Schools of Liberty :

The Ideological Background to John Milton's Tract "Of Education" (1644)

David Dykes

どんな自由化を？

ジョン・ミルトンの「教育論」にみられるイデオロギーの対立

ディビット・ダイクス

Milton was outspoken in defence of individual liberties, within certain social and religious limits. He believed that even fallen man still retained freedom of will and the power of reason. Sound schooling could produce virtuous social leaders through whom a nation could be regenerated and brought closer to God. Such an education should be by persuasion where possible, coercion where necessary. Milton's contemporaries, the Comenians aimed to make education universal, materially and morally useful, and free of traditional metaphysics and rhetoric. Their scheme tended to favour intellectual conformity. Whilst sharing their dislike of traditional university courses, Milton remained true to the elitist and literary humanist tradition, which he traced back to the Greek Academies. He hoped to teach a broad general knowledge, firm moral principles and the art of rhetoric.

1. Radicalism and love of order

By 1644, after some three years fighting for the common antiepiscopalian cause, Milton was deliberately starting to draw demarcation lines between his own beliefs and those of the dominant Anglo-Scottish Presbyterian party in London.

Particular disagreements centred upon two questions affecting Milton very personally at this time, firstly whether divorce was licit on simple grounds of incompatibility, and secondly whether in a Protestant state individuals had the right to publish dissenting views on religious and moral topics (including, of course, divorce). But both questions really derived from a more fundamental problem : the eternal tug of war between radicalism and love of order. 17th century Protestantism was caught in a self-contradiction. On the one hand, the Reformation had been born out of demands for "Christian Liberty", more specifically the refusal to allow popes or Paris theologians a monopoly in interpreting scripture. On the other hand, with the proliferation of quasi-Catholic movements and all kinds of sects, many mainstream Protestants saw a need to defend their true biblical faith against contamination from whichever source. This dilemma was to dog English political life for another 200 years, until the belated emancipation of both Catholics and Nonconformists in the 19th century.

Vast though the problem potentially was, Milton actually considered it within quite narrow ideological limits, though it is also true that many of his contemporaries saw things more narrowly still. Let us briefly notice the social and political bounds of Milton's thought, before passing on to his more consciously formulated religious opinions.

First it must be said that Milton's fierce patriotism set him apart from those who saw in English society a mere aberration from systems better ordered on the Continent or in Scotland. His anti-Catholicism went hand in hand with scorn of the Spaniards whose proud Armada of 1588 had "scattered the northern ocean" with its wrecks ("Of Reformation in England", 1641, p.615), and of the French who so vainly imagined themselves the most cultured of races :

> "Nor shall we then need the monsieurs of Paris to take our hopeful youth into their slight and prodigal custodies and send them over back again transformed into mimics, apes and kickshaws." ("Of Education", 1644, p.57).

Only in the case of Italy, as we shall presently see, was hatred of Catholicism tempered by any great respect for the country's culture. As for Milton's earlier allies the Presbyterians, by 1645 we find him roundly condemning them not only for their attempts to "force our consciences that Christ set free", but also for their truckling dependence on foreign leaders, such as "mere A. S. (Adam Stewart) and Rutherford . . . and Scotch What-d'ye call (Robert Baillie)". ("On the New Forcers of Conscience under the Long Parliament" (Sonnet), 1645). On the more positive side, Milton's patriotism found expression in his studies of English history. Already in 1641 he had come close to depicting England as God's chosen land, and rather questionably named English Wycliffe as the first source of the Reformation "at which all succeeding reformers more effectually lighted their tapers". ("Of Reformation in England", p.525). Nor should we forget that until some time in the 1640's Milton still toyed with the thought of making his poetic life's work an epic on Arthur, the Christian King of (South) Britain.

Secondly, even within little isolationist England with its mere five million people, Milton was far from claiming or even considering radical freedoms of thought for the population as a whole. Women were neither eligible nor educated to speak. At best, like Milton's acquaintance Lady Margaret Ley, they might keep salons for the benefit of free-thinking males. And of course, nothing serious was to be expected of the vast majority of English men who enjoyed no Latin and little wealth. "Areopagitica" (1644) is celebrated as a defence of the freedom to print, but what use is that to people who have no literary training and not enough money to pay the printer ? Like most members of the 17th century educated elite, Milton had no conception that the non-educated classes could make any useful contribution to the nation's moral life.

