

ABSTRACT

*“Wisdom, Which Alone Is Truly Fair”:
Education and Government in Milton’s Prose Tracts and Paradise Lost*

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While the character of Milton’s republicanism has been the subject of long debate, this study focuses on Milton’s privileging of wisdom as the characteristic which makes rulers fittest to govern and subjects most deserving of liberty. In *The Readie and Easie Way*, Milton draws on distinctions between tutelage, which is designed for overseeing young children, and teaching, which is designed to prepare youths for adulthood, to describe the importance of education in the nation under monarchies and republican commonwealths respectively. Through the lens of this same focus on maturation and wisdom, *Of Education* and *Areopagitica* demonstrate Milton’s sustained interest in cultivating wisdom in the people by teaching decorum through poetry and temperance through the government’s restraint from instituting pre-publication censorship. Finally, Milton’s *Paradise Lost* explores the importance of wisdom in Adam and Eve’s relationship and by extension educates the reader in cultivating temperance through reading and through activity at home and in politics.

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“WISDOM, WHICH ALONE IS TRULY FAIR”
EDUCATION AND GOVERNMENT IN MILTON’S PROSE TRACTS
AND PARADISE LOST

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DEDICATION

To my family, with love

*I was made in order to see You,
and I have not yet accomplished what I was made for.
How wretched man's lot is
when he has lost all that for which he was made!
Oh how hard and cruel was that Fall!
Alas, what has man lost and what has he found?*

*Let the knowledge of You grow in me here,
and there be made complete;
let Your love grow in me here and there be made complete,
so that here my joy may be great in hope,
and there be complete in reality.*

- Anselm, *Proslogion*

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Delving into the interpretation of John Milton's political and poetic works in hopes of offering a new perspective on them is a daunting task, if for no greater reason than that such an interpretive endeavor requires inhabiting, as far as possible, the mindset of Milton himself. Milton, with his various interests spanning politics, theology, languages, agriculture, publishing, music, philosophy, and logic, certainly earned his reputation as one of the most learned men of his time. One of the most intriguing and pervasive preoccupations of Milton's intellectual work—wisdom—in many ways concerns all of his manifold interests. The initial aim of this thesis project was to establish whether some aspect of wisdom as it appears in Milton's political prose and *Paradise Lost* has been overlooked in critical discourse, and to determine what a fuller understanding of wisdom's significance for Milton might contribute to consideration of his corpus.

Wisdom, as Milton defines it in *The Reason of Church Government*, concerns “anything distinctly of God, and of his true worship, and what is infallibly good and happy in the state of man's life, what is in itself evil and miserable.”¹ With this definition in mind, I will consider four main questions. First, what does Milton's vision of the human good imply about wisdom in politics and the formation of citizens? More

¹ Milton, John, *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, ed. Robert W. Ayers (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), III:229, from this point forward referenced as CPW by in-text citations. All further quotations from Milton's prose will be from these volumes and will be cited parenthetically.

specifically, how is wisdom cultivated in the individual, and how is domestic virtue related to civic virtue and wisdom? Thirdly, how is poetry for Milton, especially *Paradise Lost*, uniquely able to communicate wisdom to the readers? Finally, how do the relationships between wisdom and authority portrayed in pre-lapsarian Eden impinge on the domestic and public spheres of government in a post-lapsarian world?

In familiarizing myself with Milton's writings on education, politics, and poetry, I came to realize that wisdom best illuminated the intersection between them because he regarded each as intrinsically developmental. Human good for Milton necessarily entails maturation—a continuous progressing toward a better knowledge of God and a better understanding of the self in relation to the rest of creation. I will focus on four texts as the principal points of engagement with Milton's perception of wisdom in relation to government, education, and poetry: *The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth* (1660), *Of Education* (1644), *Areopagitica* (1644), and *Paradise Lost*.

I intend to explore the developmental character of wisdom for Milton, especially in relation to government, in order to offer a corrective to the prevailing readings of *The Readie and Easie Way* by identifying the primary distinction between monarchy and the commonwealth. Where Milton understands monarchy to be focused on the authority of the monarch rather than the development of the citizens, the republican commonwealth for him depends on the mature participation of the populace. Wisdom, as demonstrated in *Of Education* and *Areopagitica*, is best cultivated through persuasion, especially through poetry, and is most likely to flourish in conditions of liberty. Ultimately, I contend that *Paradise Lost* functions as Milton's response to his own call for educators to act, having realized at the approach of the Restoration that education would be the surest

means toward recovering maturity in the citizens, thereby allowing them to choose rulers who would preserve rather than limit the liberty of their subjects. I have chosen to engage these texts out of chronological sequence in order to forefront *The Readie and Easie Way* as the primary text through which Milton voices his educational and political views in the most direct response to the politics of the Restoration. I then return to Milton's earlier tracts, *Of Education* and *Areopagitica*, to demonstrate the continuity of Milton's thought with respect to the pedagogical nature of wisdom before finishing with an examination of *Paradise Lost*.

Scholarly discussion of Milton's political thought at the time of the Restoration generally agrees that Milton preferred the republican commonwealth to monarchy because monarchy more often restricted the liberty of the citizens, but little attention has been paid to the purpose of providing the citizens with liberty. Cedric C. Brown represents the school of thought which asserts that, for Milton, republicanism and Christian liberty cannot be separated.² Blair Worden contends that Milton's view of one's condition of servitude or liberty depends upon the degree of corruption of the self and not on the government framework, and that this position marks Milton's withdrawal from politics into faith which arose from Milton's disappointment in the Restoration.³ Understanding government in terms of pedagogy—that is, focused on the maturation of the people—explains how hierarchy can be beneficial without being necessarily coercive and why liberty is necessary for cultivating wisdom.

² Cedric C. Brown, "Great Senates and Godly Education: Politics and Cultural Renewal in Some Pre- and Post-Revolutionary Texts of Milton," *Milton and Republicanism* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 43–60

³ Blair Worden, "Milton's Republicanism and the Tyranny of Heaven," *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, ed. Gisela Bock, Quentin Skinner, and Maurizio Viroli (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 225–46.

The developmental nature of wisdom allows Milton to employ a range of pedagogical metaphors and relationships to draw out the continuities between individual, domestic, and civic manifestations of wisdom. The second chapter will discuss Milton's use of tutor and teacher as metaphors for supervision with expectations for respectively less and more progress in their pupils with regard to maturity. Chapters two and four will also explore father-child relationships and marital relationships as metaphors for the relationship between ruler and subjects. As much as these metaphors which compare the workings of the *oikos* to the workings of the *polis* are helpful in describing the interaction between governors and the governed, the analogy between the soul and the *polis* is similarly fruitful in exploring the pedagogical nature of wisdom. Irene Samuel discusses Milton's adoption of the Platonic thesis that the *polis* is the individual soul writ large, which by extension suggests that the government of the *polis* ought to imitate that which would be beneficial for the development of the soul.⁴ Aristotle declares in his *Ethics* that the proper end of government is to make the citizens just.⁵ Thus by drawing on both of these philosophical accounts Milton consistently emphasizes the need for the *polis* to seek the good of the body politic as a whole by first attending to the maturation of individuals in knowledge of God and wisdom with respect to all that is "infallibly good" in life.

⁴ Samuel, *Dante and Milton: The Commedia and Paradise Lost* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1966), 127.

⁵ Aristotle, *The Ethics of Aristotle*, trans. J. A. K. Thomson (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1971), 1103a30.

CHAPTER TWO

“More Like Boys Under Age Than Men”: Tutelage and Teaching in *The Readie and Easie Way*

When Milton published his revised edition of *The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth* in April of 1660, he did so already convinced that the English people were prepared to welcome back the Stuart monarchy with open arms. These fears were confirmed when Charles II took the throne in late May. His purpose in publishing *The Readie and Easie Way*, then, was twofold: first, to chastise his fellow Englishmen for preparing to submit themselves again to a monarchy when a commonwealth would be more fitting, and second to suggest an educational program which would enable England to better form its citizens with regard to civic and moral virtue. The central issue for Milton on both points was the relationship between liberty and moral formation, a theme which informs the majority of his mature political works.¹

Current scholarship tends to approach *The Readie and Easie Way* either as a jeremiad, Milton's political lament for the commonwealth that would never be, or else as a sign of Milton's lack of faith in the ability of his own people to rule themselves, which caused him to favor the imposition of an elitist hierarchy of educated leaders.² I suggest

¹ Martin Dzelzainis, "Milton's Classical Republicanism," *Milton and Republicanism* (Cambridge, U.K.; Cambridge University Press, 1995), 21.

² Milton, John, *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, vol VII:402, ed. Robert W. Ayers (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), from this point forward referenced as CPW by in-text citations. Robert W. Ayers notes Milton's echo of Jeremiah's words at the end of *The Readie and Easie Way*, because Milton acts as a prophet for God by delineating the paths of "iniquitous thralldom of kingship and the virtuous liberty of a commonwealth." See also Laura Lunger Knoppers, "Milton's *The Readie and Easie Way* and the English Jeremiad," *Politics, Poetics, and Hermeneutics in Milton's Prose: Essays* (Cambridge, U.K.; Cambridge University Press, 1990), 213; Knoppers identifies Milton's tract as "a prophetic lament over the apostasy of a chosen nation . . . providing a myth by which they can interpret the

that the current scholarly conversation has neglected to pay sufficient attention to the role of wisdom in *The Readie and Easie Way* in the selection of rulers and development of citizens. The paradigm informing Milton's depiction of the relationship between wisdom and government depends upon classical models of tutelage and education.

In accordance with Milton's mature political views, his presentation of the most suitable form of government in *The Readie and Easie Way* is inseparable from a delineation of the education necessary to equip the English people to make better choices for self-government. Milton offers the following alternative to the restoration of the monarchy as the central political proposal of *The Readie and Easie Way*:

Another way will be, to wel-qualifie and refine elections [for senators, until] . . . they only be left chosen who are the due number, and *seem by most voices the worthiest*. *To make the people fittest to chuse, and the chosen fittest to govern, will be to mend our corrupt and faulty education*, to teach the people faith not without vertue, temperance, modestie, sobrietie, parsimonie, justice; not to admire wealth or honour; to hate turbulence and ambition; to place every one his privat welfare and happiness in the public peace, libertie, and safetie. (*CPW* VII:442–43, emphasis added)

In sum, Milton proposes a meritocracy with a ruling senate and an education system designed to equip subjects and rulers to be "fittest." The attempt to understand Milton's proposals in *The Readie and Easie Way* necessarily raises three questions. First, what does Milton's vision of the human good imply about wisdom in politics and the formation of citizens? Secondly, what is the relationship between faith and law? Finally, what is the role of government in cultivating virtue in citizens and how should the law enable citizens to practice wisdom?

impending doom." See also Blair Worden, "Milton's Republicanism and the Tyranny of Heaven," *Machiavelli and Republicanism* (Cambridge, U.K.; Cambridge University Press, 1991), 244; Worden's analysis of Milton's writing from 1657–1660 led him to conclude that Milton withdrew from politics into faith in the face of the Restoration.

Reading *The Readie and Easie Way* according to the tutor-teacher model which informs Milton's argument illuminates his privileging of wisdom as the means and end of government's formation of citizens with respect to virtue. Milton's tutor-teacher model implies that wisdom is the sign of maturity, through which lens his argument must be read as a preference for education by example and formation of virtue by persuasion rather than by compulsion. Milton prefers the commonwealth characterized as a teacher, because it is most suited to cultivate wisdom in mature citizens, over monarchy which serves as a tutor to prescribe justice to those too immature in wisdom to govern themselves. This tutor-teacher analogy provides answers to the three main questions as follows. First, Milton's tutor-teacher analogy privileges the pursuit of wisdom as the human good; since England is a Christian nation, the government should encourage the mature wisdom of citizens by allowing them liberty to make decisions for themselves in accordance with faith and virtue.³ As to the second, religious and civic powers ought never to be united. But since the two are intimately connected, the best government is responsible to preserve liberty both by promoting rulers recognized for exceptional private virtue and instituting laws that promote virtue through justice. Finally, the government ought to act as a model for the citizens and a curb for vice, but cannot compel the citizens to choose virtue for its own sake.

³ See Thomas Festa, *The End of Learning: Milton and Education* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 68, on the promotion of justice through learning and law, although without consideration of *The Readie and Easie Way* or Milton's staunch preference for the commonwealth over any other constitutional form. William Walker, "Paradise Lost and the Forms of Government," in *History of Political Thought* 22, no. 2 (2001): 270–299, addresses Milton's endorsement of meritocracies, preferring virtuous leadership regardless of specific form of government.

Tutors and Teachers: Suitable Government for Infants and Heirs

The tutor-teacher analogy underlying Milton's argument in *The Readie and Easie Way* is a combination of classical models, biblical understandings of virtue and wisdom, and early modern political appropriations of the family metaphor. The primary difference between the monarchy and the commonwealth is that monarchy's political application of the father-child relationship relegates subjects to perpetual infancy, while the commonwealth regards subjects as heirs. Milton's argument in *The Readie and Easie Way* discriminates between the forms of government available to the English nation based on their capacities to imbue the people with wisdom through "vertue and true religion" (*CPW* VII:424).

Milton applies the prolonged tutelage versus education analogy in *The Readie and Easie Way* only to governments which qualify under the precondition of cherishing "proportiond equalitie, both human, civil, and Christian" (*CPW* VII:424). The qualifier "proportiond," referring to merit, eliminates the rule of the unwise masses Milton distrusted in democratic government and reinforces his preference for meritocracies.⁴ Government affairs are best handled by meritocracies, Milton asserts, because rulers who "seem by most voices the worthiest" are usually the wisest (*CPW* VII:443). "Equalitie," on the other hand, eliminates the coercive hierarchy of tyranny in favor of the people's liberty, because tyranny privileges pride and self-interest over the proper distinctions of merit based on "vertue and true religion" (*CPW* VII:424). The criterion of "proportiond equalitie," then, reduces the commendable forms of government to only two—the

⁴ William Walker, "Paradise Lost and the Forms of Government."

republican commonwealth and virtuous monarchy—because they balance justice with liberty in keeping with virtue.

The tutor-teacher model, dependent on the common political metaphor of fatherly rulers governing children, supplies Milton with the terms to discuss the nuanced differences between law under a commonwealth or a monarchy. As depicted in Aristotle's *Politics*, the authority structure of the *oikos*, or household, typically contained three elements: master and slave, husband and wife, and father and children.⁵ While monarchists and parliamentarians alike employed the metaphor of government as a marriage contract to suit their own ends,⁶ another controversial metaphor featured in Milton's argument in *The Readie and Easie Way* centered on the third relationship—that of fathers and children. However, the relationship of father with children was more flexible than the marriage contract, because children were meant to mature and eventually take their own places as parents and citizens. As Aristotle writes in his *Politics*, “No one takes offense at being governed when he is young, nor does he think himself better than his governors,” but after he has learned to obey he reaches the age where he in turn rules himself and others.⁷ Since the family was a component of the state

⁵ Aristotle, *Politics*, I.3, trans. T.J. Saunders (New York: Penguin Books, 1981). Dzelzainis, “The Politics of *Paradise Lost*,” *The Oxford Handbook of Milton*, ed. Nicholas McDowell and Nigel Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 547–70, here 555; and “Milton's Classical Republicanism,” in *Milton and Republicanism*, ed. David Armitage, Armand Himy, and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge, U.K.; Cambridge University Press, 1995), 3–24, here 16. Dzelzainis establishes that Milton is dependent on Aristotle for his definitions of commonwealth, including the conditions of *eudaimonia* and autonomy, as well as the concept of rule by rationality.

