 'the Satan-Abdiel encounter ... appears as a compendium, an epitome of the pamphlet wars of the revolution and in particular of the Salmasius-Milton controversy'. His main claim is that Satan's speeches in Books 5 and 6 contain, to a considerable degree, the words that feature in Milton's arguments, the republican arguments against kingship which 'Milton himself had used in various pamphlets', whereas Abdiel's speeches accommodate 'the

most, common, standard royalist arguments', and particularly Salmasian arguments for vindicating absolute monarchy in *Defensio Regia*. Lejosne's point here is that the verbal encounter between the two figures reflects the Salmasius-Milton controversy in such an inverted way as to stress Milton's earthly republican politics as irrelevant to the heavenly kingship of a 'universal hierarchy'. In a similar vein, Norbrook also argues that 'Satan is using a republican language for a speech-act designed to consolidate his personal power; Abdiel is using monarchist language for a speech-act aimed at affirming public over private interests'.<sup>47</sup>

There is little doubt that Milton put many of his arguments during the revolutionary period into Satan's mouth, to an extent, indeed, that has led readers to considerable confusion, but my examination of the controversy so far suggests an alternative perspective. Unlike Lejosne, I don't see the Satan-Abdiel controversy in Books 5 and 6 as an inverted rendition of a specific controversy between Milton and Salmasius; rather, I see it as a dramatization of the forms of linguistic appropriation and expropriation I have traced in the preceding chapters. The remarkable affinity between Satan's and Milton's arguments is primarily due to the political, secular aspect of Satan's language, that is, Satan's use of the language of real politics. In contrast, many of Abdiel's semantic values belong to the theological sphere, although I don't deny the political significance of Abdiel's language. It is not surprising that these different value-systems and value judgments about one event – God's elevation of the Son – led to different uses of the same signs and to conflicts of their meanings, as we saw in many cases of the previous chapters. If Milton himself took an aggressive role in the wars of words with his controversial prose writing, in *Paradise Lost* he dramatizes the linguistic experiences in the form of the struggle over signs and their meanings between Satan and Abdiel. It is evident that Milton sides with Abdiel in *Paradise Lost*, but it is also evident that the controversy itself resembles the linguistic, rhetorical structures of the revolutionary period in terms of the struggle in language for authority over language.



And it is also evident that Milton tries to show through the Satan-Abdiel controversy that words may be mightier than arms, irrespective of who turns out to be the ultimate winner.

**‘The sacred fruit forbidden’:  
Changing Interpretations of Divine Law in Adam and Eve**

Just as the Satan-Abdiel controversy is a reminder that *Paradise Lost* is a text of conflicts of, or contests for, meaning, so too Adam’s and Eve’s changing perceptions of ‘the fruit / Of that forbidden tree’ (1.1-2) show how the sign of divine law is subject to conflicting interpretations in Adam and Eve. Attempts to interpret divine law are made by Adam and Eve twice in the poem: once, on Adam’s initiative, in Book 4, and the second time on Eve’s in Book 9. Adam’s first dialogue with Eve in Book 4 is indicative of his appreciation of God’s stricture against eating the forbidden fruit as a serious prohibition. After accounting for the principle of God’s good and infinite creation, Adam without delay recounts God’s restriction on humankind:

... he who requires  
From us no other service than to keep  
This one, this easy charge, of all the trees  
In Paradise that bear delicious fruit  
So various, not to taste that only tree  
Of knowledge, planted by the tree of life,  
So near grows death to life, whate’er death is,  
Some dreadful thing no doubt; for well thou knowst  
God hath pronounced it death to taste that tree,  
The only sign of our obedience left  
Among so many signs of power and rule  
Conferred upon us, and dominion given  
Over all other creatures that possess  
Earth, air, and sea. Then let us not think hard  
One easy prohibition, who enjoy

Free leave so large to all things else, and choice  
 Unlimited of manifold delights ...  
 (4.419-35)

As one critic points out, God's sole prohibition in Eden 'functions as a means of establishing or testing man's ability to obey even that which is arbitrarily imposed and to believe in the justness of that imposition'.<sup>48</sup> But the fact that the forbidden fruit is the product of the Tree of Knowledge has the deeper symbolic meaning of function of marking a divine law which articulates the limits of human knowledge and reason. Adam shows a proper understanding of the symbolic significance underlying the mere object – fruit – since when Eve insists on their separate gardening for the efficiency of labour in Book 9, he reminds her of the potential for the fallibility of reason:

Reason, is free, and reason he made right,  
 But bid her well beware, and still erect,  
 Lest by some fair appearing good surprised  
 She dictate false, and misinform the will  
 To do what God expressly hath forbid.  
 (9.352-56)

To Adam, reason is a double-edged faculty: on the one hand, it helps to guide him and Eve to right choice and genuine freedom, but on the other, it leads them to the error of misjudgment. The forbidden fruit thus functions as a mark of the boundary of human reason; and from a linguistic point of view, it functions as a condition which guarantees the essential unity of the word and the thing. Adam without any questioning accepts the fruit as a sign of his obedience to the unified order of the word and the thing created by God.