Thirdly, a good half of the English male intelligentsia disqualified itself from the right to be heard for having taken the wrong side in the controversies that led to the Civil War. They included all courtiers, but also most university dons, Lawyers and physicians, and about half the clergy. They deserved silencing on at least three counts : for sympathising with treason, playing to foreign intrigues and opening the door to Catholicism. Cambridge had been purged in 1643. Milton no doubt looked forward to a similar fate for Oxford (accomplished 1646).

All in all, Milton's "liberalism", which earned him such abuse and threats of prosecution in revolutionary London, does not strike us today as very liberated. That is because we think of politics in terms of social class or economics rather than religious or moral principles.

Just how circumscribed Milton's radicalism was can be seen from how the small number of real social revolutionaries were behaving. Sects had come clearly out into the open since 1642. Quakers and Baptists were a good deal more spiritually enflamed than they are now, but were still left far behind by the Ranters, Muggletonians, Fifth Monarchy Men and others. The leaders often came from social backgrounds worlds apart from anything Milton could approve of. John Robins, the Ranters' leader, had no schooling in humanities at all. "My Hebrew, Greek and Latin comes by inspiration," he claimed, and so of course did his theology. Women preachers were not unknown in the sects, either. One of them, the Baptist Mrs Attaway, became notorious in 1645 for having been inspired by the Holy Ghost and Milton's divorce tracts to leave her husband for a certain Mr Jenney, whose wife happened to be with child at the time. She was partly responsible for Milton's undeserved reputation as an inciter of fornication. But Milton himself, compared with such folk as these, was thoroughly staid. Politically, too, he stands in absolute contrast with such groups as the Levellers who, after the War, tried to force Parliament towards universal household suffrage and the abolition of class privileges.

In Milton, a love of individual freedom coexisted, somewhat uneasily, with a deeply inbred habit of conformity to the contemporary social order, whose class basis he never once questioned. The rich and educated had an automatic right to govern. Indeed, it was the chief aim of education to produce governors and other public leaders, and schooling was an expensive commodity that only the rich could afford.

2. Freedom of choice

Moral liberty could hardly be considered in the 17th century apart from a religious context. Before arguing the case for the individual's right to make decisions for himself, one had to discuss whether the faculty of decision making was even a reality. This doubt is far from resolved, even today. In Milton's day, decisions were thought to be the result of reasoning. A situation was first analysed into logical principles, which were then sorted in order of importance or desirability. This process, which Milton in his education tract calls "Proairesis", ideally required the working of unimpaired intellect. The question was, did such a thing exist, or rather (since it was generally agreed it did not), could the lack be remedied to any great extent by moral and logical training ?

Before the Fall, perfect rationality had of course existed in the person of Adam. Created in God's image, which according to the Aristotelians must have been an extremely logical image, Adam was immediately given the task of naming the birds and beasts (Genesis 2). This was the first fulfilment of God's wish that he should rule over other creation (Genesis 1).

But with the Fall, reason, like everything else in Nature, became corrupt. Just how much rationality remained in man was a matter for debate. Many Calvinists thought that all human thinking was so hopelessly tainted by sin that man virtually walked in darkness except for individuals whom God chose to enlighten. The best known representative of this pessimistic view is the Baptist John Bunyan, whose pilgrim walks seeingly through a world of blind men. ("Pilgrim's Progress", 1678). Theoretically, if only the preelected are to be saved, and they inevitably, preaching and morality might be thought superfluous. Certainly, Baptists and others did oppose state enforcement of religion for this reason, among others. But preaching could be justified on the grounds that God, for reasons of His own, had chosen the ministry of the Word as the normal vehicle for His grace to men. The Presbyterians, who saw grace working through Spirit-guided national Churches as well as through inspired individuals, had more faith in the mass corrigibility of sin, though not always enough to put aside the pastoral rod and allow their flock to take moral decisions for themselves. Particularly in the Kirk of Scotland, Presbyterians tended to show their zeal in a dictatorial concern for other people's souls, and some of the English divines emulated their example.

Naturally, things were not quite as simple as might be suggested by the paragraph above. Real men were more nuanced in outlook, and though Milton might attack the Presbyterians as a group for being "forcers of conscience", he simultaneously entertained the greatest respect for Thomas Young, his own boyhood tutor, who was both Presbyter and Scottish. Still, viewing the Presbyterians as a party, it is quite fair to say that they were illiberal and sceptical of the individual's chances of behaving virtuously without very heavy-handed guidance. Puritanism did, however, allow of a more optimistic view of natural man, as exemplified in the writings of sir Francis Bacon.