⁶ Victoria Kahn, *Wayward Contracts: The Crisis of Political Obligation in England, 1640-1674* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 175.

⁷ Aristotle, *Politics*, VII.14. Milton cites a more developed form of this position in *The Readie and Easie Way* in keeping with the tutor-teacher model: “*Aristotle*, our chief instructor at the Universities, least this doctrine be thought *Sectarian*, as the royalist would have it thought, tells us in the third of his *Politics*, that certain men at first, for the matchless excellence of thir vertue above others, or som great public benifit, were created kings by the people . . . but when they abus'd thir power and governments grew larger,

and the children would grow up to be citizens, Aristotle held that it was important for the relationships within a family to educate the children in their duties to the state.⁸ As Brent Waters notes, “it was through the *familia* or *oikos* that individuals were inducted into the *polis* as citizens.”⁹

In classical Greek and Roman societies, the fathers enlisted two sorts of aids in training up their children to become citizens, according to their relative maturity: tutors and teachers. Justinian’s *Institutes*, which Milton read in the 1640’s and references repeatedly in his *Commonplace Book* and *Of Education*, details the authority and role of tutors designated by fathers to care for their children.¹⁰ Justinian’s *Institutes* defines *personae* as all men possessing a rational will, and places children in the category of those who have not yet developed their reason sufficiently to be considered *personae* and govern their own affairs. *Tutores* were assigned to children and even adults who were in possession of all their rights but “unable, through some imperfection, to exercise the rights.”¹¹ Therefore, according to Thomas Sandars, the Roman notion of tutor was a

and the number of prudent men increased, that then the people soon deposing their tyrants, betook them, in all civillest places, to the form of a free Commonwealth” (*CPW* VII:448).

⁸ Aristotle, *Politics*, I.13. This argument would be adopted later even by monarchists. See Su Fang Ng, *Literature and the Politics of Family in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2007), and the quotation from Gouge’s “Of Domestic Duties” on p. 1. Distinctions between monarchist and republican uses of this analogy will be discussed further in following sections.

⁹ Brent Waters, *The Family in Christian Social and Political Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 4.

¹⁰ *Of Education*, *CPW* II:399; *Commonplace Book*, *CPW* I:410–11.

¹¹ Thomas Collett Sandars, *The Institutes of Justinian* (Longmans, Green, 1910), 41. See Ng, *Literature and the Politics of Family*, 53. Justinian significantly influenced Milton’s views on liberty and slavery, and as Ng notes, Justinian believed slaves and children were not free because they were under dominion of another. Slaves were in a slightly different category; they were considered slaves because they lacked reason and were therefore deprived of rights. See also Dzelzainis, “Politics of *Paradise Lost*,” 558–59.

person who “supplied something that was wanting, who filled up the measure of his pupil’s *persona*.”¹² In other words, the office of tutor was temporary, until the pupil had gained the discernment necessary to manage his own affairs. When the child came of age (generally upon reaching puberty, around twelve or fourteen) the tutors were dismissed and the child was ushered into adulthood as a full citizen.

In Greek and Roman culture the office of teacher was distinct from that of tutor in part because education continued even after puberty. The control a teacher exercised over the life of a student was much less than that of a tutor, as the student was already considered a full citizen in the eyes of the law. Instead, the teacher would educate the young person in the skills necessary to grow up into his role as a statesman or leader, positioning him eventually to govern not only his own affairs but also the *polis*. In this way the fathers’ institution of tutors or teachers to train their children reflected two disparate opinions of their children, either as infants too unreliable or else incapable of making their own decisions or as heirs in training with the purpose of taking their places as parents and rulers in due course. Although Milton drew upon classical models such as Aristotle and Justinian in discussing the development of children into full citizens of the *polis*, he understood the English people as a Christian nation, and so any explication of his political argument must also take into account similar Jewish and Christian conceptions of childhood, tutelage, and education.

Paul, as missionary to the gentiles, wrote a letter to the Hellenized Galatians that harmonized the Christian, Jewish, Greek, and Roman concepts of tutelage, childhood, and education. In Galatians 3:23–4:7 Paul incorporated the categories of tutor and

¹² Sandars, *The Institutes of Justinian*, 41.

teacher as found in Greek and Roman culture, later identified by Justinian in his *Institutes*, into his understanding of the Law and the Gospel. Paul wrote that just as heirs have all of their rights as infants but are no better than slaves, being under the direction of tutors (ἐπίτροπος) and stewards (οἰκονόμος), so God’s people were first under Moses’ Law.¹³ In addition to the tutors assigned to children in matters of law, Paul also named managers or stewards who would likely be responsible for supervising the children in private settings, managing all of the small domestic decisions and actions for them according to their proper order.¹⁴ So, Paul reminds the Galatians that while an heir is an infant, all of his public actions and decisions are supervised by the tutor and he learns discernment at home from the steward.

The significance of Paul’s choice of the term “heirs” for believers indicates that Christians are intended to inherit a fuller understanding of faith than that available through the Law, and this inheritance is by implication attainable through a teacher, wisdom. Just as the capacity for reason distinguished children from adults for the Greeks and Romans, the believer is released from childhood under the Law at the reception of the Gospel, and the wisdom revealed in Christ continues the believer’s process of moral education. Although believers were previously under the Law, Paul wrote that now “God [had] sent the Spirit of his Son into [their] hearts, crying: Abba, Father” (Gal 4:6 NIV). The coming of the Spirit of God and the revelation of God’s wisdom in Christ is the “coming of age” for believers, according to Paul’s interpretation. For Milton as well as

¹³ The Latin Vulgate renders ἐπίτροπος as *tutores*, the same term employed in Justinian’s *Institutes* for administrators appointed to infants by the government or the father

¹⁴ οἰκονόμος (translated in the Vulgate as *actoribus*) derives literally from *oikos* (house) and *nomos* (law, which is derived from *nemo*—to divide or apportion), suggesting that an *oikonomos* would supervise the proper order of the household.

for Paul, it is good for believers always to be growing in wisdom and virtue under Christ's teachings. However, they are heirs with Christ in that they have exchanged a tutor for a teacher and have been granted sufficient wisdom to manage private affairs (*oikonomia*) and duties of state for themselves.

The transition from Law to Gospel, tutor to teacher, is consistent with the father-children analogy of government, since maturity is a natural improvement which should not be reversed. Milton adopts Paul's comparison of the Law to a provision for infancy, and the Gospel to spiritual education much more fitted for mature believers and citizens.

Milton writes in *The Reason of Church Government*:

the Gospell is the end and fulfilling of the Law, our liberty also from the bondage of the Law I plainly reade. How then the ripe age of the Gospell should be put to schoole againe, and learn to governe her selfe from the infancy of the Law, the stronger to imitate the weaker, the freeman to follow the captive, the learned to be lesson'd by the rude, will be a hard undertaking to evince from any of those principles which either art or inspiration hath written. (*CPW* I:763)¹⁵

Thomas Aquinas establishes the authority of these descriptions of the Law as tutor and wisdom as teacher in his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*: "For the New Law ought to be given after the Old Law, just as first a tutor is given and afterwards the teacher so that man might first recognize his infirmity."¹⁶ Blair Hoxby also addresses Milton's engagement of Paul in conjunction with Justinian elsewhere, saying "In his

¹⁵ Barbara Keifer Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 146; Lewalski references the same passage in connection with Milton's conviction that under the Law "God as father of his family the church must have provided a discipline for 'training it up under his owne all-wise and dear Oeconomy.'" Jeffrey Shoulson also summarizes Milton's thought, "The law's immaturity, weakness, bondage, and ignorance are contrasted to the Gospel's maturity, strength, freedom, and wisdom;" see Jeffrey S. Shoulson, *Milton and the Rabbis: Hebraism, Hellenism, & Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 65.

¹⁶ Aquinas, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, chap 8 lect 2, p.171.

Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce Milton said that ‘the time of the Law is compar’d to youth, and pupillage’ because he read Galatians 4:1-5 through the lens of the *Institutes*.¹⁷ But while Blair Hoxby and previous scholars have identified the relationship between Paul’s letter to the Galatians and Milton’s conceptions of Law and Christian liberty, the status of wisdom as teacher constituting a New Law has often been overlooked.¹⁸ It remains to be explored, also, what ramifications the transition from Old Law to New Law via Christian wisdom has for the role of civic law. While Paul supplied the bridge from the Greek and Roman conceptions of tutor and teacher to Christian theology, Milton’s identification of the English as a Christian nation allowed him to apply his principles of Christian liberty to his recommendation or criticism of political forms.

In *The Readie and Easie Way* Milton employs typological interpretations of the Israelites’ journey from Egypt to the Promised Land to elucidate his comparisons of Christian liberty to civic government. Just as throughout the Old Testament God frequently had to remind an unfaithful Israel that he liberated them by bringing them up out of Egypt, Milton described England’s favorable reception of the Stuart monarchy like Israel’s cowardice in “chusing them a captain back for *Egypt*” (*CPW* VII:463). Having avoided the fatal decision to return to Egyptian captivity, the Israelites received the Law at Mount Sinai. Milton describes Moses as having the best warrant to issue laws of any lawgiver to come, because the precepts were derived from God himself (*CPW* II:398).

¹⁷ Blair Hoxby, “*Areopagitica* and Liberty,” *The Oxford Handbook of Milton* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 225.

¹⁸ See Quentin Skinner, “John Milton and the Politics of Slavery,” in *Visions of Politics* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 286–307.

Moses was a mediator for the Jews, since he passed on God's laws as prescriptions for specific behaviors in the daily life of individuals and the whole community.¹⁹ Josephus describes Moses' Law in *Against Apion* by saying that,

Starting from the very beginning of our upbringing and from the mode of life practiced by each individual in the home, [Moses] did not leave anything, even the minutest detail, free to be determined by the wishes of those concerned. Even in relation to food, what we should refrain from and what we should eat, the company we keep in our daily lives, and our application to work and, conversely, rest, he himself set the law as the boundary and rule, so that we might live under it as if it were our father and master and commit no sin either willfully or from ignorance.²⁰

The Law of Moses, then, performed the functions of tutor and steward for the Israelites, dictating wise decisions even up to domestic economy.

However, since the Israelites did not end their spiritual growth and development at the foot of Mt. Sinai, the progression from bondage to liberty for Milton was not as simple as escaping from Egypt. The problem with the law was, as Irene Samuel notes, that "To be protected from the error of [sin's] possibility is to be denied the exercise of self government," and it is precisely this self-government Milton regards as central to Christian liberty.²¹ Indeed it is typologically significant to Milton's analogy that Moses was barred from the Promised Land, having led the Israelites up to its border, and Joshua led them in. Again the Law as tutor protected and guided believers until they reached the

¹⁹ God issued the Ten Commandments directly to the Israelites, but the rest of the law he told only to Moses, who stood between God and the Israelites because the Israelites were afraid. Exodus 20:18-22, Deuteronomy 4:10-14, 5:5.

²⁰ Josephus, *Against Apion*, 2.173.

²¹ Irene Samuel, *Dante and Milton: The Commedia and Paradise Lost* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1966), 236.

Promised Land (liberty), and then only Joshua (Hebrew Yeshua, the same name rendered in the New Testament as Jesus) could lead them in to possess the land. Likewise, at the giving of the Law God told the Israelites that “everyone cannot do as he sees fit because you have not yet entered the land I promised,” implying that the Promised Land signifies a new stage of maturity and a new relationship to law.²² In other words, virtue should be prescribed by the Law only until the new teacher, the wisdom of God, has come to lead the way. Milton’s concept of liberty parallels the Promised Land for the Israelites typologically in that wisdom or right reason serves as the New Law for the soul. In the Promised Land each person strengthens his wisdom through choosing to do “as he sees fit” in accordance with truth, goodness, and virtuous principles.

Subjects of the Stuart Monarchy: Milton’s Critique

Against the three stages of the exodus from Egypt Milton juxtaposed the three states of maturity identified in the Greek and Roman *polis*—slavery, childhood, and adulthood—and three types of government: tyranny, virtuous monarchy, and republican commonwealth. Confusion concerning Milton’s metaphors and the historical precedents cited in *The Readie and Easie Way* often arises from the fact that Milton was writing against two separate entities rather than one. He rejected the Stuart monarchy insofar as it was, and was likely to remain, a tyranny. But he also rejected the institution of monarchy in general in that it treated citizens as perpetual infants rather than heirs, and therefore did not sufficiently educate them in wisdom. *The Readie and Easie Way* condemns England of wishing to return to slavery in Egypt when Milton refers to the Stuart monarchy as a corrupt or bad government. When Milton is merely contrasting

²² Deuteronomy 12:8-9, NIV.

prescriptive laws and government with the liberty he believes appropriate to mature citizens he refers to it as a reversion to childishness or laziness in submission to a tutor or master. Thus the Stuart monarchy figures in *The Readie and Easie Way* both as the bondage of the Egyptians, implying a bad government which reduces citizens to slaves, and as an instance of monarchy in general, still acting as a tutor to childish subjects.²³

The two arguments against tyranny and monarchy are often conflated unnecessarily, confusing assessments of Milton's republicanism and analysis of *Paradise Lost*. Quentin Skinner, for instance, combines the two categories by asserting that in *The Readie and Easie Way*, "Accepting the rule of a king, he [Milton] is now prepared unequivocally to assert, is strictly equivalent to deciding to enslave oneself."²⁴ However, Milton is still willing to concede in *The Readie and Easie Way* that "I denie not but that ther may be such a king, who may regard the common good before his own" (*CPW* VII:447–48) and "monarchie of it self may be convenient to som nations" (*CPW* VII:449).²⁵ Although he rejects bondage to tyranny absolutely, nevertheless Milton does not disallow every use of monarchy.

Indeed, Milton's position that "monarchie of it self may be convenient to som nations" is consistent with his traditional republican sources, including Livy and

²³ This is a slight difference from Cedric Brown's argument in "Great Senates and Godly Education: Politics and Cultural Renewal in Some Pre- and Post-Revolutionary Texts of Milton," *Milton and Republicanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 50. Brown directly equates deliverance from the monarchy with deliverance from slavery.

²⁴ Skinner, "John Milton and the Politics of Slavery," 20.

²⁵ See Worden, "Milton's Republicanism and the Tyranny of Heaven," 228. Worden recognizes that in Milton's 1654 *Second Defence* he wrote: "If I inveigh against tyrants, what is that to kings? . . . As much as a good man differs from a bad, so much do I maintain that a king differs from a tyrant." Worden identifies some doubt from Milton during the 1650s that the English people were well enough educated to sustain republican rule; see p.233.