Here, we need to be alert to Adam's remarks such as 'this easy charge' (4.421), 'let us not think hard / One easy prohibition' (4.432-33). Adam's response to God's command does not seem to be problematic on the surface, since prelapsarian Edenic law

itself is ‘single in unity and thus easy to keep’ when compared with the ‘Pauline postlapsarian Eden, where the law multiplies uncontrollably and becomes impossible to keep’.<sup>49</sup> But it is also difficult to deny that Adam’s too simple and optimistic interpretation of the law in Book 4 appears to be precarious, if we consider the weighty significance imposed on the law, the ultimate fate of all humanity depending on the interpretive choice of the first progenitors. Adam in Book 4 makes light of the interpretive task by saying ‘let us not think hard’, when he should dwell on the limit of the law imposed on him. Meanwhile, Eve does not attempt any interpretation of it on her own, simply following the words of Adam as patriarchal head: ‘my guide / And head, what thou hast said is just and right’ (4.442-43). The subsequent account by Eve of the day of her creation – the scene of her being drawn to her own image reflected in the mirroring lake – illustrates that she was engrossed with the matter of her own being rather than with the matter of the relation between the self and God’s law.

This non-interpretation of divine law, derived from Eve’s submissive posture and her preoccupation with herself in Book 4, undergoes a dramatic reversal in Eve’s lead in Book 9. In both the separation scene and the scene of Satan’s temptation in Book 9, Eve emerges as the subject of interpretation as well as that of action. Of course, at the temptation scene, it is impossible to ignore the role Satan’s rhetoric plays in reorienting Eve’s perceptions of the Tree of Knowledge and its fruits, but Eve’s own reasoning also plays an undeniable part. Milton’s representation of Eve as a figure who has her own independent interpretive ability in Book 9 undercuts the traditional perception of Eve as a figure ‘embodying the flaw in human nature, the un-reason, and vanity which prevents it from achieving its celestial potential’.<sup>50</sup>

It is just before and after eating the forbidden fruit that a significant change takes place in Eve’s perspective on the Tree of Knowledge and its fruits. Eve addresses the Tree and its fruits, just before she ventures to take one of them:

Great are thy virtues, doubtless, best of fruits,  
 Though kept from man, and worthy to be admired,  
 Whose taste, too long forborne, at first assay  
 Gave elocution to the mute, and taught  
 The tongue not made for speech to speak thy praise ...  
 (9.745-49)

Eve addresses the fruit as if it retained virtues capable of giving the ability of speech. The fruit is only a sign of man's obedience and a symbol of a pledge of that obedience, not an object which harbours vital and intrinsic virtues in nature, still less the ability of speaking. As in Bishop James Ussher's account, Eve's interpretive process here relates to her 'superstitious conceit of the fruit of the tree; imagining it to have that virtue which God never put into it'.<sup>51</sup> Eve's assumption develops to the extent that the fruit possesses a divine attribute: 'Here grows the cure of all, this fruit divine, / Fair to the eye, inviting to the taste, / Of virtue to make wise' (9.776-78). A crucial feature of this series of interpretive processes is that it contributes to strengthening her linguistic legitimation of her unconscious desire to transgress God's law. This work of legitimation in language is carried out through her replacement of the sign of divine law as a symbol of man's obedience with the sign of a superstitious and idolatrous belief. This switch in the meaning of the sign culminates in her adoration of the Tree of Knowledge after eating its produce:

O sovereign, virtuous, precious of all trees  
 In Paradise, of operation blest  
 To sapience, hitherto obscured, infamed,  
 And thy fair fruit let hang, as to no end  
 Created; but henceforth my early care,  
 Not without song, each morning, and due praise  
 Shall tend thee, and the fertile burden ease  
 Of thy full branches offered free to all;  
 Till dieted by thee I grow mature  
 In knowledge, as the gods who all things know ...  
 (9.795-804)

Eve's conferring the title 'sovereign' on the Tree and her profession of daily song and praise towards it suggests that her daily worship of God has been replaced with that of the Tree. This substitute of the object of worship represents the culmination of Eve's idolatrous infatuation. The Tree as a sign of man's obedience to God loses its original meaning only to produce the meaning of an objectified sign, a reified ideological sign which is reduced to the object of Eve's idolatry. Through the semantic transformation of this idolized sign, Eve has the illusion that she will rise above a human presence to become a pagan god. This misconception of the meaning of the sign, as a result, leads to the strengthening of Eve's alienation from God by entrusting herself to superstitious powers, rather than to the cultivation of an inner spiritual relationship with God.

This semantic transformation of the sign primarily arises from the peculiar process of Eve's interpretation of the Tree. Eve's interpretive work starts with God's naming of the Tree:

Thy praise he also who forbids thy use,  
 Conceals not from us, naming thee the tree  
 Of knowledge, knowledge both of good and evil;  
 Forbids us then to taste, but his forbidding  
 Commends thee more, while it infers the good  
 By thee communicated, and our want:  
 For good unknown, sure is not had, or had  
 And yet unknown, is as not had at all.  
 In plain then, what forbids he but to know,  
 Forbids us good, forbids us to be wise?  
 Such prohibitions bind not.