Bacon would certainly have agreed with both Bunyan and the Presbyterians that a mere perusal of Nature through logical spectacles was not enough to arrive at anything like an understanding of God's purposes, as some enthusiasts of logic came close to suggesting. Yet Bacon did not on that account despise the use or the powers of reason. He merely chose to regard revealed knowledge and explored knowledge as two separate dimensions. No doubt, the Book of Scripture and the Book of Nature would, if both read faithfully to their conclusion, recombine into a perfect unity. But this unity was an infinitely distant goal, not (as in so-called "Aristotelian" university courses) the starting point of knowledge itself. The title illustration Bacon chose for his "Advancement of Learning" (1605) was of a ship sailing out through the Straits of Gibraltar in search of a continent which will surely exist but which is totally unknown. God has created the stars and the magnetic pole for man to steer by, but it is by reason and experience that man must learn to read the constellations and to devise a compass.

Milton was not, like Bacon, a navigator into the unknown. He was happier with his proven classics, theological and philosophic. But a glance at Chapter XII of his "Christian Doctrine" (probably written mainly in the 1650's) should convince us that he had considerable faith in the capabilities of a disciplined human mind. We find, for example:

> "It cannot be denied, however, that some remnants of the divine image still exist in us, not wholly extinguished by this spiritual death. This is evident not only from the wisdom and holiness of many of the heathen . . . " (p.333) ". . . and further evidence Milton quotes consists of biblical passages, including Psalm 19: "The heavens declare the glory of God . . . ").

A second example has particular relevance to "Proairesis", the process of moral decision making:

> "There can be no doubt that for the purpose of vindicating the justice of God, especially in his calling of mankind, it is much better to allow to man (whether as a remnant of his primitive state, or as restored through the operation of the grace whereby he is called) some portion of free will in respect of good works, or at least of good endeavours." (p.333).

Active proof of Milton's respect for his reader's liberty of thought can be seen in the open-endedness of this question whether free will is a remnant of a former perfection or a result of restoring grace. A less optimistic and more authoritarian man would have chosen on the reader's behalf and hammered the decision home with a facile quotation. But it is Milton's view, reminiscent of Bacon's, that, provided the practical essentials of a problem are grasped, details of provenance and definition can safely be left for later consideration. Total explanation is not the immediate goal:

> ". . . so far from recommending or imposing anything on my own authority, it is my particular advice that everyone should suspend his opinion on whatever points he may not feel himself fully satisfied, till the evidence of Scripture prevail,

and persuade his reason into assent and faith." (p. 306).

Transferring the same attitude to natural science, we need only substitute "the evidence of Nature" for that of "Scripture. Sure enough, open-endedness proves very characteristic of Milton's view of knowledge in general, so much so that in "Paradise Lost" he even breaks the classic compositional rule that the world of an epic should be perfect and self-contained. Despite apparent wealth of description, we are ultimately left uninformed even as to the physical layout of the planetary/solar system, which could equally well be Copernican or Ptolemaic:

" . . . (God) his fabric of the heav'ns
Hath left to (men's) disputes, perhaps to move
His laughter at their quaint opinions wide
Hereafter, when they come to model heav'n
And calculate the stars . . ." ("Paradise Lost", published 1667, VIII, 76-80).

There may be a touch here of the literary man's scorn of the specialist, but at any rate we can safely say that Milton's religion and morality were not closely dependent on any particular concept, ancient or modern, of time and space, mathematics or science. Materially, Miltonic man was a free agent, not feeling himself bound to any cosmic logic that might force him to one conclusion rather than another. Man had the subjective freedom to make or mar himself through his moral choices, but in things morally indifferent to follow the lights of his natural reason.

3. Collective regeneration and the role of learning

This concept of "morally indifferent", though, needs to be relativised. While the object of knowledge may pose no moral problems in itself, the state of knowing (and the act of learning) always lead on to a moral trial. One can possess knowledge either humbly or arrogantly, and the attitude we choose to take at the start will later strongly affect the way we use our acquired knowledge, for good or evil. If we bear in mind this link between knowledge and moral responsibility, we will not mistake Milton's words in the education tract for a mere pious platitude:

> "The end then of learning is 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 nearest by possessing our souls of true virtue which being united to the heavenly grace of faith makes up the highest perfection." ("Of Education", p.48).