Machiavelli, in recognizing that monarchy can constitute good government if it is justly suited to the level of wisdom of the people (*CPW* VII:449). William Walker, discussing Livy's *Rise of Rome*, contends that "over the course of Book I, monarchy emerges as a productive, legitimate, and necessary form of government in light of the fact that the first Romans had a 'bellicose temper,' and were 'an untutored multitude, which in those days was rather primitive.'"²⁶ Livy speaks approvingly of Numa Pompilius' election—a man "famed in those days for his justice and piety"²⁷—because the Roman nation was "not yet grown up." Indeed, Livy also acknowledges that "calm and moderate exercise of governmental authority fostered and nourished it so that when it matured and grew strong it was able to enjoy the excellent fruits of liberty."²⁸

Machiavelli's *Discorsi*, Walker asserts, similarly argues that obeying one single person of more merit than the rest can facilitate the establishment of laws and constitutions. Likewise, laws instituted by a virtuous ruler may have the effect of civilizing the people and teaching them "to know the good and the honest, and to distinguish them from the bad and vicious."²⁹ In short, Milton follows traditional republican thought in admitting that for nations still immature in wisdom, a tutor is necessary to reinforce the categories of right and wrong actions, just as tutors are indeed necessary for small children, before citizens will be equipped to govern themselves.

²⁶ Livy, *The Rise of Rome*, trans. T. J. Luce (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 24–26. Qtd in Walker, "Paradise Lost and the Forms of Government," 273.

²⁷ Livy, *The Rise of Rome*, 23.

²⁸ Livy, *The Rise of Rome*, 71.

²⁹ Walker, "Paradise Lost and the Forms of Government," 275, 279. From Machiavelli's *Discorsi*, trans. Christian E. Detmold (Boston: James R. Osgood, 1882), 90.

Milton's objection, indeed, is not that monarchy itself is harmful, but that it can hinder the moral development of the state by endeavoring to keep citizens like subordinate children rather than treating them as heirs. Although monarchy may be suitable and even necessary for a young nation, Milton makes it clear that it is not sufficient for a people to remain under the absolute prescription of a monarchy and refuse to develop mature wisdom. The negative effect of prolonged monarchy is that it instills uniformity in the people in adherence to predetermined notions of justice and religion, and in order to maintain control this often causes rulers to make the people "softest, basest, vitioussest, servilest, easiest to be kept under; and not only in fleece, but in minde also sheepishest" (*CPW* VII:460). Good government in the tutor model, even under Moses' Law, has the weakness of "turning all vertue into prescription, servitude, and necessitie, to the great impairing and frustrating of Christian liberty" (*CPW* VII:445). Christian liberty in this case is impaired by the inability to make individual choices concerning virtue, and frustrated because the government neglects to teach the people how to make those choices.

Characterizing Milton's objection to the Stuart monarchy, as a monarchy in itself as opposed to a tyranny, requires a return to the analogy of government as a family—with fathers ruling over children, and appointing tutors and teachers. King James I (and VI), the father of Charles I, promoted the father and children analogy in his own writings. James I's *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies* was first published in 1598. Although Milton would not disagree with James I's assertion that, "The King towards his people is rightly compared to a father of children,"³⁰ his following application of the analogy

³⁰ King James the VI and I, *Political Writings*, ed. Johann P. Sommerville (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 76.

exhibits a preference for the model of perpetual tutelage. This model results in the characterization of citizens as immature, dependent children, incapable of resistance against the father because they lack sufficient reason or right. King James further declared that “The head cares for the body, so doeth the King for his people,” because all “discourse and direction flowes from the head.”³¹

Milton attacks the same perpetual tutelage model by alleging in *Eikonoklastes* that Charles I’s “embodiment of the familial metaphor makes grown men dependent children—and the kingdom ‘a great baby’ (CPW III, 469)—when they are in fact mature citizens.”³² In *The Readie and Easie Way* Milton objects to Charles I’s injunction to his own son “not to neglect the speedie and effectual suppressing of errors and schisms” (CPW VII:457).³³ The distinctions between Egypt and tutelage are easy to confuse because monarchs like Charles II and his father “hear the gospel speaking much of libertie; a word which monarchie and her bishops both fear and hate,” and become afraid that their subjects will form religious opinions contrary to the wishes of the state. In response, monarchies become more controlling until they compromise the principles they initially taught. The commonwealth is not susceptible to such fear because it does not attempt to control the citizens in the way tutors do with small children. Milton regards the English as wise enough to govern their own affairs as a commonwealth, to be considered heirs rather than infants, although his faith is shaken somewhat by their amiable response to the proposed return of the monarchy.

³¹ King James I, *Political Writings*, 76–77.

³² Ng, *Literature and the Politics of Family*, 59.

³³ Quotation from *Eikon Basilike* chapter xxvii, believed at the time to have been written by Charles I.

While in *Eikonoklastes* and *The Readie and Easie Way* Milton vehemently rejects the Stuart monarchy's subjection of citizens to perpetual tutelage as infants, this tutor-teacher model underlying Milton's arguments is at odds with Su Fang Ng's conclusion that "In debunking absolutist patriarchalism, early modern authors also debunked domestic patriarchy,"³⁴ and later that Milton "reconceptualize[s] family as a brotherhood."³⁵ Insofar as Milton prefers all citizens to be treated as heirs together, trained in hopes of aspiring to rule the commonwealth in turn, he does treat family and state as a brotherhood. But he retains room for the meritocratic patriarchy of the rulers; those who are most virtuous, most experienced, and most wise rule over the rest, although without considering themselves superior to the others. The brotherhood maintained through humility even in hierarchy is reflected through the pedagogical model, as rulers in Milton's terms consistently introduce laws with a view to training those they rule in hope of seeing other citizens eventually mature to take their own places in the government. Milton's argument in *The Readie and Easie Way* proposes a meritocratic commonwealth which views all citizens as heirs worthy, with proper training, to assume roles as law-givers and educators. Milton's preference for rulers as teachers defined thus far is crucial in the articulations of his argument for the separation of the secular and religious powers.

Law and Liberty: Religion and Government

The analogy of tutor and teacher models of government also represents his perception of the proper relationship between spiritual liberty and civic government in

³⁴ Ng, *Literature and the Politics of Family*, 18.

³⁵ Ng, *Literature and the Politics of Family*, 58.

The Readie and Easie Way. It is clear that although Milton does extend his analyses of the merits of commonwealths to a general recommendation for all nations, he is specifically writing to and for England. For this reason the balance between civic law and spiritual freedom is necessarily reflective of his understanding of the English as a Christian people, and more specifically a Protestant people, resulting in his conviction that the government ought to preserve spiritual liberty and form the virtue of the citizens. Although Milton believed strongly that the church should not be institutionalized in the state, he was concerned primarily that the law of the government be such that it allowed the citizens to grow in Christian virtue by practicing their own wisdom, rather than merely submitting to arbitrary or tyrannical edicts. It will be useful first in examining the relationship between religion and law to consider the nature of the freedom Milton hopes to protect by instituting the commonwealth. This he subdivides into two distinct types and asserts that the “whole freedom of man consists either in spiritual or civil libertie,” and of these “liberty of conscience . . . ought to be to all men dearest and most precious” (*CPW* VII:456).

Spiritual liberty, as Milton understands it, aligns with the New Law as enumerated by Paul in Galatians. This liberty requires the ability to serve God “according to the best light which God hath planted in him to that purpose, by the reading of his reveal’d will and the guidance of his holy spirit” (*CPW* VII:456).³⁶ In short, the incarnation of the Son of God and the gift of the Holy Spirit equipped believers with sufficient wisdom to govern their own religious affairs. “Liberty of conscience” or “spiritual liberty” is clearly

³⁶ *CPW* VII:330. In *Letter to a Friend*, dated October 20, 1959, Milton clarifies that “Liberty of conscience [belongs] to all professing Scripture the rule of their faith & worship, And the Abjuracion of a single person,” clearly indicating that the religious freedom and toleration he champions in *The Readie and Easie Way* is only applicable to Christian nations.

the more important of the two types of liberty for Milton, and the ensuing discussion clarifies Milton's view that the state ought to preserve spiritual liberty by refraining from regulating it.

Civil liberty, on the other hand, consists of justice, in that it preserves the "civil rights and advancements of each person according to his merit" (*CPW* VII:458). Civic liberty, in contrast to spiritual liberty, is preserved by the actions and legislation of the state. The state in other words is responsible for forming the virtue and wisdom of the citizens through justly punishing and rewarding private actions: the best are elected to rule based on merit and the meritorious ones are permitted justly to exercise force to preserve their own liberties (*CPW* VII:455). Civic liberty in Milton's terms does not mean *laissez-faire*, it means that civic liberties are preserved for each "according to his merit," which means all are allowed to make their choices, but then those who make wrong choices ought to be punished for them.³⁷ The localized government Milton proposes is another instance of government regarding citizens as heirs: each city may "make their own judicial laws . . . so they shall have justice in thir own hands . . . [and] they shall have none to blame but themselves, if it be not well administered" (*CPW* VII:459).

The commonwealth, unlike monarchy, is willing to allow the citizens to make decisions, make mistakes and learn from them, and take responsibility for them, trusting them to do well. In time, individuals may "exercise and fit themselves, till thir lot fall to be chosen into the Grand Council, according as thir worth and merit shall be taken notice

³⁷ Milton implies that those who have been irresponsible in self-government may justly be deprived of liberty by the virtuous (*CPW* VII :455). For a similar analysis see Dzelzainis, "The Politics of *Paradise Lost*," 567.

of by the people” (*CPW* VII:459–460). So the process of election upholds standards of virtue and rewards or punishes those who do or do not meet them. Milton equates the commonwealth with liberty because it allows citizens the greatest opportunity to develop wisdom by exercising choice and reason as sons and heirs, but still preserves the process for ensuring the state has wise leaders who will institute good laws (as opposed to the unpredictability of democracy).

The distinction drawn between spiritual and civil liberty leads intuitively to Milton’s proposition that religious and civic powers ought to be separate, and especially that spiritual liberty as the freedom “dearest and most precious” ought not to be infringed upon by the state. Concerning the relationship between religion and government, Milton was heavily influenced by Dante.³⁸ Milton’s reliance on Dante is not at all surprising given that Milton’s own understanding of the superiority of liberty is very like Beatrice’s declaration to Dante in canto 5 of *Paradiso*:

“The greatest gift God made for any creature
by His own bounty, gift most perfectly
like His own excellence, gift He holds most dear,
Was from the first the will at liberty:
all creatures made to be intelligent
were and are so endowed, and only they.”³⁹

Given this similar disposition toward the importance of liberty as a gift of God, it is not surprising that Milton also draws from Dante’s poetry to reinforce his theories concerning the proper division between civil and religious power.

³⁸ Milton was unusual among his contemporaries for his interest in Dante; Milton was the first Englishman to reference Dante’s *De Monarchia*, and also spent time with commentators and scholars of Dante during his time in Florence, Italy. One of these, Giacomo Mazzoni, Milton includes in *Of Education* as an excellent poetry critic to be used in school curricula.

³⁹ Dante, *Paradise*, 5.19–24.

Irene Samuel identifies Milton's transcription of several lines from canto 16 of *Purgatorio* in his Commonplace Book as evidence of Milton's agreement with Dante that religious and ecclesiastical powers should never be joined.⁴⁰ Dante the pilgrim pauses to converse with Marco Lombardo, and entreats him to explain the reason that the world is devoid of virtue. The portion of Marco Lombardo's reply Milton copied out was,

Soleva Roma, che 'l buon mondo feo,
due soli aver, che l'una e l'altra strada
facean vedere, e del mondo e di Deo.
L'un 'altro ha spento, ed è giunta la spada
col pastorale, e l'un con l'altro insieme
per viva forza mal convien che vada. . .
Dì oggimai che la Chiesa di Roma,
Per confondere in sé due reggimenti,
Cade nel fango, e sé brutta e la soma.

[Rome, which made the good world, used to
have two suns that made visible the two paths, of
the world and of God.
One sun has extinguished the other, and the
sword is joined to the shepherd's staff, and it is ill
For those two to be violently forced together. . . .
Say then that the Church of Rome, because it
Has fused together in itself the two authorities, falls
In the mud and soils both itself and its burden.]⁴¹

As evident in Milton's selection of these lines from *Purgatorio*, as well as his tracts *Civil Power and Hirelings*, although the spiritual is higher than the civil, it is equally wrong for the Church to subsume secular authority as for the state to assume the right to dictate religious opinions.⁴²

⁴⁰ Samuel, *Dante and Milton*, 214.

⁴¹ Dante, *Purgatorio* 16.106-11, 127-29.

⁴² Jean Bethke Elshtain describes these scenarios, subdivisions of the "monistic fusion of power," as the "plenipotentiary state" and the "plenipotentiary spiritual earthly kingdom." (*Sovereignty: God, State, and Self*, "Will, Power, and Earthly Dominion," New York: Basic Books, 2008, 59). In reference to Christianity she adds that the ideal of Christian unity was possibly "one of the most powerful sovereign weapons ever exercised" (60, see n9 for citation).

However, Samuel passes over the context of the excerpt from Dante in Milton's Commonplace Book, which provides a crucial clarification to Milton's view of the relationship religion and government ought to have. The quotation from *Purgatorio* 16 is included under the entry entitled "De Religione quatenus ad Repub: spectat" [Concerning Religion, how far it has in view the Republic], and bookended by two quotations from Machiavelli's *Discorsi*.⁴³ In first of these Milton paraphrased the original Italian in his own Latin, "Laudatissimos omnium inter mortales, eos esse qui vera Religione hominum mentes imbuunt, immo iis etiam laudatiores qui humanis legibus Regna et Respub" [The most worthy to be praised among all mortals, are those who imbue the minds of men with true Religion, nay they are more praiseworthy even than those who (established) kingdoms and republics by human laws].⁴⁴ Cedric Brown observes that Milton's paraphrase alters the focus of Machiavelli's original, which discusses the differentiation between good governments and tyrannies, by adding emphases on "true Religion" and the educational process of "imbuing minds."⁴⁵ In this way Milton's paraphrase actually elides Machiavelli's distinction between those who "author and found religions" and those who "establish kingdoms or republics," relying instead upon the difference of means—true religion rather than human law—to move men toward the good.

The second reference from the *Discorsi* likewise begins with Milton's own Latin paraphrase which declares that even under good princes all men should be permitted to

⁴³ Maurice Kelley, "Milton and Machiavelli's *Discorsi*," *Studies in Bibliography* 4 (1951): 123–127. Kelley dates the excerpts from the *Discorsi* listed above (only two of the seventeen total citations of Machiavelli's *Discorsi* in the Commonplace Book) between November 1651 and February 1652 based on manuscript evidence and handwriting. This date signifies a development of his ideas since the writing of *Areopagitica* and *Of Education*, but not as fully developed as in *The Readie and Easie Way*.

⁴⁴ My translation, Latin text from the Commonplace Book, folio 197.

⁴⁵ Brown, "Great Senates and Godly Education," 43.

hold their own opinions about religion. The paraphrase is followed by a quotation from the original Italian: “dove ciascuno può tenere e difendere quella opinione che vuole” [where every one was able to hold and defend whatever opinion he wished].⁴⁶ In fact, Machiavelli’s description of the reigns of good rulers in the context of that quotation makes no explicit mention of the freedom of subjects to hold private opinions concerning religion. Machiavelli only criticizes rulers who destroy religions or fail to promote nobility and virtue in their people. Milton’s paraphrase allows him to elaborate on the verbatim quotation in Italian based on his own inferences about the nuances of the place of religion in government.