(9.750-60)

The problem of Eve's interpretive task essentially does not stem from her naming the Tree of Knowledge, since she follows the naming of which God informed Adam on the day of his creation, that is, the naming of 'the tree whose operation brings / Knowledge

of good and ill' (8.323-24); rather, her problem arises from the distortion of what is signified in that naming. The Tree of Knowledge, as she names it correctly, provides 'knowledge both of good and evil', but her interpretation excludes the knowledge of evil from her thought. Eve infers that possession of the knowledge of the good will lead her to wisdom and 'inward freedom' (9.762), and this inference of the intimate relationship between the good and knowledge makes God's prohibition gradually incomprehensible. Furthermore, Eve's reasoning does not make room for God's warning of death as a consequence of eating from the Tree of Knowledge. This exclusion of the senses of evil and death from the sign of the Tree of Knowledge shows that Eve's interpretation is working according to the principles of negation and exclusion. Eve negates and excludes the senses implicit in God's sign of prohibition, those of evil and death, whereby she tries to legitimate her transgressive act and at the same time delegitimize the authority of God's law. This interpretive mode of negation and exclusion depending on legitimation and delegitimation has a decisive influence upon her Fall. Another crucial change in her interpretation occurs immediately after the Fall:

Our great forbidding, safe with all his spies  
 About him. But to Adam in what sort  
 Shall I appear? Shall I to him make known  
 As yet my change, and give him to partake  
 Full happiness with me, or rather not,  
 But keep the odds of knowledge in my power  
 Without copartner? So to add what wants  
 In female sex, the more to draw his love,  
 And render me more equal, and perhaps,  
 A thing not undesirable, sometime  
 Superior; for inferior who is free?

(9.815-25)

The most significant aspect of Eve's response after the Fall may well be the change in her ways of seeing and speaking, especially in relation to God and Adam. To Eve, God

is no longer seen as ‘universal Lord’ (5.205) who is ‘bounteous still / To give us [Adam and Eve] only good’ (5.205-6). To her, God is now seen as ‘a sort of great absolute Subject which pronounces the interdict’,<sup>52</sup> as an absolute legislator who inhibits man’s pursuit of the knowledge of good. These ways of seeing and speaking of God suggest that Eve has started to perceive the problems of divine law and prohibition thoroughly as a power relation. Like Satan’s language in initiating rebellion, Eve’s language after the Fall treats God in a nominal definition as a ruler who imposes an arbitrary law, as a ‘forbidder’ who decrees strict limits using the law. If God is defined in this way, man is defined nominally as one who is subjected to the ruler and his authoritarian law. These nominal definitions of the relationship between God and man as one of rule and subjection constitute a noticeable characteristic of her post-lapsarian language.

This characteristic of Eve’s language applies to her relation to Adam as well, but in a more complex way, for, as illustrated in the above lines, it raises not only questions about the relation between knowledge and power, but those of their relation in gender politics. For an understanding of the relationship between knowledge and power in gender politics, the Foucaudian notion of the power/knowledge relation might be helpful as a frame of reference. According to the Foucaudian definition, power is not something confined to the superstructural spheres of law, sovereignty and state apparatuses; rather, it is operated and exercised at a micro-level with ‘its specificity, its techniques and tactics’ as ‘discourse and forms of knowledge’.<sup>53</sup> This intersection of power and knowledge, in Foucault’s view, is ‘interwoven with other kinds of relations’, for instance, with those of ‘production, kinship, family, sexuality’.<sup>54</sup> The relation between Adam and Eve in Eden is a kind of prototype of a family relation, but Eve’s statements after the Fall pose the question of power/knowledge in a specific gender relation.

In the prelapsarian Eden, Eve is represented as a figure inferior to Adam, as we can see from Adam’s words:



For well I understand in the prime end  
 Of nature her the inferior, in the mind  
 And inward faculties, which most excel,  
 In outward also her resembling less  
 His image who made both, and less expressing  
 The character of that dominion given  
 O'er other creatures ...

(8.540-46)

Immediately after eating the fruit, Eve desires to subvert the perception of this unequal sexual relation, with the advantage of knowledge newly acquired from the forbidden fruit. Eve envisions knowledge as a power enabling her to 'add what wants / In female sex', that is, to supplement what the female sex lacks in both intellectual and governing abilities; and further, this power is seen as a means which enables her to achieve her desire not only of equality with the male sex, but of domination over it. Before eating the fruit, the relationship between Adam and Eve, though it was not essentially equal, was in no way a relation of domination and oppression, having been formed 'in love and mutual honour' (8.58). As one critic points out, however, 'For the first time in the poem Eve herself interprets sexual difference as inferiority and oppression' and as 'relations of power where power, specifically the power of knowledge, determines the hierarchy and operates as sexual domination'.<sup>55</sup> Eve's interpretation of her relation to Adam as a power relation signifies the subversion of gender semantics in the prelapsarian world in which such notions as love and mutual respect played a crucial part between the couple; and it also signifies the ultimate dismantling of divine law imposed in order to sustain such a semantic relation.