It is interesting to note that the end of learning turns out to be just the same as the end of composing "Paradise Lost" (I, 1—5). The factual content of learning is secondary, what matters is that knowledge of God's ways (in Scripture and in Nature) should lead us to a desire to be virtuous and regenerate. But we are not merely concerned here with the "highest perfecting" of individual learners. We are talking of the collective (though individually experienced) regeneration of vast numbers of people. The "new heav' ns, new earth" promised in "Paradise Lost" (XII, 549) are pictured as a populous commonwealth "founded in righteousness and peace and love", three conspicuously social virtues. Until this state of perfection comes about, it is man's task, through enquiry and education, to approach patiently, and as nearly as he can, to the same ideals:

> "I call, therefore, a complete and generous education, that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war." ("Of Education", p.50).

Of course, in the same way that it was debatable whether individuals had the soundness of intellect to be able to attempt good deeds unprompted, so too there was disagreement whether commonwealths possessed any real capability for self-improvement. Pessimists saw the world as a great Vanity Fair ripe for destruction. Despite periodic rescue operations by God, history had been one long chronicle of ignored and squandered grace, as first the Patriarchs, then the Jews, next the Graeco-Romans and latterly even the Christian Church followed one another down the slithery road of sin.

But optimists, including Milton, could read the same histories with a calm faith. Had not God, precisely, always hatched the greatest blessings out of the direst evils? Noah's Flood ended with the rainbow of God's renewed grace ("Paradise Lost", XI, 897). The destruction of the Jerusalem Temple coincided with the coming of the Holy Spirit "that dost prefer before all temples th'upright heart and pure" ("Paradise Lost", I, 17—18). The decline of the Roman Church had set the stage for a triumph of truth which, despite setbacks, was still in progress:

> "Then was the sacred Bible sought out of the dusty corners where profane falsehood and neglect had thrown it, the schools opened, divine and human learning raked out of the embers of forgotten tongues, the princes and cities trooping apace to the new erected banner of salvation . . ." ("Of Reformation in England", p.524).

Indeed, some would say that spiritual and intellectual regeneration out of the midst of ruin is the most central single theme in Milton's writings.

In the rather larger than life description of the Reformation just quoted, the reader may have been struck by the prominent role allotted to "divine and human learning", "the schools" and the revival of "forgotten tongues". In the century or so before Milton's birth, philological and literary research had revolutionised men's outlooks. They had led to reassessments of the meaning of certain scriptural passages, an ever more dogged reverence for the scriptural texts themselves, and to persistent questioning of the hermetic world-philosophies taught at universities. To support new interpretations, and to popularise them, vernacular Bible translations multiplied, soon followed by translations of other theological texts and works of Greek and Latin literature. In effect, universities were becoming too small for the arguments they dealt in, and their wares were spilling out into the street. From about 1580 the flow of translations turned into a spate. Meanwhile textual analysis had developed as a more or less objective science. A few mediaeval forgeries had been exposed, and some obscure passages elucidated.

A similar revolution was taking place in the reading of the Book of Nature, especially after astronomical and anatomical observations, not to mention the discovery of a whole new continent, began to suggest deficiencies in the traditional teachings. Men gradually began to break free of the metaphysical framework that had blocked the way to an empirical observation of natural phenomena. Specialists in navigation, fortification, land surveying, mining and the textile industry led the way, but by the start of the 17th century the more disinterested voice of Bacon was calling for the suspension of traditional physics teaching, to be replaced by research into the scattered data emanating from the workshops and seaports.

Not that textual criticism and scientific curiosity had ever been a Protestant monopoly. Far from it. The Intellectual Renaissance originated in Italy, as Milton realised when planning the course of his grand tour. In his education tract he commends the Italian pronunciation of Latin and the main 16th century Italian works on poetic theory. Italian is the only modern language he mentions in "Of Education" as worth studying. In his other writings, too, this awe of Italy is only too obvious. One of his cherished memories seems to have been his visit paid to Galileo, an allusion to which appears in a prominent place in "Paradise Lost" (I, 288). Of his continuing correspondence with Italian intellectuals, he went on boasting for years (for example, in his "Second Defence of the English People", 1654). Even in boyhood, his closest friendship had been with the Anglo-Italian Charles Diodati.

But much as Milton admired and yearned to emulate the Italian cultural achievement, he never felt entirely at ease with the Italian world. He tells in his "Second Defence" how he made himself intolerable to his courteous friends in Naples by his insistence on professing his Protestantism at every opportunity. At least part of his interest in the improving of Englishmen's education came from a desire to overcome a sense of cultural inferiority, which jarred badly in a country so spiritually advanced as England:

> "And perhaps then other nations will be glad to visit us for their breeding, or else to imitate us in their own country." ("Of Education", p.58).