The sequence of these three elements, the two excerpts from the *Discorsi* with the excerpt from *Purgatorio* 16 between them, clarifies the relationship between religious and civic government in Milton’s thought. The first demonstrates that religion is more praiseworthy than human law as a means to form citizens in regard to virtue, the second that civil power should be kept separate from religious authority even when the government endorses good principles, and third that conscience should be free from government regulation. In short, human laws should be instituted to encourage the principles of true religion in subjects, but the people’s opinions concerning religion should be free and not coerced, since political and ecclesiastical authority ought not to be mixed. The ensuing questions based on these distinctions are how exactly civic law can affect the virtue of citizens or lack thereof, and how it ought to encourage virtue and wisdom in citizens without usurping religious authority.

⁴⁶ Machiavelli, *Discorsi* I.10, trans. Christian E. Detmold, 108. Folio 197 from Milton’s Commonplace book.

The role of law in forming the virtues or vices of citizens is likewise reflected in Dante. The lines immediately preceding the excerpt chosen by Milton point to another cause of corruption in the *polis*, one which is equally important to Milton's formulation of the relationship between law and virtue.

Lume v'è dato a bene e a malizia, . . .
A maggior forza e a miglior natura
liberi soggiacete, e quella cria
la mente in voi, che 'l ciel non ha in sua cura.
Però se 'l mondo presente disvia
in voi è la cagione, . . .
Onde convenne legge per fren porre;
convenne rege aver che discernesse
de la vera cittade almen la torre. . . .
per che la gente, che sua guida vede
pur a quel ben fedire ond' ella è ghiotta,
di quel si pasce e più oltre non chiede.
Ben puoi veder che la mala condotta
è la cagion che 'l mondo ha fatto reo,
e non natura che 'n voi sia corrotta.

[. . . a light is given
you to know good and evil, . . .
To a greater Power and better Nature you lie
subject and therefore free, and that creates the
mind in you, which the heavens do not govern.
Thus, if the present world has gone astray, in
you is the cause, . . .
Therefore it was necessary to set the law as a
curb; it was necessary to have a king who would
discern the tower at least of the true city. . . .
[But] the people, who see their guide
striking at the thing that they themselves are
greedy for, feed there and seek no further.
You can clearly see that bad government is the
cause that has made the world wicked, and not
nature corrupt in you.]⁴⁷

Samuel is certainly correct in noting that Milton's ideas echo those of Marco Lombardo in Dante's *Divina Commedia*, namely, that laws need to be good and well administered,

⁴⁷ Dante, *Purgatorio*, 16.74-75,79-83, 94-96, 100-105.

or else the people will be led into sin rather than away from it.⁴⁸ That the justice of the state perpetuates the vices or virtues of the people that choose it is evident in Milton's evaluations of the forms of government in *The Readie and Easie Way*, specifically in that he focuses on the private behaviors of rulers and their subjects.⁴⁹

Emperor Justinian, who proved so influential in forming Milton's opinions of liberty, slavery, childhood, and tutelage, reappears later in the *Divina Commedia* to answer this very question. In *Paradiso* 6, Justinian teaches Dante that the ordering of the soul has political consequences.⁵⁰ Justinian is the only spirit to speak for a whole canto without narrative interruption in the entire *Divina Commedia*. As Anthony Esolen notes, Dante's choice to allow Justinian so much latitude to address the issues of justice in conjunction with human rulers "illustrates his conviction that civil law and ecclesiastical discipline are coequal realms, the latter meant to lead us by showing us where the Highest Good may be sought, the former meant to lead us by encouraging virtue and correcting us when we stray."⁵¹ As discussed previously in regard to the distinction between spiritual and civic liberty, the function of the law is justice administered wisely. Justinian describes his own rule in regard to law as being directed "by the prompting of the primal Love / [to prune] the law of all rank and useless things . . ." and his relates his recognition

⁴⁸ Dante, *Divina Commedia*, Purgatorio, 16.

⁴⁹ Not only the mode of legislation affects the citizens' liberty to practice wisdom (as identified in teacher/tutor distinction) but the actual precepts embodied in the law shape the virtue of citizens.

⁵⁰ Dante, *Divina Commedia*, Paradiso, 6.112-123.

⁵¹ Dante, *Paradise*, 415; cf. 1 Peter 2:13-14.

that “God in His grace was pleased to breath in me / the lofty work to which I gave my all, / when with the Church I walked in harmony.”⁵²

Justinian’s approach toward legislation is the antidote to the ills of law described by Marco Lombardo, and subscribes to the same view of the effect of justice on the soul. Justinian legislated in accordance with the prompting of Love, in this case a reference to the Holy Spirit, and he ruled so that “con la Chiesa mossi i piedi” [(he) walked with the Church].⁵³ He turns the discussion to the souls with him on Mercury:

Questa picciola stella si correda
d'i buoni spirti che son stati attivi
perché onore e fama li succeda
e quando li disiri poggian quivi,
sì disviando, pur convien che i raggi
del vero amore in sù poggin men vivi.
Ma nel commensurar d'i nostri gaggi
col merto è parte di nostra letizia,
perché non li vedem minor né maggi.
Quindi addolcisce la viva giustizia
in noi l'affetto sì, che non si puote
torcer già mai ad alcuna nequizia.

[This little star is ornamented by
all the brave souls who live their lives that fame
and honor might succeed them when they die—
But when desire is set on things below,
it wanders from the road, and so the rays
of true love mount with less life in the flame.
That our rewards are measured as our days
have merited, for us is happiness—
that we may see them neither less nor more.
The living justice has so sweetened us
that we can never twist our hearts toward wrong,
for our desires are rendered pure and just.]⁵⁴

⁵² Dante, *Paradise*, 6.11-12, 22-24.

⁵³ Dante, *Paradise*, 6.22. On the significance of “primal Love” for “Holy Spirit,” see Anthony Esolen’s note on page 55 of *Paradise*.

⁵⁴ Dante, *Paradise*, 6.112-123.

Justinian's description of the just souls on Mercury in *Paradise* matches Milton's description of civil liberty which "preserves the civil rights and advancements of each person according to his merit," with the additional aspect that souls are formed by living in accordance with just laws to the extent that they do not wish to be rewarded in any way their merits have not earned. Justinian illustrates that justice taught by the laws of the state turns souls so that they can neither wish nor do evil, even to the point of recognizing that their justice and piety ought not to merit the highest rewards because their aim was honor rather than wisdom or faith. Dante's representation of Justinian on justice is congruent with Milton's stated purpose for the commonwealth to teach citizens "faith not without virtue, . . . justice; not to admire wealth or honour; to hate turbulence and ambition" (*CPW* VII:443).

But although Justinian's laws were written and administered in harmony with virtue and the Church, he fell short of Milton's political proposal and Dante's representation of perfection in one way: he and the other souls on Mercury placed too much value in honor on earth. In this respect, Milton adheres to the Platonic thesis that the state is the individual soul writ large. This model by implication draws upon the three parts of the soul—wealth-seeking, honor-seeking, and wisdom-seeking—and corresponds with Milton's requirement that the state teach citizens "not to admire wealth or honor."⁵⁵ Milton is careful to clarify in *The Readie and Easie Way* that faith ought to be more important than justice so that wealth and honor would not be admired to the same extent, because "the first duty [of man] is to be grateful to God and mindful of his blessings," as he writes in the *Second Defence* (*CPW* IV:545). Justinian and the rest of the souls on

⁵⁵ See Samuel, *Dante and Milton*, 70–71, although in conjunction with *Paradise Regained*.

Mercury lost sight of this highest duty to God because their “desires [were] set on things below,” and so “the rays / of true love mount[ed] with less life in the flame.”⁵⁶

While Samuel correctly identifies in Dante and Milton the shared principle that law should uphold the virtues derived from true religion, she pays minimal attention to the political differences in Dante and Milton’s applications of this concept with respect to what sort of rulers are best able to administer laws. Instead, she attempts to reconcile the two accounts by arguing that “If Dante had attempted the story of the fall, or if Milton had attempted a poem on his own time seen in the light of eternity, the political emphasis of the two works might have been more nearly the same.”⁵⁷ On the contrary, Dante and Milton apply similar principles concerning religion, liberty, and political power to nearly opposite political arrangements, as the monarchical vision of Dante is exactly what Milton refutes in terms of the tutor model of government.

Anthony Esolen summarizes Dante’s political stance in his notes to *Paradise* by asserting that, “Dante believed that monarchy was ordained by God as the most natural and fitting form of government for mankind, the most analogous to God’s own rule and the most consonant with human freedom.”⁵⁸ Dante hoped for a righteous emperor to unify the will of the people and “‘restore’ the rule of law,”⁵⁹ while Milton refused both the monarchy and the papacy as the best forms of authority for the encouragement of Christian liberty. Likewise Robert Durling and Ronald Martinez observe that “Dante viewed the Romans as a second Chosen People, whose function was to bring the world

⁵⁶ Dante, *Paradise*, 6.115-17.

⁵⁷ Samuel, *Dante and Milton*, 265.

⁵⁸ Dante, *Paradise*, 412.

⁵⁹ Samuel, *Dante and Milton*, 257.

under the rule of law and universal monarchy (to ‘make the world good,’ essential preparation for the coming of Christ).”⁶⁰ Dante’s *Divina Commedia* and *De Monarchia* admire authorities that preserve liberty by unifying the will of the people under one religious and one civil ruler.⁶¹ While Milton borrows Dante’s principle of the “two suns” cited by Marco Lombardo, his understanding of civic and spiritual liberty causes him to explicitly reject both of the figures Dante puts forward to bring unity to the people: the emperor and the pope (*CPW* VII:429).

Far from hoping the new government will “‘restore’ the rule of law,” the commonwealth suggested in *The Readie and Easie Way* would restore the best balance between law as corrective against vice and ruler as positive but not prescriptive model of virtue.

The Justice of the State: Modeling Maturity

Thus, the proper role of government in relation to wisdom according to *The Readie and Easie Way* is to model justice for the citizens—in the laws and in the rulers—since laws themselves are unable to persuade citizens to value virtue for its own sake. Milton praises or criticizes monarchical or republican forms of government primarily based on the private virtues of the rulers and those they encourage in their subjects. Contrary to the tutelage model of the monarchy, which elevates the king above the law, the commonwealth requires its rulers to teach justice by example or forfeit the status of legislator.

⁶⁰ Dante, *Purgatorio*, 272.

⁶¹ Elshtain’s *Sovereignty*, 71, “For Dante, the monistic singularity of sovereign is not in the interest of power but, rather, serves a rationally driven quest for the peace that alone enables humankind to achieve justice.”

In keeping with Milton's definition of civil liberty, under which rulers are advanced according to their merits, the commonwealth only retains rulers who act in accordance with wisdom, justice, and virtue in their personal lives. The free commonwealth most nearly matches Christ's injunction that those who are greatest behave as if they were least, Milton argues, because in the commonwealth

they who are greatest, are perpetual servants and drudges to the public at their own cost and charges, neglect their own affairs; yet are not elevated above their brethren; live soberly in their families, walk the streets as other men, may be spoken to freely, familiarly, friendly, without adoration. (*CPW* VII:425)

In this instance Milton implies that three criteria should be implemented in choosing rulers: they should excel in the virtues which ought to be instilled in the subjects, they should behave in political dealings according to Christian principles, and they should not consider themselves intrinsically superior to their subjects. The commonwealth is the best combination of these qualities because those who are greatest rule, but are not "elevated above their brethren." These sorts of rulers may be understood in accordance with Milton's teacher model, since teachers likewise serve their students although they excel them, model in themselves what they wish to teach, and recognize that their object is to train students out of the need for further teaching.

On the contrary, monarchs regard law as their own pronouncement and therefore not by necessity the standard for their personal lives, which has two effects. First, the king too easily deserts virtue because he believes law has no control over him. In doing so the king affects his subjects by the model of his own behavior, until he has gathered

a dissolute and haughty court about him . . . to the debauching of our prime gentry both male and female; not in their passetimes only, but in earnest, by the loose employments of court service. (*CPW* VII:425)

Eager to please their king, citizens conform to his example—in this case a negative one.

Secondly, when the authority and power of legislation and the management of government rests in a single person, the law itself only has weight if the authority of the king remains intact. Whereas in a commonwealth the body of laws and the principles upon which they were founded can serve as a guide and corrective for the rulers, any correction directed toward a monarch must originate with the people, not the laws, and is therefore construed as sedition against the government.⁶² If authority resides in the king himself, the danger is that the monarchy easily becomes most “full of fears, full of jealousies,” and often most suspicious of religious leaders on account of the fear that “reformation would diminish regal authority” (*CPW* VII:457). As discussed previously in relation to James I and Charles I, Milton’s concern is that the tutelage-style prescription of behavior is unable to convince citizens to value virtue for its own sake and so has to resort to coercion to induce obedience to laws. Hobbes’ *Leviathan* encounters the same problem with obedience to laws, and concludes that ultimately the only way to enforce conformity to the monarch’s laws is to introduce and manipulate religion so that men will fear to displease God. The simplest way to prescribe religion is often by controlling church government—which can only compromise the teaching of both church and law.

However, more subtle than compromising the virtue of the people, a return to monarchy can compromise the wisdom of the citizens by refusing them the latitude to make private decisions concerning publically endorsed principles. In addition to the risk described previously that those who choose monarchy may in fact end up in thrall to a tyranny, persisting in monarchy when it is *not* suitable to the level of wisdom of the people is likely to stunt the growth of wisdom. Milton contends that the tutelage of the

⁶² See *CPW* VII:454.

monarchy, for “us [the English] who have thrown it out, receiv’d back again, it cannot but prove pernicious” (*CPW* VII:449). Indeed, the fact that England has consented to submit itself again to a tutor is a sign for Milton that the people are lazy and immature, not having been properly educated:

And what madness is it, for them who might manage nobly thir own affairs themselves, sluggishly and weakly to devolve all on a single person; and more like boys under age then men, to committ all to his patronage and disposal. . . . how unmanly must it needs be . . . to hang all our felicity on him, all our safetie, our well-being, for which if we were aught els but sluggards or babies, we need depend on none but God and our own counsels, our own active vertue and industrie. (*CPW* VII:427)

Milton is most upset with the English people because the monarchy should not be necessary when the subjects are capable of managing their own affairs well. To accept the supervision of a tutor implies either that one is incapable of managing one’s own affairs yet, as is the case with infants and “boys under age,” or that one is too lazy to do so, as are the “sluggards” Milton names.

In other words, the “sluggards” are incapable of governing themselves by right reason, and return to childishness by allowing a ruler to dictate for them all proper behaviors and attitudes. Such an acknowledgement from the English of their own “unworthiness to be governed better” marks a voluntary return to thralldom, as opposed to a constant search for a better moral education. The contention of *The Readie and Easie Way* assumes that if the English people were better educated, they would have chosen to institute a commonwealth rather than return to monarchy. Secondly, that belief in their unworthiness to be governed better led the English to believe too little of their own virtue and to settle for a more oppressive government.