The processes just before and after Eve's Fall reveal the complex developments and consequences of her interpretations of the forbidden Tree and its fruits: the semantic substitution of the sign of divine law for the sign of idolatry, the work of legitimation and delegitimation depending on the interpretive modes of negation and exclusion, and her perceptions of the relationship between God and man, and between man and woman

as power relations. If Eve's transgression of divine law encompasses these multiple factors arising from her interpretive processes, Adam's interpretation of the forbidden fruit, just before the Fall in particular, is not so dramatic as Eve's. This is not, of course, to claim that there is no change in his interpretation of it; rather, Adam's interpretation shows a subtle change under the influence of Eve's rhetoric. Eve remarks upon the Tree's effects in her first speech to Adam after the Fall:

This tree is not as we are told, a tree  
 Of danger tasted, nor to evil unknown  
 Opening the way, but of divine effect  
 To open eyes, and make them gods who taste;  
 And hath been tasted such ...  
 (9.863-67)

Eve's account of the Tree's 'divine effect' is a repetition of her changed perceptions of it just before the Fall. The significance of this account, above all, lies in the fact that it aims to persuade Adam of the legitimacy of her own interpretation of the Tree in her delegitimation of the authority of God's Word, whereby she tries to justify her own action. Adam replies in astonishment:

How are thou lost, how on a sudden lost,  
 Defaced, deflowered, and now to death devote!  
 Rather how hast thou yielded to transgress  
 The strict forbiddance, how to violate  
 The sacred fruit forbidden!  
 (9.900-4)

When Adam speaks of Eve's transgression in despair, we notice a shift in Adam's interpretation of divine law from the initial 'easy prohibition' to the later interpretation 'The strict forbiddance'; and the changed interpretation registers the loss of his initial optimism, faced with Eve's transgression of God's law. Along with this fundamental

change in the way he sees God's prohibition, another subtle shift in interpretation takes place when he refers to the fruit as 'The sacred fruit'. Influenced by Eve's persuasive words, 'he is already looking on the fruit as something more than a sign of obedience. Adam now imagines the fruit to be consecrated'.<sup>56</sup> The way Adam makes a compromise with the fact of Eve's transgression is also interesting, mainly because of his artful reasoning reaching it. Adam infers that 'Perhaps thou shall not die, perhaps the fact / Is not so heinous now, foretasted fruit, / Profaned first by the serpent, by him first / Made common and unhallowed ere our taste' (9.928-31). Adam accepts Eve's interpretation of the fruit as legitimate and then negates its divine power in his own unique dialectical interpretation. The process of this dialectical interpretation is indeed an illustration of how he justifies his inclination towards the transgression of divine law. After going through this interpretive process of legitimation, Adam finally participates in eating the forbidden fruit.

It is also interesting to observe Adam's reaction to the fruit right after taking it as distinct from Eve's. As we have seen, Eve notably displays a desire for domination empowered by knowledge. By contrast, Adam delights in the discovery of the great pleasure of forbidden tasting:

Eve, now I see thou art exact of taste,  
 And elegant, of sapience no small part,  
 Since to each meaning savour we apply,  
 And palate call judicious; I the praise  
 Yield thee, so well this day thou hast purveyed.  
 Much pleasure we have lost, while we abstained  
 From this delightful fruit, nor known till now  
 True relish, tasting; if pleasure be  
 In things to us forbidden, it might be wished,  
 For this one tree had been forbidden ten.  
 (9.1017-26)

Adam now interprets the forbidden fruit as ‘this delightful fruit’ which provides ‘tasting’ and ‘sapience’, the two meanings of ‘savour’. Where Eve desires a power mediated by knowledge, Adam desires the pleasure he supposes he has been forbidden to relish until now. In the signifying structure of a desire for this pleasure, it is natural for him to forget the original meaning of the fruit as the pledge of obedience to man’s limit in God’s prohibition. Given the fact that God’s prohibition is a law which regulates the limit of man’s desire, the irony is that Adam now desires even the prohibition of divine law – ‘it might be wished, / For this one tree had been forbidden ten’ – for more enjoyment of pleasure. This desire for God’s prohibition extends to sexual desire, with Adam viewing Eve as an object of desire: ‘I saw thee first and wedded thee, adorned / With all perfections, so inflame my sense / With ardour to enjoy thee, fairer now / Than ever, bounty of this virtuous tree’ (9.1030-33). The ways Adam sees the fruit after the Fall are in essence conditioned by the structure of desire, which integrates the disparate semantic spheres of tasting, laws and sex. The forbidden tasting, laws allusive to the Ten Testaments and sex all belong to different semantic levels of desire. But Adam’s transgression of God’s only interdict opens up these dissimilar areas of desire all at once, accelerating its intensity and potency. Adam’s Fall, in this sense, has the characteristic of an extensive unfolding of the divergent meanings conditional upon the integral structure of desire.

Adam’s misconception of the fruit as the source of desire finally comes to an end, after he experiences ‘Carnal desire inflaming’ (9.1013):

O Eve, in evil hour thou didst give ear  
 To that false worm, of whomsoever taught  
 To counterfeit man’s voice, true in our fall,  
 False in our promised rising; since our eyes  
 Opened we find indeed, and find we know  
 Both good and evil, good lost, and evil got,  
 Bad fruit of knowledge, if this be to know,  
 Which leaves us naked thus, of honour void,

Of innocence, of faith, of purity,  
 Our wonted ornaments now soiled and stained,  
 And in our faces evident the signs  
 Of foul concupiscence ...