The conclusion of Milton's arguments in *The Readie and Easie Way*, then, viewed through the lens of the tutor-teacher paradigm borrowed from classical and biblical sources, is that government ought to reflect the wisdom of the people by preserving liberty and modeling justice. For a people of mature wisdom Milton believed the commonwealth to be infinitely preferable, while monarchy's prescriptive justice was more suitable to a nation still unequipped for self-government. Because the wisdom of the people can only be improved through education, Milton's political proposals are essentially unfeasible if the government is not partnered with educators and poets who can form the wisdom of the people through education. To return to the central proposal of *The Readie and Easie Way*, it is now clear how the success of the republican senate depends both upon making "the people fittest to chuse" by allowing them the livery of heirs to practice self-government, and upon making "the chosen fittest to govern" by teaching them to be role-models and teachers rather than tutors. All of this, Milton writes, "will be to mend our corrupt and faulty education" (*CPW* VII:443). As such, while the tract may indeed function as a jeremiad, a last moment plea against reinstating the monarchy, or simply a polemical treatise, *The Readie and Easie Way* is in effect a call to action for poets and educators like Milton himself. While at the time of the Restoration Milton realized the English people were "more like boys under age than men," his tract entreated teachers to begin preparing the wisdom of the people to make better use of their next opportunity to seize and maintain their liberty.

CHAPTER THREE

“Skilfull Considerers of the Human Things”: Decorum and Temperance in *Of Education* and *Areopagitica*

While Milton clearly censured the English people in 1660 for their willingness to reinstate the Stuart monarchy, which he thought had historically clung too tenaciously to its role of tutor, he was equally troubled that the English people were not suitably willing to take responsibility for self-government. He thoroughly rejected both rule by the general masses and any attempt to coerce the people by means of laws to conform to virtue as viable options for bettering the political situation. This opinion led to Milton’s oblique appeal to educators in *The Readie and Easie Way* to mend England’s “corrupt and faulty education” and begin to provide an education that would make “the people fittest to chuse, and the chosen fittest to govern” (CPW VII:443). *The Readie and Easie Way* implies that the education necessary to improve the nation consists of persuasion through the example of the rulers and through the people’s engagement with literature. The term *literature* in this context refers both to imaginative literature and philosophical literature, “philosophical” in this case meaning non-imaginative literature involved in the question of wisdom. Such an education, properly conducted, develops wisdom in both rulers and ruled. While chapter two determined that, for Milton, education was essential for supplying the wisdom necessary for a successful nation, this chapter explores how exactly engagement with imaginative and philosophical literature is able to instill the nation with wisdom.

Milton's positions on the importance of education and on poetry as intrinsically pedagogical have been well treated in numerous studies,¹ but there is still disagreement as to the consistency or inconsistency of *The Readie and Easie Way* with respect to Milton's earlier views on politics and education, and the role of poetry in educating both subjects and rulers for wisdom. *Of Education* (1644) and *Areopagitica* (1644) were published five months apart, and they reveal similar thoughts on the relationship of education to the cultivation of moral virtue which consists of training reason to make correct choices. The two documents are complementary in that the first treats the best method for educating children in reason and virtue, while the second treats the political importance of allowing citizens the opportunity for continuous exercise of right reason in search of truth. This chapter aims to establish that the relationship between government and the reading of literature which was so formative in Milton's early tracts *Of Education* and *Areopagitica* manifests itself in the educational program implied by *The Readie and Easie Way*. In doing so, tracing Milton's political use of the pedagogical metaphor will help establish that poetry is uniquely able to educate citizens in the formation of decorum, and that mature engagement with literature develops and relies on the cultivation of temperance.

Decorum, in the seventeenth-century sense Milton employs, encompasses "That which is proper to a personage, place, time, or subject in question, or to the nature, unity, or harmony of the composition."² As such, decorum is intrinsically social. In relation to a literary work, Milton views decorum not only as the relationship of various parts to the

¹ As a very few examples, Ann Baynes Coiro, "'To Repair the Ruins of Our First Parents': *Of Education* and Fallen Adam," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 28, no. 1, *The English Renaissance* (Winter, 1988): 133-147. Also Richard J. DuRocher, *Milton Among the Romans: The Pedagogy and Influence of Milton's Latin Curriculum* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2001).

² "Decorum," *Oxford English Dictionary*.

whole, but also the ways in which the piece both fits and surpasses the expectations for a work in its genre, and the effect of the whole on the perceived community of readers. Decorum and temperance, then, are essentially social and personal aspects of the same virtue which attends to the fitness of a certain good. Temperance attends to the fitness of food, knowledge, or other goods for personal intake. Decorum, for Milton, encompasses a broader scope to consider the influence of personal actions or artistry on one's community.

Of Education

Of Education promises to outline the same sort of education Milton requires in *The Readie and Easie Way* as a solution for political difficulties—to provide both rulers and subjects with the wisdom that will help them better perform their roles. The approach to education Milton calls for in 1660 is, namely, “to teach the people faith not without vertue, . . . not to admire wealth or honour; to hate turbulence and ambition; to place every one his privat welfare and happiness in the public peace, libertie, and safetie” (*CPW* VII:443). According to the underlying argument of *The Readie and Easie Way*, these qualities cannot be induced by coercion, so education must instead consist of persuading the students to implement a certain set of principles as the guide to a good life both through the example of teachers and through engagement with exemplary texts. The pedagogical program in *Of Education* easily fits these requirements.

Likewise, the two most often discussed statements regarding the purpose of schooling in *Of Education* support the aims of Milton's mature politics. First, he writes, “I call a compleate and generous Education that which fits a man to perform justly, skillfully magnanimously all the offices both private and public of peace and war” (*CPW*

II:377–79). The acquisition of the capacities cultivated by the best educational program, Milton asserts, will indeed “fit” the people to fulfill the duties and offices of self-government, politically and privately, and seems to fulfill the criteria for the program suggested in *The Readie and Easie Way*. Gauri Viswanathan asserts along these lines that “having decided that the object of education was to make good citizens of the state, Milton put his intellectual weight behind national consolidation rather than individual salvation,” and that she is confused by Milton’s “treatise on education that purports to lead pupils to an understanding of divinity but [that] culminates more forcefully in an affirmation of Englishness.”³ However, the emphasis that *The Readie and Easie Way* places on the importance of spiritual liberty would suggest that the more compelling purpose of learning is instead the second of the two: to “repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the neerest by possessing our souls of true vertue” (*CPW* II:366–67). Stephen Schuler concludes that this second statement of purpose is the final cause for which Milton recommends education, and the civic education provided is the “observable consequence of the fulfillment of that initial spiritual goal.”⁴ Schuler’s position is the most compatible with Milton’s later insistence that spiritual liberty is the “dearest and most precious” freedom, although civic liberty is also important (*CPW* VII:456).

³ Viswanathan, Gauri. “Milton, Imperialism, and Education.” *Modern Language Quarterly* 59, no. 3 (September 1998): 345–361, here 352, 360.

⁴ Schuler, Stephen J. “Sanctification in Milton’s Academy: Reassessing the Purposes in Of Education and the Pedagogy of Paradise Lost.” *Milton Quarterly* 43, no. 1 (March 1, 2009): 39–56, here 40.

In accordance with the principles later espoused in *The Readie and Easie Way, Of Education* demonstrates that the manner of accomplishing such an education is to inflame the students with “admiration of vertue” and “high hopes of living to be brave men, and worthy patriots, dear to God” under the instruction of a teacher who draws them on “with mild and effectuall perwasions,” but “chiefly by his own example” (*CPW* II: 384–85). Edward Phillips, Milton’s nephew, seems to suggest that Milton embodied this principle for himself, in terms of study “he himself giving an example to those under him . . . of hard study and spare diet.”⁵ Within the category of education Milton presumes that students are both interacting with teachers and engaging with texts. The role of teachers has already been discussed in connection with the roles Milton delineates for republican government, namely, to encourage virtue by persuasion and example. Thus, since the component of students interacting with teachers has been adequately dealt with by analogy in the previous section, this chapter is primarily concerned with learning by engagement with texts.

What remains is to demonstrate how the sequence of texts Milton proposes is able to equip citizens with wisdom and other necessary virtues. The overall scope of the educational program follows a progression of maturity similar to that present under the pedagogical model of the teacher figure (as opposed to the tutor). First, there

will be requir’d a speciall reinforcement of constant and sound indoctrinating to set them right and firm, instructing them more amply in the knowledge of vertue and the hatred of vice. . . . Being perfit in the knowledge of personall duty, they may then begin the study of Economics. . . . The next remove must be to the study of *Politics*; to know the beginning, end, and reasons of politicall societies. (*CPW* II:396–98)

⁵ Edward Phillips, “The Life of Milton,” in *Paradise Lost*, ed. David Scott Kastan (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2005), 414.

In other words, the students first ought to master personal discipline, next household discipline, and finally the discipline of the city. Similarly, under the direction of a tutor children learn self-government and the management of household affairs, and then through education they learn to govern the polis. All three of these levels of self-government comprise the broader category of training in ethics. Ethics constitutes the second of the three major stages of education Milton proposes in *Of Education*, preceded by grammar and followed by advanced rhetorical training.

The placement of “poetry,” one type of imaginative wisdom literature, in the curriculum parallels the development of wisdom, and the students’ engagement with it is equally dependent on progression through stages of maturity. Milton emphasizes the requirement that exposure to poetry increase on a level with the maturity of the students because poetry for him constitutes a manifestation of the wisdom he endorses in issues of government: decorum. While students could very early have practiced the “prosody of a verse,” and part way through their studies already have read heroic poems and poets “counted most hard” (*CPW* II:394, 401, 404), Milton reserves the composition of poetry until after the students have learned *proairesis* (deliberative choice) by advancing through the levels of personal, household, and political wisdom. In other words, students may very early begin to imitate syntax and soon start to understand the themes and complexities of poetry by reading, but the composition of good poetry requires “decorum . . . which is the grand master peece to observe” (*CPW* II:405). Milton states that “From hence and not till now will be the right season of forming them to be able writers and composers in every excellent matter” because he recognizes that “glorious and magnificent use might be made of poetry both in divine and humane things,” but only

when the poets themselves are already “fraught with universal insight into things” (*CPW* II:405-6). In order to know what is fitting for instructing people in wisdom, the poets themselves must have accomplished all the stages of moral maturity.

Attending to Milton’s distinction between two different stages in poetic formation clarifies what Julian Koslow terms Milton’s “paradoxical treatment of poetry.”⁶ According to Koslow, Milton at once proposes a “plan for education that exalts the reading of poetry and a pedagogical practice that marginalizes the actual writing of poems.”⁷ Rather, by postponing the composition of poems until the grammatical and ethical training have been completed, Milton conveys the need for cultivation of decorum through first reading exemplary works before composing. Essentially, the student must first comprehend the prosody and the ethical purpose of poetry before grasping with additional training “what this sound and manner were intended to do.”⁸ Gregory Machacek recognizes that Milton’s own poetry conveys a similar attitude toward learning decorum by imitation of enduring works. Concerning Milton’s use of Homer, Machacek claims that Milton “characterizes Homer’s epics less as subtexts that can meaningfully resonate with his own poem than as examples of poems that have been revered for a very long time and that might therefore teach him something about how to create an enduring

⁶ Koslow, Julian. “‘Not a Bow for Every Man to Shoot’: Milton’s *Of Education*, between Hartlib and Humanism.” *Milton Studies* 47 (2008): 24-53. This argument also addresses Riggs’ claim that “Milton’s remarks on poetry in *Of Education* are complicated to the point of inconsistency by his sense of poetry’s special privilege” (445). William G. Riggs, “Poetry and Method in Milton’s *Of Education*,” *Studies in Philology* 89, no. 4 (October 1, 1992): 445-469.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ C.S.Lewis, *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), 61.

poem.”⁹ This treatment of poetry is in fact consistent with Milton’s stipulation that those who profess to teach should excel in the same areas.

Milton draws upon the same distinction between mastery of the rules of prosody and decorum, or wisdom applied to writing, in his assertion that engagement with authoritative texts is able to remedy the lack of wisdom which ails both leaders and subjects. Milton scorns ill-constructed curricula which bog students down in the “Grammatick flats and shallows” so long that they are helpless when cast into the “fathomles and unquiet deeps of controversie” (*CPW* II:375). Unbalanced education leads students most often to contempt of learning and therefore to founding their actions on the wrong principles. By implication, a well-formed education would encourage young people not to enter the practice of law for the sake of “litigious terms, fat contentions, and flowing fees” or politics with “souls so unprincipl’d in vertue” that “tyrannous aphorismes appear to them the highest points of wisdom” (*CPW* II:375-76). On the contrary, were their education better carried out, future leaders would learn to approach law as a “prudent, and heavenly contemplation of justice and equity” and base their behavior in affairs of government on virtue and “true generous breeding” (*CPW* II:375-76). Milton implies, then, that unless leaders learn to exemplify virtues and wisdom, seeking to perform their duties always based on the right principles, they only become “ambitious and mercenary” and lead the nation into tyranny (*CPW* II:375). Ultimately, failure to draw students past grammar and into the decorum necessary to deal with controversial issues results in the production of leaders unable to act in accordance with wisdom either in their private or political roles.

⁹ Gregory Machacek, *Milton and Homer: “Written to Aftertimes”* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2011), 5.

Although it comes prior to *Of Education* and *Areopagitica* chronologically, the *Reason of Church Government* (1641) addresses the necessity of poetry in particular for teaching citizens to value justice and wisdom, and to be prepared to receive laws. In this way, citizens are presented through *mimesis* with the chance to practice making deliberative judgments in particular situations, which will subsequently affect their receptivity to political configurations and laws. In the preface to the first book, Milton appeals to Plato's account of the best means to prepare citizens to receive the laws given by rulers:

His advice was, seeing that persuasion certainly is a more winning and more manlike way to keep men in obedience than fear, that to such laws as were of principal moment, there should be used as an induction some well-tempered discourse, shewing how good, how gainful, how happy it must needs be to live according to honesty and justice; which being uttered with those native colours and graces of speech, as true eloquence, the daughter of virtue, can best bestow upon her mother's praises, would so incite, and in a manner charm, the multitude into the love of that which is really good, as to embrace it ever after, not of custom and awe, which most men do, but of choice and purpose, with true and constant delight. (*CPW* I:746-47)

The *polis* is most well served when the subjects receive the same education in virtues that the leaders receive so that they love "that which is really good" in their own right, and not simply because of the example set for them by their leaders and enforced through law. Likewise, according to Milton, Moses wrote Genesis as a prologue to his laws, "knowing how vain it was to write laws to men whose hearts were not first seasoned with the knowledge of God and of his works" (*CPW* I:747). Thus the education of the people by poetry accomplishes two ends. First, it makes the people more receptive to laws because they understand and love the principles behind the laws. However, a second result is that having become acquainted through persuasion with the highest principles, "that which is

really good,” they will be equipped to hold their rulers accountable for presenting an example and passing laws that adhere to the same values.

Milton departs from the same classical models he cites, such as Plato, by indicating that the nation will mature and improve as the wisdom of the people more closely resembles the wisdom of the rulers. Milton does not differentiate in either case between the virtues that should be taught to subjects as opposed to rulers; instead, he makes clear that the application of those virtues is dependent upon their role in the society. Ultimately, for Milton the wisdom of the rulers and the wisdom of the governed are complementary. Rulers need to exemplify virtues for their people in order to lead them toward and not away from the good. However, the step from occupying the role of tutor to that of teacher requires not simply offering an example but allowing citizens to exercise *proairesis* for themselves. For their part, citizens must heed the examples set by their rulers by obeying the laws, but they must also learn to discern for themselves in order to take responsibility for their own behavior and also to be able to hold rulers accountable to standards of virtue.