(9.1067-78)

The dizzying shift in Adam's interpretations of the fruit ranging from 'The sacred fruit' through the 'delightful fruit' to the 'Bad fruit of knowledge' shows how the sign of the fruit is at the centre of conflicting interpretation in *Paradise Lost*. If we add Eve's changing interpretations of it to Adam's, we find that the sign in the text produces a network of various meanings which conflict with that imposed in God's commandment of prohibition. Adam finally recognizes the real sense of the Tree of Knowledge, namely, that of 'Both good and evil', and the loss of the good – the loss of 'honour', 'innocence', 'faith' and 'purity' – but it is a recognition he has acquired after transgressing the limit of divine law; it is also an awareness he has finally reached after going through a variety of conflicting interpretations of the fruit.

God's single commandment that the Edenic couple should not eat 'the fruit / Of that forbidden tree' (1.1-2) is a sign of divine law decreeing their inherent limits, whether in knowledge, power, or desire, thereby testing their obedience to and faith in God. In *Paradise Lost*, however, even the sign of God's law symbolized by the forbidden Tree and its fruit is open to conflict over meaning. The sign of divine law is more or less singular in Book 4, for it is looked upon as 'just, efficacious, and easy to keep'<sup>57</sup> without any serious interpretive difficulties. But at the very critical moment prior to and after the Fall in Book 9, the sign is subjected to a growing divergence of interpretation, producing multiple and contrasting meanings in the text. The interpretive and semantic ramifications also involve the process by which the Edenic couple try to secure the legitimacy of their transgressive acts, delegitimizing the authority of God's law and Word. When Adam and Eve lapse into the Fall through this process of interpretive legitimation, the Fall cannot culminate in their renewed faith in the Tree and

its fruit as a sign of divine law. Rather, the Fall means that they must live on in the knowledge of their lack of legitimacy, knowing that their language is delegitimated, and knowing God but alienated from Him. In this way, the forbidden Tree and its fruit in *Paradise Lost* bear testimony to the way legitimation works in the couple's interpretation and what effect it has upon their relation to God in the post-lapsarian world as well as to a symbol signifying – as it were, allegorically – the general status of the sign within contests or conflicts.

In *Paradise Lost* Milton might have wished to fix meaning along the lines of his own interpretations of God, Satan and humankind. Contrary to Milton's wishes, however, *Paradise Lost* shows that the text was the site of fierce conflicts over signs and their meanings. We have seen the cases not only in the division of the meaning of God's unity occasioned by Milton's Arian heterodox interpretation itself but in his representation of the modes of language used between characters. The representation is evident in the conflicting definitions of the concept of sovereignty between God and Satan, the verbal dispute between Satan and Abdiel, and the Edenic couple's changing interpretations of the sign of divine law. Together with this dramatic presentation of the linguistic, semantic and interpretive conflicts, the text shows how the question of legitimation in its intersection with delegitimation was a central issue. We have observed the evidence in Milton's legitimation of his own poetic project and in the attempts by some of his characters to secure the legitimacy of their verbal authority and interpretation. The major subjects in *Paradise Lost* – linguistic conflict and the problem of legitimation – are also ones exemplified in Milton's controversial prose. It is at this juncture that we notice a distinctive intersection, both thematic and structural, between the concerns of Milton's epic and those of his prose writings.

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## Notes

1. Kendrick, *Milton: a study in ideology and form*, pp. 81-2.
2. Charles Martindale also takes note of the tension between classical and biblical sources in *Paradise Lost*, although not particularly from a generic perspective. See Charles Martindale, *John Milton and the Transformation of Ancient Epic* (London and Sidney, 1986), p. 29.
3. Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Oxford, 1982), p. 38.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 42.
6. Mikhail Bakhtin, 'Epic and Novel', in *The Dialogic Imagination*, pp. 13, 15.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
8. Ken Hirschkop, *Mikhail Bakhtin: An Aesthetic for Democracy* (Oxford, 1999), p. 57.
9. On this point, see Thomas Corns, *Regaining Paradise Lost* (London and New York, 1994), pp. 123-24.
10. For detailed accounts of circumstances surrounding Milton's prefatory note and its cultural and political implications, see Corns, *Regaining Paradise Lost*, pp. 111-13, Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, 'Paradise Lost and Milton's Politics', *MS 38* (2002), 146-48.
11. David Quint, *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1993), p. 133. David Quint, who reexamines the history of epic genre in terms of oppositional traditions 'between epics of the imperial victors and epics of the defeated' (p. 8) exemplified in Virgil's *Aeneid* and Lucan's *Pharsalia*, situates Milton's *Paradise Lost* in the tradition of the latter, see chap. 7. See also Norbrook, *WER*, pp. 438-67, and Lewalski, 'Paradise Lost and Milton's Politics', 144-46.
12. Lewalski, 'Paradise Lost and Milton's Politics', 144, 145.
13. John Dryden, *Annus Mirabilis: The Year of Wonders*, in W. P. Ker, ed. *Essays of John Dryden*, vol. I (Oxford, 1900), pp. 10, 11.
14. John Dryden, *Of Dramatick Poesie, An Essay*, in *Essays of John Dryden*, vol. I p. 95. On the publication of this essay, see Lewalski, 'Paradise Lost and Milton's Politics', no. 22.
15. Lewalski, 146, 147. Lewalski, who explores Dryden's emphasis on rhyme and its relation to royalist culture and politics in his two essays, argues that Milton's choice of blank verse is 'the aesthetic complement to republican politics and culture' (147). From a different perspective, Sharon Achinstein links Dryden's emphasis on good rhyme in his *Dramatick Poesie* with the intention of controlling the dissenting energy of nonconformity. See Sharon Achinstein, 'Milton's Spectre in the Restoration: Marvell, Dryden, and Literary Enthusiasm', *HLQ* 59 (1996), 18. In this section, I would argue that Milton's refusal of rhyme in the face of Dryden's implicit defence of it in heroic poetry is linked to his broader concerns with matters of legitimation, delegitimation and appropriation, which were subjects in his revolutionary controversies.
16. John M. Steadman, *Milton's Biblical and Classical Imagery* (Pittsburgh, PA, 1984), pp. 116, 117. For the controversy regarding Muse and Spirit and Steadman's detailed account of his own view, see *idem*, chap. 5.
17. William H. Race, *Classical Genres and English Poetry* (London, New York and Sidney, 1988), p. 3.
18. Kendrick, *Milton: a study in ideology and form*, p. 124.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 125.
20. For a reading of *Paradise Lost* as 'an odyssey of subjectivity' (p. 233), see Smith, *LR*, chap. 7.
21. See Andrew Marvell's poem on *Paradise Lost* in Fowler, ed. *Paradise Lost*, p. 53. This poem was added in the second edition of *Paradise Lost* in 1674.
22. Fredric Jameson, 'Religion and ideology: a political reading of *Paradise Lost*', in Francis Barker, *et al.*, eds. *Literature, Politics and Theory: Papers from the Essex Conference 1976-84* (London and New York, 1986), p. 37.