Similarly, if rulers are to lead their people by example, they ought to learn to rule by practicing the same behaviors they expect of their subjects. Milton’s recommendation that the boys in school practice soldiery that they may “come forth renowned and perfect Commanders in the service of their country” demonstrates this opinion by analogy (*CPW* II:412). By practicing the “rudiments of their souldiership” before lunch and after supper Milton expects them to learn “just and wise discipline” (*CPW* II:411-12). Indeed, Milton proceeds to list several abuses of authority in the army, presumably those he had observed among the English during the civil war. Milton concludes that the youth

educated under his program, “certainly, if they knew ought of that knowledge that belongs to good men or good governours” would not allow the lack of wisdom and just discipline to persist (*CPW* II:412). Similarly, *Of Education* establishes that engagement with authoritative texts, especially poetry, persuades students to esteem virtue and sound principles and teaches them to imitate the decorum necessary to write their own works.

Areopagitica

While *Of Education* addresses the development of wisdom through engaging with texts that exhibit decorum, *Areopagitica* complements *Of Education* by treating the reception and evaluation of new works in accordance with their ability to impart wisdom. More specifically, *Areopagitica* discusses to what extent the government ought to concern itself with sanctioning or censoring works based on their effect on national moral formation. Conversely, *Areopagitica* also describes the citizens’ own responsibility for reading and writing literature conducive to improving their own virtue and the character of the nation as a whole. In light of these questions, Milton’s position on censorship in *Areopagitica* will become more intelligible in conjunction with the tutor-teacher pedagogical metaphor developed previously.

Various critical readings of *Areopagitica* have tended to claim that it proposes a free and easy toleration of publication and political discourse, which was later replaced at the publication of *The Readie and Easie Way* with language of meritocracy and elitism. Nigel Smith comments that Milton’s proposal for a perpetual senate in *The Readie and Easie Way* “seems to ‘freeze’ society in the opposite manner to the form of public

exchange and political life suggested in *Areopagitica*.”¹⁰ Smith’s reading certainly recognizes that in *The Readie and Easie Way* Milton has lost the faith he had at the writing of *Areopagitica* that the English did currently possess the wisdom necessary to govern themselves well. However, although Milton certainly alters his evaluation of the English people during the time between the two publications, further attention to the distinctions between Milton’s approach to pre-publication censorship and post-publication censorship in *Areopagitica* will demonstrate the continuity of Milton’s principles between the two tracts.

Whereas decorum constitutes the wisdom of creating an enduring work capable of imparting wisdom, temperance provides the complementary capacity on the part of the reader to discern what works have pedagogical value. Martin Dzelzainis asserts that the argument of *Areopagitica* is fundamentally dependent on temperance, which he defines as “‘managing’ one’s own life—especially the ‘dyeting and repasting of our minds’” in view of the goal of knowing God better and imitating him (*CPW* II:398, 513).¹¹ Thus temperance, as it is considered in *Areopagitica*, encompasses both the wisdom belonging to the people and the wisdom belonging to their rulers. Considering temperance as the virtue citizens must develop to reach maturity indicates that unless the people practice temperance in directing their choices, they are unable to increase in wisdom.

For rulers, on the other hand, wisdom lies in assessing the level of temperance the people possess and modifying the strictness of their regulations accordingly. For rulers,

¹⁰ Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640-1660* (Yale University Press, 1997), 193.

¹¹ Martin Dzelzainis, “Republicanism,” in *A Companion to Milton*, ed. Thomas N. Corns (Wiley-Blackwell, 2003), 300.

Milton declares, “the great art lyes to discern in what the law is to bid restraint and punishment, and in what things perswasion only is to work” (*CPW* II:527). Tyrants behave foolishly when they imagine that sin will cease to trouble their nation if they remove all objects of temptation by feeding them instruction through the “pipe of a licenser” (*CPW* II:527). As Phillip Donnelly recognizes, “In Milton’s account, the state may indeed require coercion to protect citizens from one another or from other states; yet the ultimate stability and success of the state depends upon the citizens’ exercise of positive virtues the nature of which precludes their being compelled.”¹² Instead, wise rulers, like poets, must be “skilfull considerers of the human things” (*CPW* II:537). The wisdom of the rulers according to this argument is to be perceptive to the needs of the people, countering any dangerous forces in order to protect the people, but seeking always to allow them to exercise temperance whenever possible. Milton distinctly links lack of trust in the discretion of the common people with a lack of wisdom on the part of the rulers (*CPW* II:537). In short, Milton argues in *Areopagitica* as he does in *The Readie and Easie Way* that the rulers must allow the people to exercise temperance by discerning for themselves what texts are useful for pursuing truth and, through truth, wisdom.

The prime battleground for working out the tensions between teaching by example and encouraging exercise of temperance is the practice of political writing in which Milton participated heavily up through the publication of *The Readie and Easie Way*. Both rulers and citizens published polemical tracts, and the common practice of refuting previously published arguments caused print to function as a middle ground for the exchange of political ideas. Cecile Jagodzinski writes that “Authors and readers

¹² Phillip J. Donnelly, *Milton’s Scriptural Reasoning: Narrative and Protestant Toleration* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 31.

existed in a middle world: not only were they subject to surveillance by religious and political authorities, but they also subversively share in it, writing about, reading about, judging those in power.”¹³ In the terms Milton applies, publication is where the rulers write instructional materials for their subjects, take public positions on issues, and make laws. At the same time the “middle world” is a forum for the people to demonstrate their maturity by critiquing the actions and laws of their rulers, proposing alternate solutions, and affirming or rejecting the values espoused by their rulers. Thus the interactions of the nation and its rulers in the form of published literature reflect the status of the nation’s maturity in a positive feedback circle. The more mature the public demonstrates itself to be the less controlling the government should be about prescribing what is published. The power of print as a medium for spreading ideas led in large part to the monarchy’s increasing desire to control it by means of censorship. Milton argues that censorship as a mode of control is unnecessary, provided that readers exercise care in what they read.

Indeed *The Readie and Easie Way* is an instance of the communication Milton describes at the opening of *Areopagitica*: “They who to States and Governours of the Commonwealth direct their Speech, High Court of Parliament, or wanting such accesse in a private condition, write that which they foresee may advance the publick good” (*CPW* II:486). At the same time, *The Readie and Easie Way*, which Laura L. Knoppers terms Milton’s jeremiad, intended to give English citizens “a myth by which they can interpret the impending doom,” warning them to choose their leaders more wisely in order to

¹³ Cecile M. Jagodzinski, *Privacy in Print: Reading and Writing in Seventeenth-Century England* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1999), 11.

preserve their liberty.¹⁴ By discussing “our government – poor pillars,” and the folly of “our people choosing a captain back for Egypt,” Milton effectively participates in the middle ground by addressing both parties at once.

Milton closes *Areopagitica* with the resounding claim that the Lords and Commons, if they wished to be “greatest and wisest men” must be willing to value opinions of their people made public through printing. Rather than attempt to stamp out adverse opinions, rulers ought to allow their people to hold them accountable as rulers and “redress willingly and speedily what hath been err’d” (*CPW* II:520). Indeed, Milton asserts that “when complaints are freely heard, deeply consider’d, and speedily reform’d, then is the utmost bound of civill liberty attain’d, that wise men looke for” (*CPW* II:487). The instrument of change and growth for a nation, then, is “the generall instinct of holy and devout men, as they daily and solemnly express their thoughts” (*CPW* II:553).

Unlike some perceptions of his argument, Milton does *not* endorse free license (toleration), either on the part of readers or authors. On the one hand, Milton concedes that a fool is a fool with a good book or a bad book, and no amount of freedom in reading material will teach him/her temperance. On the other hand, if the government perceives that a work encourages vice, to allow it free reign would be for the law to “unlaw itself.” The issue at stake for Milton, then, is not whether the government should censor literature or not censor it. The distinction Milton makes most strongly is between pre-publication and post-publication censorship.

¹⁴ Laura L. Knoppers, “Milton’s *The Readie and Easie Way* and the English Jeremiad,” *Politics, Poetics, and Hermeneutics in Milton’s Prose: Essays*, ed. by David Loewenstein, James Turner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 213-26, 213.

The first issue Milton addresses with regard to censorship in *Areopagitica*, then, is to what degree the government should prohibit publication of literature which is deemed harmful. The conversation concerning which texts the government should allow to serve as authorities for the people is an ancient one, appearing prominently in Plato's *Republic*. Plato ostensibly censored all poetry, including Homer, unless it taught what was virtuous and right about the gods and could not be open to misinterpretation. However, Milton disregards the notion of this position being presented by Plato as a viable political proposal for three reasons. First, under the ostensible guidelines Plato would allow circulation of "a Library of smaller bulk than his own dialogues would be abundant" (*CPW* II:522).

Furthermore, Plato references many plays and poems with the understanding that his audience has read them, and having done so is better able to understand the point at hand.¹⁵ Secondly, Plato would have been inconsistent if he meant these regulations to be enacted because he himself was chastised by his rulers for his writings. Finally, Milton demonstrates that Plato is offering a sarcastic rather than serious proposal and shows the implausibility of removing all poetry that might encourage folly or vice by following Plato's ostensible argument *ad absurdum*. Milton states that applying Plato's censorship laws according to their basic premise would oblige rulers to conclude that "If we think to regulat Printing, . . . we must regulat all regulations and pastimes . . . examin all the lutes, the violins, and the ghittarrs in every house" (*CPW* II:523-24). As much as taking Plato's stance on licensing too seriously would lead, in Milton's mind, to strict control over "all regulations and pastimes" (*CPW* II:523), Milton indicates that the wisdom belonging to

¹⁵ See Paul M. Dowling, *Polite Wisdom: Heathen Rhetoric in Milton's Areopagitica*, 47.

good rulers is to decide when it is fitting to extend citizens the liberty to make their own decisions concerning minute daily details and “the rule of life both economicall and politicall” (*CPW* II:550).

Milton insists that it would accomplish very little for the government to dictate every minute detail of daily life in hopes of combatting those “things of aptnes to corrupt the mind” (*CPW* II:523). Not to mention that such strict censorship would be ineffective: “The rest [the unlearned],” Milton states, “as children and childish men, who have not the art to qualifie and prepare these working mineralls, well may be exhorted to forbear, but hinder’d forcibly they cannot be” (*CPW* II:521). Over-zealous censorship along these lines, Milton asserts, would “bring a famin upon our minds again” (*CPW* II:559). Censorship then becomes a figure for order in the soul, as food becomes a figure for literature feeding the mind. The laws Milton hopes to instill in the people are unconstraining because they are internalized rather than imposed. *Areopagitica* essentially offers citizens “rationally structured and legally insured room to fashion their own lives.”¹⁶

Next Milton attends to the distinction between pre-publication censorship, in the form of licensing, and post-publication censorship. To put the licensing act into effect, Milton asserts, would constitute “the discouragement of all learning, and the stop of Truth, not only by disexercising and blunting our abilities in what we know already, but by hindring and cropping the discovery that might bee yet further made both in religious and civill Wisdome” (*CPW* II:491-92). Much has been made of Milton’s claim that

¹⁶ Paul Stevens, “Milton’s Janus-Faced Nationalism,” *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, vol 100 (2), April 2001, 267. See also David Loewenstein and Paul Stevens, eds., *Early Modern Nationalism and Milton’s England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008). He asserts that “Milton here finds the nation in the heart rather than in the landscape,” 195, see *CPW* III.214-15.

licensing would be the “stop of Truth,” but what is more pertinent to this argument is his insistence that it would hinder readers from making advances in religious and civil wisdom.

Pre-publication censorship not only robs the citizens of the opportunity to practice wisdom in reading and publishing, but it also deprives rulers of the opportunity of being responsive to the evaluations and complaints of the citizens. To deprive citizens of participation in their government in this way, in Milton’s mind, is tantamount to forcing them to remain in an infantile position under tutelage. Even if an author has been allowed to publish his work, he has still not been treated as a mature adult “if in this the most consummat act of his fidelity and ripenesse, no years, no industry, no former proof of his abilities can bring him to that state of maturity, as not to be still mistrusted and suspected” (*CPW* II:532). Implicitly, writing is a product of maturity. Therefore, if all publications and decisions on the part of the citizens are still mistrusted, “Nor is it to the common people less than a reproach” (*CPW* II:532). Milton objects to what Dzelzainis terms the “infantilization of the author.”¹⁷ Milton labels *Areopagitica* the “common grievance of all those who had prepar’d their minds and studies above the vulgar pitch to advance truth in others, and from others entertain it” (*CPW* II:539).

Areopagitica likewise contains a direct address to the Lords and Commons which evidences the principles elucidated in *The Readie and Easie Way* along with the optimism the later tract lacks: “Lords and Commons of England, consider what nation it is wherof ye are, and wherof ye are the governours: a Nation not slow and dull, but of a quick, engenious, and piercing spirit, acute to invent, suttle and sinewy to discours, not

¹⁷ Martin Dzelzainis, “Republicanism,” *A Companion to Milton*, 303.

beneath the reach of any point the highest that human capacity can soar to” (*CPW* II:551). Milton certainly does not mean to say that all opinions and beliefs ought to be tolerated, as he makes clear by saying “that also which is impious or evil absolutely either against faith or maners no law can possibly permit, that intends not to unlaw itself” (*CPW* II:565). He reserves the right of rulers to outlaw some principles and behaviors which are evil, but again rulers need discretion to determine which are significant errors and which are merely “neighboring differences, or rather indifferences” (*CPW* II:565). What he does say is that rulers are responsible for assessing the maturity of their people and adjusting their oversight accordingly.

Thus Milton implies yet again that wise citizens choose for themselves rulers who are open to the possibility of mature people who participate in government. In *Areopagitica*, as in *The Readie and Easie Way*, that which appears to be destabilization is actually maturation. Every instance of hierarchy focused on maturation of other people can look like destabilization if the character of the pedagogical metaphor is not considered in sufficient detail.

The Readie and Easie Way

Of Education and *Areopagitica*, then, describe the type of education for poets and leaders for decorum and temperance that Milton implicitly calls for in *The Readie and Easie Way*. By 1660 his evaluation of the fitness of the English people to rule themselves has indeed changed, since they choose to return to monarchy rather than opt for a more responsive and mature government.

But Milton is not content simply to call for a change in the education of the nation and provide principles to guide the change. One observation which Milton makes in

Areopagitica contributes to his privileging of poetry as the best medium for educating the people. He writes, “what ever thing we hear or see, sitting, walking, travelling, or conversing may fitly be call’d our book, and is of the same effect that writings are” (*CPW* II:528). This intriguing statement has received too little attention in relation to education. Education does not consist solely of interaction with texts, as valuable as they may be, but also of learning to “read” the actions and persuasions of peers, teachers, leaders, and fellow humans in general. Likewise our actions present a “book” to others which offers examples or cautions to them. As Milton writes in *Apology Against a Pamphlet*, any poet who hoped “to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought him selfe to bee a true poem” (*CPW* I:890). Poetry is uniquely able, as imaginative wisdom literature, to offer individualized “people” and their actions as matter for scrutiny and evaluation by the reader. Likewise the practice of decorum interprets even live people as though they were cohesive works of literature composed for the sake of benefitting observers.

Like the paradigm of the good teacher Milton sets up throughout these three political tracts, Milton leads by example as an educator by writing *Paradise Lost*. Gregory Machacek has indicated that Milton’s deeper purpose in imitating Homer, but also Virgil and other great poets, was for his poem to achieve the standing of a canonical work.¹⁸ Milton initially attempted to write *Paradise Lost* as a play for the stage, *Adam Unparadised*, and had certainly written many smaller poems. But Milton specifically chose to write *Paradise Lost* as an epic presumably because he knew that texts like Homer’s and Virgil’s are read and taught in schools. In accordance with Milton’s argument in *Areopagitica*, while truth can be extracted even from “drossy volumes,” he

¹⁸ Machacek, *Milton and Homer*, 12.

intended to produce a work which would be among the most effective in teaching students to develop skills in reading. Thus Milton could accomplish a two-fold purpose. First, by emulating those works Milton's text would also become a pedagogical text used in schools, thereby equipping the teachers with material that could help them teach decorum and the other virtues Milton hopes to instill in the people. Secondly, by according his text canonical status by association with the epic genre and great epic writers, Milton ensures that readers will come to his poem prepared to learn virtue and wisdom from it.

Thus far this project has concerned itself with Milton's assertion that education would equip the people with the virtues necessary to be good rulers and subjects and his preference for a republican commonwealth responsive to the maturity level of the people. The following chapter will explore *Paradise Lost* as Milton's pedagogical preamble designed to invoke imaginatively the government he wishes England would aspire to form, to demonstrate the virtues he wishes the people would cultivate, and to teach them simultaneously how to read and interpret wisdom literature.

CHAPTER FOUR

“To Reach and Feed at Once Both Body and Mind”: Domestic, Civic, and Spiritual Temperance in *Paradise Lost*

While *Paradise Lost*, coming after the Restoration as it does, is widely acknowledged to reflect Milton’s response to contemporary politics, the nature of the political view endorsed by the poem remains a subject for debate.¹ The most prevalent interpretation—focusing primarily on Satan’s rule, the monarchy in heaven, and post-lapsarian government—asserts that Milton holds God’s monarchy to be the only legitimate absolute rule, which earthly rulers ought not venture to claim for themselves.² Other scholars favor the opinion that Milton voices his republican principles from the mouth of the heroic Satan and flatly rejects monarchy even in heaven.³ However, a third critical reading, proposed by William Walker, argues that Milton does not accept or reject any particular form of government entirely. Instead, Milton implies that the validity of any government depends on whether the ruler merits the position and fulfills it

¹ Barbara Kiefer Lewalski dates the beginning of Milton’s work on *Paradise Lost* to 1658, although he would continue to revise it until 1669. Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 442.

² Steven Jablonski discusses God’s monarchy and determines that human monarchies are not as reliable as divine monarchy because all human rulers are by definition fallible (see Jablonski, “‘Freely We Serve’: *Paradise Lost* and the Paradoxes of Political Liberty,” 107). Critics such as Michael Wilding attempt to reconcile the disparate viewpoints by explaining that, for Milton, God’s monarchy “was the only monarchy justified,” while human monarchy was presumptuous (see *Dragon’s Teeth: Literature in the English Revolution*, 219). Lewalski reads *Paradise Lost* as Milton’s assertion appropriation of God’s position as monarch by “any earthly monarch is idolatrous” (*Life of John Milton*, 466).

³ Michael Bryson, for instance, asserts that Milton voices his republican principles through Satan by supporting his rebellion against the monarchy (see *The Tyranny of Heaven: Milton’s Rejection of God As King* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004) and “‘His Tyranny Who Reigns’: The Biblical Roots of Divine Kingship and Milton’s Rejection of ‘Heav’n’s King,’” in *Milton Studies*, (43), 2004, 111-44.).

worthily—a type of government system Walker names “meritocracy.” While Walker unfolds this argument by focusing on the merit of God’s monarchy, as contrasted with Satan’s rule and post-lapsarian human political systems, he does not consider the middle case: the qualifications for a ruler who is not God, but who is also not corrupted by sin.⁴

The first instance of human governance in *Paradise Lost*, the rule of Adam over Eve in pre-lapsarian Eden, has historically been ignored by critical discussion as an instance of civic authority and has been analyzed primarily with respect to gender roles. Only recently has the pre-lapsarian household been examined in the light of a political hierarchy.⁵ For Milton’s contemporaries, however, interpreting the first family as simultaneously the first instance of political authority would not have been unprecedented due to the frequent employment of marriage contract language in the seventeenth century in political arguments.⁶ Victoria Kahn observes that monarchists and parliamentarians alike consistently adapted the marriage-contract metaphor to suit their own political ends.⁷ Likewise, various royalists such as Robert Filmer regularly appealed to Adam’s rule in Eden specifically as the first monarchy from which all subsequent

⁴ David Armitage also, in his claim that “*Paradise Lost* is built around only two narratives—the biblical narrative of the Fall, and the story of Satan’s colonization of the New World,” considers Eden essentially an apolitical entity. Adam and Eve only become subject to the problem of empire after they are expelled from Eden. Armitage, “John Milton: Poet Against Empire,” *Milton and Republicanism*, ed. David Armitage, Armand Himy, and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 206-26, here 216, 222.

⁵ See Laura Lunger Knoppers, *Politicizing Domesticity from Henrietta Maria to Milton's Eve* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2011). Also, Erin Murphy, *Familial Forms: Politics and Genealogy in Seventeenth-Century English Literature* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2011). Murphy focuses on Eve as a representative of the domestic and Adam as ruler, but does not discuss their relationship in Eden as a political hierarchy.

⁶ This oversight is likely a reflection of prevailing opinions about the beginning of the distinction between public and private spheres, which will be addressed later.

⁷ Kahn, *Wayward Contracts*, 175.

kings inherited the divinely granted right to command allegiance from their people. Therefore, Milton's treatment of Adam as simultaneously king, husband, and father figure was immensely important in light of the intersections between the critical debates of marriage roles and political roles.

This chapter will consider the virtue of temperance in the light of what Barbara Keifer Lewalski refers to as "the educational project of *Paradise Lost*: to create imaginative experiences that will help readers gain moral and political knowledge, virtue, and inner freedom."⁸ In *Paradise Lost* Milton purposes to teach readers the political and spiritual importance of temperance by imaginatively suggesting its practice in a setting at once domestic and political. Next Milton demonstrates how even in a post-lapsarian world private applications or misapplications of temperance continue to affect the political sphere inevitably. However, since Milton's poetic treatment of temperance is complex, he also incorporates interpretive tools and approaches into his poetry to develop his readers' capacity to grasp political and theological truths.

Adam and Eve

Milton begins to account for Adam's headship over Eve by virtue of his wisdom as early as book 4. Eve relates to Adam her realization of "how beauty is excelld by manly grace/ And wisdom, which alone is truly fair" (4.490-91). Adam likewise recognizes that Eve was created his "inferior in the mind and inward faculties which most excel" (8.541-41). In addition to satisfying the requirement for a suitable political hierarchy, according to Milton's most recent political publications, Adam and Eve's acknowledgment of Adam's superiority on the grounds of greater wisdom agree with

⁸ Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton*, 510.

Milton's previously voiced sentiments on marriage. Part of Milton's exposition of Genesis 1:27 in *Tetrachordon*, one of his divorce tracts from 1645, affirms that although a husband nearly always has authority over his wife, "particular exceptions may have place, if she exceed her husband in prudence and dexterity, and he contentedly yeeld, for then a superior and more naturall law comes in, that the wiser should govern the lesse wise, whether male or female" (*CPW* II:589). In simpler terms, Adam and Eve do serve as models for the prevailing marriage hierarchy, that of a man over a woman, but this hierarchy is based on the disposition of the follower to "contentedly yeeld." The hierarchy is similarly governed by the dictates of a "superior and more naturall law" which stipulates that rulers must merit their authority by possession of superior wisdom. Adam and Eve as portrayed by Milton demonstrate characteristics of a fit ruler and citizen respectively in their marriage. Milton depicts Adam's headship over Eve as merited by his superior wisdom, and Eve's maturity with regard to virtue enables him to govern as a teacher rather than a tutor.

The dinner scene in Eden, when Adam and Eve receive Raphael, foregrounds temperance in regards to food as evidence of mature self-government and an analogy for temperance with regard to higher knowledge. Eve practices good household economy in her preparations, with the result that she facilitates the temperance of herself, Adam, and Raphael as they partake in the meal. Her activities accord with Aristotle's definition of temperance in the *Ethics*, which states, "the temperate man desires the right things in the right way and at the right time."⁹ After receiving Adam's instructions, Eve plans

⁹ Aristotle, *The Ethics of Aristotle*, trans. J. A. K. Thomson (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1971), 108 (III.12 –1119b). "ὥσπερ δὲ τὸν παῖδα δεῖ κατὰ τὸ πρόσταγμα τοῦ παιδαγωγοῦ ζῆν, οὕτω καὶ τὸ ἐπιθυμητικὸν κατὰ τὸν λόγον." (πρόσταγμα also being the word used for the commandments of a king)

What choice to chuse for delicacie best,
What order, so contriv'd as not to mix
Tastes, not well joynd, inelegant, but bring
Taste after taste upheld with kindest change. (5.332-36)

Eve focused on the pleasing effect of the food, primarily the elegance of the arrangement of tastes. The result of Eve's careful planning is that Adam, Eve, and the angel "to their viands fell" and enjoyed "pleasant liquors," then ceased "when with meats and drinks they had sufficed / Not burdened, nature" (5.434, 445, 451-52). While all three enjoyed the meal, Milton stresses that they did not eat to excess. When Eve acts, she collects only what she needs, showing more frugality than Adam, who instructed her to "bring forth what thy stores contain" and "pour abundance," commanding her to hold nothing back (5.314-15).

While Laura Knoppers has remarked on Eve's preparations for the meal as an exercise of civic virtue,¹⁰ the majority of interpretations have focused on this contradiction of Adam's authority. Many readings of this scene, along with the preparation of the meal for Raphael and the later separation scene, seem to assume that Eve's initiation of conversation with Adam or correction of him necessarily signals a destabilization of the hierarchy of their relationship or some impertinence on her part. Catherine Gimelli Martin insists that Eve's "hospitable tasks seem to be performed as much on her own initiative as Adam's—whose 'expertise' she corrects in the process."¹¹ Elisabeth Liebert remarks that Eve's correction of Adam's suggestion "nudges their relationship towards a horizontal interrelation of equals and away from the hierarchy

¹⁰ Knoppers, *Politicizing Domesticity*, 141, 147.

¹¹ Martin, *The Ruins of Allegory: Paradise Lost and the Metamorphosis of Epic Convention* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 252.

where received knowledge is authorised and handed down from above.”¹² While each of these scholars identifies to a certain extent the simultaneous hierarchy and equality of Adam and Eve, Eve’s mild correction of Adam’s instruction is even more significantly an indicator of health of their relationship as mature subject and ruler.

Indeed, *Areopagitica* and *The Readie and Easie Way* suggest that such feedback is a necessary component of any healthy ruler-ruled relationship that is based on a desire for the maturity of the citizens and the good of the *polis* as a whole. At the most basic level, Eve’s reply clearly indicates that she has already acquired the ability for *oikonomia* and does not need Adam in the capacity of tutor. Eve has sufficient knowledge of household management that she does not require him to specify which foods to prepare or how best to host a guest. Indeed, before he even called her to comment on Raphael’s approach, Eve had already prepared dinner, “due at her hour” to “please true appetite” (5.303-5). This is significant because, as Aristotle also indicates, temperance should “govern the appetitive part of us as the instructions of his tutor govern the life of a child” and the lack thereof would indicate a shortcoming on her part.¹³ Secondly, Eve is able to offer Adam a better method of stewardship of household goods. Given that there is food in abundance available in Eden, Eve informs him that “small store will serve, where store, / All seasons, ripe for use hangs on the stalk; / Save what by frugal storing firmness gains / To nourish, and superfluous moist consumes” (5.322-25).

¹² Elisabeth Liebert, “Rendering ‘More Equal’: Eve’s Changing Discourse in *Paradise Lost*,” *Milton Quarterly*, vol 37 no. 3 (2003) 152-165 (here 158).

¹³ Aristotle, *The Ethics of Aristotle*, trans. J. A. K. Thomson (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1971), 108 (III.12 –1119b). “ὥσπερ δὲ τὸν παῖδα δεῖ κατὰ τὸ πρόσταγμα τοῦ παιδαγωγοῦ ζῆν, οὕτω καὶ τὸ ἐπιθυμητικὸν κατὰ τὸν λόγον.” (πρόσταγμα also being the word used for the commandments of a king)

Thirdly, Eve's correction redirects the purpose of the meal from the honoring of their esteemed angelic guest to the glorification of the Lord for his provision. Where Adam's stated purpose in instructing Eve was to make preparations "fit to honor and receive / Our heavenly stranger," Eve declares her intention to "pluck such choice / To entertain our angel guest, as he / Beholding shall confess that here on earth / God hath dispensed his bounties as in Heaven" (5.315-16, 327-30). In accordance with the tutor-teacher analogy of government developed in Milton's political prose, Eve's response fulfills rather than challenges the expectations of hierarchy. Adam likewise behaves as Milton would have wise rulers do and, acknowledging that in this case Eve's insight is superior, does not reprove her.

As often as Eve's correction of Adam's directive is lauded, scholars chastise Milton and even Adam for their treatment of Eve after the meal. Aside from her silence and then absence in the ensuing discussion, Laura Knoppers also argues that the lack of expressed appreciation for her work drove Eve to demand separation from Adam in book 9. Eve, Knoppers writes, is upset because her careful preparations for the meal go unrecognized by Adam or Raphael, both of whom refer to God's bounty and the abundance of fruit from the trees without alluding to her effort in gathering or presenting it (5.368, 390). However, locating the cause of Eve's restlessness in this oversight seems to neglect the setting of Eden, which was characterized by self-gift. Phillip Donnelly asserts that Milton portrayed God's charity in "enabling humans to achieve their good as creatures through the uncompelled exercise of right reason in the various fitting choices of self-gift" as a model for Adam and Eve's "ontic charity which entails a dynamic

process of gift and free response.”¹⁴ For Milton, the whole of creation, the human ability to reason, and the manifestation of Wisdom in the Son are all examples of gratuitous divine “self-gift” to mankind. Accordingly, Eve as a human made in the image of God imitates God’s charity through service without attending to her own pride.

Milton also appears to have emphasized Eve’s lack of need for affirmation and praise for service before the Fall by including just such a speech of praise after it. Ironically, Adam’s praise for Eve nearly parallels Milton’s description of her meal preparations in book 5. At that time, Milton writes, Eve was concerned with arranging the food so as “not to mix / Tastes, not well joynd, inelegant, but bring / Taste after taste upheld with kindest change” (5.332-36). Likewise, after partaking of the forbidden fruit Eve offered him, when Adam compliments Eve, saying “I the praise / Yeild thee, so well this day thou hast purvey’d” (9.1020-21), he emphasizes the elegance of her arrangement:

“Eve, now I see thou are exact of taste,
And elegant, of Sapience no small part,
Since to each meaning savour we apply
And Palate call judicious.” (9.1017-20)

Adam’s praise forefronts the dual meaning of “taste” as a term for judgment as well as flavor. Although Eve’s previous meal preparation did in fact exhibit wisdom, Adam applies “sapience” in this case to that which yields the most pleasure, demonstrating the moral effects of the Fall. Eve’s previous meal had been prepared with “savourie fruits, of taste to please / True appetite” (5.304-5). Adam, on the other hand, was more concerned that they had not “known till now / True relish” (1023-24). At the same time, Adam’s subsequent remarks lay bare the posture of ingratitude toward God which was lacking in

¹⁴ Donnelly, *Milton's Scriptural Reasoning*, 86, 161.

pre-lapsarian Eden. “Much pleasure have we lost while we abstained / From this delightful fruit,” Adam laments, belittling God’s provision in the rest of the garden. With gratitude directed away from God, recognition of human agency in provision becomes more important, especially as self-gift becomes less enjoyable or common.