23. Christopher Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution* (London, 1977), p. 364. See also chap. 29; Andrew Milner, *John Milton and the English Revolution* (London and Basingstoke, 1981), p. 165. See also pp. 150-166.
24. Stanley Fish, *How Milton Works* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 2001), pp. 12, 108.
25. Marshall Grossman, *The Story of All Things: Writing the Self in English Renaissance Narrative Poetry* (Durham and London, 1998), pp. 17, 25.
26. On Milton's anti-Trinitarian heresy, see Maurice Kelley, 'Introduction', in *CPW*, VI, pp. 47-73; Christopher Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution*, chap. 23.
27. For the controversy on Milton's Arian heresy and recent scholars' arguments, see John P. Rumrich, 'Milton's Arianism: why it matters', in Stephen B. Dobranski and John P. Rumrich, eds. *Milton and Heresy* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 75-92; A. D. Nuttall, *The Alternative Trinity: Gnostic Heresy in Marlowe, Milton, and Blake* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 136-71. Like Rumrich and Nuttall, Robert Thomas Fallon also examines the controversy ranging from Maurice Kelly's insistence on Milton's Arian heterodoxy to counter-arguments to Kelly's view by William B. Hunter and C. A. Patrides; but unlike them, he comes to the conclusion that the Father and the Son in *Paradise Lost* are one in terms of poetic imagery, see Robert Thomas Fallon, *Divided Empire: Milton's Political Imagery* (Pennsylvania, 1995), pp. 42-53. On Marxist scholars' examination of Milton's relation to Arian heresy, see Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution*, pp. 285-302; Terry Eagleton, 'The god that failed', in Mary Nyquist and Margaret W. Ferguson, eds. *Re-membering Milton: Essays on the texts and traditions* (New York and London, 1987), p. 348.
28. John P. Rumrich finds that one of the major features of Arian heresy lies in its insistence upon the Father's unbegotten essence as distinct from the Son's, see Rumrich, 'Milton's Arianism: why it matters', pp. 79-80.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 76-7; 'Introduction', in *CPW*, VI, p. 50.
30. On the tendency of subjective interpretations of Scripture by religious radicals in Milton's time, see David Norbrook, 'Order and Disorder: The Poem and its Contexts', in *idem*, ed. Lucy Hutchinson, *Order and Disorder* (Oxford, 2001), xxiv.
31. Mary Ann Radzinowicz, 'The Politics of *Paradise Lost*', in Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker, eds. *Politics of Discourse: The Literature and History of Seventeenth-Century England* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, 1987), pp. 209, 210; Norbrook, *WER*, p. 474; Fallon, *Divided Empire*, p. 5. Fallon argues that Milton probably got the idea of 'the pattern of co-rulers' (p. 5) of the Father and the Son from the circumstances of a French court where during the minority of King Louis XIV, the queen mother as regent, Ann of Austria and her chief minister, Cardinal Jules Mazarin, shared power.
32. On God's role as 'a dynamic, Machiavellian legislator' (p. 474), see Norbrook, *WER*, pp. 467-80.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 474.
34. Conal Condren, *The Language of Politics in Seventeenth-Century England*, p. 80.
35. Richard Tuck, 'Introduction', in *idem*, ed. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Cambridge, 1996), xxxiii. On Hobbes's theory of sovereignty, see *idem*, xx-xli. On the claim that 'at no point in the poem does Milton include 'a contractual account of the origin of government' he himself advocated in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*', see Howard Erskine-Hill, *Poetry and the Realms of Politics: Shakespeare to Dryden* (Oxford, 1996), p. 193.
36. Condren, *The Language of Politics*, p. 83. On Hobbes's concept of sovereignty and its nominal definition, *idem*, pp. 83, 98-100, 111-14 and *passim*.
37. John M. Steadman, *Milton's Epic Characters: Image and Idol* (Chapel Hill, 1968), chap. 15; Michael Wielding, *Dragon's Teeth: Literature in the English Revolution* (Oxford, 1987), chap. 8; William Myers, *Milton and Free Will: An Essay in Criticism and Philosophy* (London, New York and Sydney, 1987), chap. 1; Leonard Mustazza, "Such Prompt Eloquence": *Language as Agency and Character in Milton's Epics* (London and Toronto, 1988), chap. 2; Joan S. Bennett, *Reviving Liberty: Radical Christian Humanism in Milton's Great Poems* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1989), pp. 49-55; Blair Worden, 'Milton's republicanism and the tyranny of heaven', in Gisela Bock, Quentin Skinner and Maurizio Viroli, eds. *Machiavelli and Republicanism* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 238; Victoria Kahn, *Machiavellian Rhetoric: From the Counter-Reformation to Milton* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1994),