The Fall, of course, consisted of more than intemperate pleasure in the wrong literal meal, which offers an opportunity for Milton to relate temperance to the acquisition of knowledge as well. Couching the narrative of the Fall in terms of temperance allows Milton to accomplish two of his pedagogical purposes. First, it engages his readers in associating choices made about the intake of the body and the intake of the mind with their underlying orientation toward obedience to God. These lessons he hopes will be integrated into his readers’ lives as family members and citizens. However, Milton also provides for the education of readers who have not yet developed the ability to parse from his nuanced treatments the importance of temperance in following God’s will. Raphael in his conversation with Adam provides an explication of the analogy of knowledge as food which ought to be subject to temperance. Raphael reminds Adam,

knowledge is as food and needs no less
Her temperance over appetite to know
In measure what the mind may well contain,
Oppresses else with surfeit and soon turns
Wisdom to folly, as nourishment to wind. (7.126-130)

Readers who give sufficient consideration to Raphael’s elucidation would then be more prepared to engage the subject of knowledge and temperance imaginatively in the account of the Fall. For any reader who might not be prepared to follow the complexities of Milton’s poetic treatment, at least he plainly states the major analogy he aims to

communicate. It is simple enough to conclude that temperance is the virtue that turns knowledge toward wisdom's use, and lack of temperance leads to folly. Ann Torday Gulden points out that the meal itself indirectly features the same connection between temperance with regard to food and temperance with regard to knowledge. Eve's dinner preparation complements Raphael's offered banquet of higher knowledge, Gulden writes, in such a way that Eve, "through her domestic ability, can be seen to mediate the message Raphael brings from on high."¹⁵ Eve herself confirms the connection between pleasures of food and pleasures of the mind, even as she reaches for the forbidden fruit: "What hinders then / To reach and feed at once both body and mind?" (9.778-79). In making this analogy between food and knowledge Milton diverges from both Aristotle and Plato. Whereas for Plato knowledge is the highest good, which he does not distinguish from wisdom, Milton views knowledge as subordinate to wisdom. Aristotle affirms that temperance is considered to be "one of the virtues developed in the irrational parts of the soul. . . . We do not speak of men who seek [pleasures of the soul, such as learning] as 'temperate' or 'intemperate.'"¹⁶ Thus *Paradise Lost* surpasses the classical authorities it draws upon by ordering even knowledge within the ultimate end of learning, which is "to know God aright."

Temperance and Governance after the Fall

Given Adam and Eve's unique situation in Eden before the Fall, especially as a single family unity without relationship to any grander social or political context,

¹⁵Ann Torday Gulden, "Milton's Eve and Wisdom: The 'Dinner-Party' Scene in *Paradise Lost*," in *Milton Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (December 1998): 137-143, here 137.

¹⁶Aristotle, *Ethics*, 103 (III.10—1117b).

Milton's poetry also explores how the behavior of the domestic setting of Eden impinges on the domestic and public spheres of government in a post-lapsarian world. Michael relates to Adam that temperance constitutes the people's respect of God's image in themselves, and that sin causes neglect of temperance in the post-lapsarian world, which in turn leads to sickness and civil strife. As befits Michael's more didactic mode, Milton has the ability to voice his convictions directly, and with the benefit of training his readers to better interpret the messages of his poetry. Michael places the blame for humans' altered state on earth, subject to sickness and pain, firmly on their lack of temperance. "Thir Makers Image," Michael informs Adam, "then / Forsook them, when themselves they vilifi'd / To serve ungovern'd appetite" (11.515-17). Just as much as Eve and Adam's temperance before the Fall was a reflection of their gratitude toward God, so sinners afterward would "pervert pure Natures healthful rules / To loathsom sickness," a fate which was merited because they "Gods Image did not reverence in themselves" (11.523-25). However, to calm Adam's fears that this devastation and suffering were all that could be expected of life outside of Eden, Michael assures Adam that a virtuous life can assure better quality of life. Specifically, he says, it is possible to live a long and healthy life

if thou well observe
The rule of not too much, by temperance taught,
In what thou eatst and drinkst, seeking from thence
Due nourishment, not gluttonous delight. (11.530-33)

Finally, Milton provides Adam—along with the readers who are learning to interpret his poetic passages—this time with a more extensive exploration of the effect of the lack of temperance on national character. Michael directs Adam's attention to, in a sense, the marriage scene of Eden writ large onto a post-lapsarian world. Adam watches

as the Sons of Seth descend to the plain, who seemed to be “just men” who had “all thir study bent / To worship God aright, and know his works / Not hid, nor those things last which might preserve / Freedom and Peace to men” (11.575-80). The description of these “just men” uses language very similar the ultimate purpose of learning endorsed in *Of Education*, namely, “to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the neerest by possessing our souls of true vertue” (*CPW* II:366-67). These men have already succeeded, as much as they could, in repairing the ruins of their first parents with respect to their relationship with God. Almost immediately these men are joined by a “Beavie of fair Women, richly gay / In Gems and wanton dress” who come out from tents to meet them (11.582-83). The scene becomes domestic with the arrival of the women from the tents, but these hostesses are starkly contrasted with Eve “Undekt, save with her self more lovely fair / Then Wood-Nymph” as she awaited her husband and their guest (5.380-81). The “ill-mated marriages” between the Sons of Seth and these daughters of men were officiated by Hymen rather than God the Father because they resulted from the dancing and singing of the women which caused the men to “let thir eyes / Rove without rein” (11.684, 585-86).

In reproof of Adam’s gravitation toward the pleasurable sight, Raphael proceeds to explain the downfall of a whole people in terms of domestic vice. He tells Adam that the women in the vision are in fact

empty of all good wherein consists
 Womans domestic honour and chief praise;
 Bred onely and completed to the taste
 Of lustful appetence, to sing, to dance,
 To dress, and troule the Tongue, and roll the eye.
 To these that sober Race of Men, whose lives
 Religious titl’d them the sons of God

Shall yield up all thir vertue, all thir fame
Ignobly, to the traines and to the smiles
Of these fair Atheists. (11.616-25)

Raphael identifies two causes for the corruption of the nation: the intemperance of the women and the lack of wisdom on the part of the men. Thus, domestic vice was allowed to propagate because of failures Milton identifies as characteristic of politics.

The women, by ignoring temperance, abused the modest beauty of Eve, but have sinned even more gravely by subjecting wisdom to pleasurable appearance. In doing so, the daughters of Cain neglected the proper ordering of themselves and the household, meaning that they corrupt the whole society. Before the Fall, Adam informed Eve that “nothing lovelier can be found / In Woman, then to studie houshold good / And good works in her husband to promote” (9.234-36). Having neglected their primary duty as subjects, to cultivate virtue in themselves and their rulers, the lack of temperance on the part of the women kept the men from remaining “sober.” Due to the lack of temperance in household management and personal bearing of these women combined with the weakness of the men, “the world erelong a world of tears must weepe” (11.627).

As much as in *The Readie and Easie Way* Milton argued “vertue, temperance, modestie, sobrietie, parsimonie, justice” were necessary for the development of a people mature in wisdom and self-government, so here the lack of personal and domestic virtues led to political downfall (*CPW* VII:442–43). Milton defined “Economics” in his *Commonplace Book* as “management of a household broadly” and under the “Index Oeconomicus” he included entries concerning food, dress, marriage, the education of children, divorce, riches, and poverty (*CPW* I:392-419). A closer examination of the virtues Milton lists in the *Readie and Easie Way* passage cited above will reveal that they

all relate to economics, or *oikonomia*. “Modestie,” in Milton’s time, possessed an even more similar connotation to that of temperance, meaning “self-control, freedom from excess or exaggeration.” “Sobrietie,” the virtue the Sons of Seth were reputed to have (11.621), meant “moderation in the indulgence of appetite.” Finally, “parsimonie” carried the sense of “the careful or sparing use of money or other material resources; economy.”¹⁷ The majority of the virtues in Milton’s list in *The Readie and Easie Way*, therefore, are derivatives of temperance. Since before *The Readie and Easie Way*, indeed as early as the publication of *The Reason of Church Government*, Milton had seen the correlation between the practice of these domestic virtues and merit in the political sphere. He writes, “If then it appear so hard and so little knowne, how to governe a house well, which is thought of so easie discharge, and for every mans undertaking, what skill of man, what wisdome, what parts, can be sufficient to give lawes and ordinances to the elect houshold of God?” (*CPW* 1:754). The women in the scene lack these virtues, and are therefore not only forgetting their proper role in marriage, but are also bad subjects. Raphael’s analysis lays the blame for the men’s loss of sobriety at least partially upon the women’s lack of modesty, sobriety, and parsimony.

However, Raphael places the remainder of the fault on the men for being poor governors of their wives. Before marriage the men were virtuous, just, sober, and acted in faith. The description of these imagined characters corresponds almost perfectly with Milton’s list in *The Readie and Easie Way* of those qualities needed for fit governors and fit citizens. Nevertheless, the appetitiveness of the women tempted the men to forsake their sobriety, Michael continues, primarily because of “Mans effeminate slackness”

¹⁷ All three definitions are taken from the Oxford English Dictionary.

when he should “better hold his place / By wisdom, and superiour gifts receav’d” (11.634-36). The combined effect of the failure of the subjects and the governors in their proper roles led, in the scene and in Michael’s explanation, to political as well as domestic turmoil. In sum, the ruler’s inability to correct the subject, instead being swayed to the same vice, led from domestic harmony and public “Freedom and Peace” to “fierce Faces threatning Warr” (11.641). In the same way, Milton makes clear that private virtue or vice has the potential to determine the character and the political fate of the nation as a whole.

Having established the organic interdependence Milton perceived between individual domestic virtue and national character, Milton’s routine practice of critiquing rulers based on personal habits both becomes useful and is clarified in turn. Indeed, Milton criticizes political rulers most strongly for failing to adhere to temperance in their private lives. Whereas Milton praises Eve for adorning herself with nothing but her own beauty while presiding over the dinner table, Milton takes the opportunity of Adam’s reception of Raphael to digress into a stinging condemnation of princes who adopt more than the necessary pomp and circumstance when interacting with guests and with their citizens:

Mean while our Primitive great Sire, to meet
His god-like Guest, walks forth, without more train
Accompani'd then with his own compleat
Perfections, in himself was all his state,
More solemn then the tedious pomp that waits
On Princes, when thir rich Retinue long
Of Horses led, and Grooms besmeared with Gold
Dazles the croud, and sets them all agape. (5.350-57)

In this section of poetry Milton reaffirms the distinction between good and bad rulers that he identifies in *The Readie and Easie Way*. Adam was, before the Fall, one of the good

rulers who “live soberly in thir families, walk the streets as other men, may be spoken to freely, familiarly, friendly, without adoration” (*CPW* VII:425). By contrast, the pomp of princes negatively affects the people, distancing them from their rulers rather than facilitating healthy interaction between the governors and governed. Milton’s digression is similarly reminiscent of his denunciation of any king who chooses to “pageant himself up and down in progress among the perpetual bowings and cringings of an abject people, on either side deifying and adoring him for nothing don that can deserve it” (*CPW* VII:426). In Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, then, as much as in his political prose, domestic temperance or lack thereof becomes an appropriate criterion for judging fitness for rule in the public sphere.

Milton’s overarching pedagogical purpose, then, works in the three scenes of *Paradise Lost* considered here on multiple levels. First, he reinforces the correlation between privately practiced virtues and national character, demonstrating positive examples before the Fall and the consequences of negative examples afterwards. Next, he establishes that the object of temperance, economy, and all related virtues is to glorify God for his abundance and respect his image in the human body by caring for it. However, Milton simultaneously increases his readers’ ability to discern these truths from the interactions of characters in his poetry through the instruction of Raphael and then of Michael. Raphael in the first instance clarifies the correspondence between temperance of food for the mind and temperance of food for the body. Michael, in the second instance, first shows Adam, and by extension the readers, the dissolution of the virtuous family unit which led to political turmoil, then proceeds to analyze the actions of the people with regard to their virtue and consequences. Thus Michael “practices” for the

benefit of Adam and the reader the skill of “reading” real-life people and situations as if they too were books.

Milton’s own poetic practice is ultimately consistent with his arguments in *Areopagitica*. Before the Fall, Milton presents wisdom and virtue positively embodied by Adam and Eve. Given that his readers inhabit a post-lapsarian mindset, however, Milton proceeds to offer opportunities to interact with negative examples after the Fall. Thus, as Milton asserts in *Areopagitica*, “Assuredly we bring not innocence into the world; we bring impurity much rather: that which purifies us is triall, and triall is by what is contrary” (*CPW* II:515). Milton’s structure of *Paradise Lost* serves a similar function as the way Phillip Donnelly identifies *Areopagitica* itself working, in that it “not only proposes that knowledge is derived and virtue constituted through an encounter with falsehood, but also provides the opportunity for such a process.”¹⁸

Through the exhortations of Raphael and Michael, Milton persuades the reader to accept the spiritual and physical benefits of temperance, recognizing that the “virtue of temperance is such that its genuine practice cannot be the result of compulsion.”¹⁹ The medium of poetry is uniquely suited for this purpose because with it Milton has the ability to first allow readers to imaginatively inhabit Eden, where authority is not intrinsically coercive, and where the maturity of the governed is not questioned. The poetic dramatization of the pre-lapsarian condition operates persuasively on behalf of Milton’s argument that the virtues and “reading” practices which contribute to such a state are indeed desirable. In that way, Milton’s poetry acts as a preamble to the laws he

¹⁸ Donnelly, *Milton’s Scriptural Reasoning*, 34.

¹⁹ Donnelly, *Milton’s Scriptural Reasoning*, 33.

would wish to see set in place under the republican commonwealth he envisions in *The Readie and Easie Way*.

CHAPTER FIVE

Epilogue

Wisdom for Milton, even in pre-lapsarian Eden, implied development as the soul learned to know God more fully and implemented virtues more consistently each day. Ultimately, Milton's poetry and his proposals for the establishment of a republican commonwealth, educational programs for young citizens, and post-publication censorship all illuminate his underlying assumption that the human *oikos* and *polis* ought to strive as much as possible to parallel God's original intent for his people. Michael summarizes God's providential plan, which first instituted laws and human leaders,

With purpose to resign them in full time
Up to a better Cov'nant, disciplin'd
From shadowie Types to Truth, from Flesh to Spirit,
From imposition of strict Laws, to free
Acceptance of large Grace, from servil fear
To filial, works of Law to works of Faith. (12.300-6)

This series of parallel purpose statements encapsulates precisely the transition from tutelage to education set forth in *The Readie and Easie Way, Of Education*, and *Areopagitica*. The pedagogical nature of wisdom ultimately derives from God's design; therefore, rulers and teachers and poets in truly loving God should take the same interest in the maturation of others. Despite the appearance of destabilization, the obedience arising from the Spirit's "working through Love . . . to guide them in all truth" infinitely surpasses mere compliance to laws.

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