- chap. 8; most recently, David Loewenstein, *Representing Revolution in Milton and His Contemporaries*, chap. 7. Although Loewenstein shows in detail how Satan appropriates the religious and political languages of revolutionary pamphleteers, he basically views Satan's rhetoric as 'subtle, equivocal uses of language, artifice, and dissimulation' (p. 212); on the opposite side of these points, Diana Treviño Benet argues that there is no deception, no fraud in Satan's rhetoric, particularly in relation to the scene of the infernal Council in Books 1 and 2. Benet tries to demonstrate how Satan was an exemplar of 'a modern politician' (p. 102) who showed his political qualities substantially in the face of leadership challenges and, in particular, 'an avatar of the self-made politician achieving prominence in England during the period from 1642-60 when the hereditary ruler of the nation was challenged or absent altogether' (pp. 102-3). See Diana Treviño Benet, 'Hell, Satan, and the New Politician', in Diana Treviño Benet and Michael Lieb, eds. *Literary Milton: Text, Pretext, Context* (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1994), pp. 91-113.
38. On Satan's use of deliberative oratory in the rebellion scene, see Steadman, *Milton's Epic Characters*, p. 264.
  39. Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution*, pp. 124-25.
  40. Bennett, *Reviving Liberty*, p. 52; Mustazza, "Such Prompt Eloquence", p. 24.
  41. On detailed accounts of Christian liberty and secular inequality, see A. S. P. Woodhouse, 'Introduction', in *idem*, ed. *Puritanism and Liberty: Being the Army Debates (1647-9) from the Clarke Manuscripts with Supplementary Documents* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1992; first published 1938), pp. 11-100.
  42. Richard Bentley, ed. *Milton's 'Paradise Lost': A New Edition* (1732), p. 187; Zachary Pearce, *A Review of the Text of 'Paradise Lost'* (1733), pp. 201-2. Both of them are cited by John Leonard in *Naming in Paradise: Milton and the Language of Adam and Eve* (Oxford, 1990), p. 178.
  43. Leonard, *Naming in Paradise*, p. 178.
  44. *Ibid.*, p. 179.
  45. *Ibid.*, p. 180.
  46. Linda Gregerson, *The reformation of the subject: Spenser, Milton, and the English Protestant epic* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 199.
  47. Roger Lejosne, 'Milton, Satan, Salmasius and Abdiel', in *MR*, pp. 114, 107, 109, 117; Norbrook, *WER*, p. 478; Loewenstein views Satan's rhetoric in Books 5 and 6 as simulated 'republican discourse' (p. 228) and Abdiel's resistance to it as a way of reminding the assembled angels and readers of Satan's revolutionary-looking but dissembling rhetoric, see Loewenstein, *Representing Revolution in Milton and His Contemporaries*, pp. 228-231.
  48. Michael Lieb, *Poetics of the Holy: A Reading of Paradise Lost* (Chapel Hill, 1981), p. 95; for a similar view, Dennis H. Burden, *The Logical Epic: A Study of the Argument of Paradise Lost* (London, 1967), p. 124.
  49. Jason P. Rosenblatt, *Torah and Law in Paradise Lost* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1994), pp. 14-5.
  50. Ruth Parkin-Gounelas, *Literature and Psychoanalysis: Intertextual Readings* (Basingstoke and New York, 2001), p. 11.
  51. Bishop James Ussher, *A Body of Divinity* (London, 1649), p. 135. Quoted in Rosenblatt, *Torah and Law in Paradise Lost*, p. 22.
  52. Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon and trans. Colin Gordon, *et al.* (Brighton, 1980), p. 140.
  53. *Ibid.*, pp. 116, 112.
  54. *Ibid.*, p. 142.
  55. D. K. McChrystal, 'Redeeming Eve', *English Literary Renaissance* 23 (1993), 505.
  56. Leonard, *Naming in Paradise*, p. 225.
  57. Rosenblatt, *Torah and Law in Paradise Lost*, p. 13.

## Conclusion

The central purpose of this thesis has been to examine the linguistic configurations of dialogic conflict and the rhetorical modes of legitimation and delegitimation in the texts of Milton and his contemporaries. Many events and developments arising from the seventeenth-century English Revolution brought about varying degrees of controversy, among which issues of episcopacy, licensing, regicide and republicanism in the Cromwellian Protectorate demonstrate a clear manifestation of the ideological conflict and division of the period. This thesis has tried to show how the ideological disputes were represented in the linguistic form of dialogic conflict among competing factions or writers, and how they led to distinctive rhetorical strategies of legitimation and delegitimation. My central claim has been that Milton's engagement with the controversies and his experience of linguistic conflict and legitimation and delegitimation in them issue in the thematic and structural treatment of such conflicts in *Paradise Lost*.

For an effective analysis of the central concerns in the thesis, I have offered as a theoretical groundwork the model of Mikhail Bakhtin and V. N. Voloshinov and its relevance to Renaissance rhetorical theory. The combination of the modern linguistic model and early modern rhetorical theory has helped to develop my topics in various ways. In particular, the linguistic model by Bakhtin and Voloshinov has provided a significant guideline by which to elaborate the characteristics of antagonistic dialogue encompassing the ideological functions of legitimation and delegitimation rehearsed in the writings of Milton and his contemporaries.

In accord with Bakhtinian and Voloshinovic claims, the writings of Milton and his contemporaries demonstrate clearly that language did not exist in a neutral space but was the site of ideological contestation where the complex processes of appropriation, competition and transformation of meaning were inscribed and actualized. The linguistic

and semantic conflicts at each stage of the controversies essentially originated from the different perceptions, standpoints and value judgements with which the polemicists or writers involved looked at the controversial events, which gave birth to different criteria for applying specific evaluative words and signs including figurative signs. Also, their choice of specific references judged to be appropriate to their positions from a diverse range of semantic possibilities promoted the conflict over language, signs and signification. These linguistic disputes, in fact, constituted part of the broader struggle of legitimation and delegitimation in which they tried to defend the legitimacy of their positions, or conversely attack and expose those of their adversaries as illegitimate. As far as the undertakings of legitimation are concerned, their common use of languages in biblical and classical texts was concerned with an attempt to enhance the persuasive power of their arguments by establishing their verbal authority through their reference to the prevailing normative vocabularies. Thus, normative languages were not only used for the rhetorical and ideological purposes of legitimation, but were also subject to conflict mostly because of different investments of meaning. These struggles were accompanied by the writers' self-reflexive awareness of how appropriation of languages and their meanings could play a crucial role in constructing their own factional interests and propagating their validity and universality to the readers or to the society as a whole. Correspondingly, they were keen to develop their own idiosyncratic rhetorical and textual strategies in the service of their political and religious interests, principles and intentions.

In exploring linguistic conflict and its ideological, rhetorical and textual implications expressed chiefly through the media of prose forms and poems as well as through printed parliamentary speeches, printed sermons and broadsides, my study considers some of Milton's major prose works as having a pivotal position. This consideration of Milton's prose works as the nucleus and nexus of my thematic concerns has had some impact upon the structural direction of the thesis. As we have seen in this

study, Milton's rhetoric sustains a dual structure of legitimation and delegitimation in each of his tracts, but in a broader perspective, his works display a shift in function from delegitimation to legitimation after the regicide in 1649. The process by which this thesis examines the changing ideological functions and modes of Milton's rhetoric has prompted its centre of gravity to move from the question of delegitimation to that of legitimation. For this reason, my five chapters are divided into three parts.

The first two chapters concerning the episcopacy and licensing controversies have offered an analysis of distinctive strategies and figurative and logical modes in Milton's rhetoric of delegitimation in comparison with other texts. They have also shown how the controversies emerged as linguistic disputes through semantic confrontation and appropriation of authoritative texts in their adoption of similar or diverse polemical forms. Building upon the mechanism of linguistic, semantic conflict but shifting the focus, chapters 3 and 4 have traced rhetorical similarities and differences between Milton and his contemporaries in legitimating the regicide and the Cromwellian Protectorate, and the problems revealed in their republican legitimation of the Protectorate in particular. Faced with the regicide and the new political system of the Protectorate, regicide apologists and pro-Cromwellian republicans found themselves in a position to claim legitimacy for the events against those who were in strong opposition or unsympathetic to them. Legitimation became imperative for them, and their awareness of the work required complex rhetorical strategies in the regicide controversy and created sustained tension and conflict in an attempt to republicanize the Cromwellian Protectorate. Their rhetorical activities for legitimation were also in an interwoven relation with their textual and semantic competition with their ideological opponents, and with the semantic conflict over the concept of civil liberty in the case of the republican controversy over the Protectorate.

Finally, I have tried to demonstrate that Milton's *Paradise Lost* is a literary representation of his experience of ideological, linguistic conflict and of his rhetorical

practice involving the undertakings of legitimation and delegitimation. Although there has been an awareness in recent scholarship that Milton's epic must be viewed in the light of his engagement with revolutionary politics, such work has too often attempted to read the epic's dramatic episodes or main characters in direct relation to contemporary real events or figures. Furthermore, there has been relatively little recent work directly on the ways in which Milton's specific linguistic experience and rhetorical practice are engrained in *Paradise Lost*. This study challenges this way of reading of *Paradise Lost*: it offers a distinctive reading by showing how Milton's epic bears a thematic and structural resemblance to his polemical writings in his generic justification, his articulation of Arian heresy and the modes of conflict and competition over signs and their meanings between his main characters.



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