Milton might take cold comfort in the fact that, in Catholic Europe, the Inquisition was rapidly stifling some of the brighter flames of free thought. Galileo was silenced in Italy for too openly challenging Ptolemy and Aristotle, while in England Copernicanism and empirical physics could be fairly safely discussed. Descartes was unable to publish his ideas on astronomy, as well.[1] Naturally, one could provide examples of intellectually intolerant Protestant states too (Calvin's Geneva, for one), but the decisive difference lay in the fact that Protestantism had no supranational system of censorship to match the Inquisition and the Index. Repressiveness depended on the whim or political interests of individual governments, and what was forbidden in one mini-state might be actively encouraged ten miles away in the next. This very diversity of intellectual policy tended to underline the artificial and arbitrary nature of human prohibitions, thus inciting Protestant (and neighbouring Catholic) thinkers to more boldness than they might otherwise have shown. In his divorce tracts, his "Christian Doctrine", his "Ready and Easy Way" (1660) and various other works, Milton is fully representative of the independent, do-it-yourself spirit of thought that Protestant diversity engendered. In "Areopagitica", he makes it quite clear that he saw this spirit as something healthy and creative, provided always that it was followed in humility and reverence.

4. Education in practice

We have quoted Milton above as saying, firstly, that the aim of learning is to "repair the ruins of our first parents", and secondly, that education "fits a man to perform justly, skilfully and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war". At first sight, these may appear to be aim one and aim two of the same activity. But in fact, "learning" in the first case is different from "education" in the second. Education is an application of learning, in the same way that engineering is an application of physics. Learning itself is as infinite as the God (or natural universe) that it loves and seeks to approach. But education, though loving in its way too, is man-centred and subject to narrow constraints, some inherent in the teaching situation and materials, others imposed by the social scope of the educational project in hand.

Stated in terms of dynamism, learning tends towards freedom, but education seeks to confine, to control and to direct.

This distinction reminds us of the paradox we referred to in our first section, of Protestantism's simultaneous urge to throw off scholastic restraints on the interpretation of scripture and yet to defend the "plain truths" against violent or subtle distorsion. The fact is that religious doctrine requires some degree of institutionalism if it is to subsist as a social force at all. The Protestants were in difficulty because they shared no general consensus as to the form the ultimate institutional authority was to take.

In the Middle Ages, education had been fairly firmly under the control of Mother Church. Pupils were trained in Latin and logic not for their own self-fulfilment, but that they might serve in the Church's functions. In Milton's day, the great majority of MA graduates (though a minority of all students) were still destined for the ministry. Some law graduates would also find employment in bishops' courts or other Church offices, while, outside of London, medical men might still need a bishop's licence to allow them to practise.[2] Grammar schools and their teachers were subject to a comparable licensing system. University colleges were almost invariably headed by an ordained priest, and at matriculation (in Oxford) or graduation (in both universities) students were obliged to swear allegiance to the Thirty-nine Articles of the State Church. "Christian Liberty" from non-evangelical restraints was more theoretical than real. Some Reformed countries, such as Geneva and Scotland, were more strictly run still, and, if anything, more rule-bound than before Reformation.

True, with regard to "pure learning", including such areas as philosophy and physics, Protestantism might, if only on balance, be called more libertarian than Catholicism. But in the instruction of children and youth, most Protestants were zealously particular. Luther, and other school-founders of the pioneer period, had seen their schools not just as imparters of classical wisdom, but more importantly as instillers of doctrinal, moral and political discipline. In sermons, catechisms and other forms of direct indoctrinating, intimidation was a standard technique. Being a schoolboy, in the younger years at any rate, must have been quite a daunting experience.

In England, the Elizabethan Church in 1562 imposed Nowell's Catechism as the sole authorised text in order to enforce conformity. The "plain truths" the government was anxious to defend went far beyond what we today would understand under the heading of "religion". Considerable space was devoted, for instance, to the defence of political absolutism :

> "For if it be for every man a heinous offence to offend his private parents, and parricide to kill them ; what shall we say of them that have conspired and borne wicked armour against the commonweal, against their country, the most ancient, sacred, and common mother of us all . . . and against the prince, the father of the country itself, and parent of the commonweal . . . ?" (Nowell's Catechism, 1562).[3]

Of course, the political and social indoctrination of children did not always proceed in the same direction. The forcefulness of Nowell's threats indicates something of the strength of the Catholic and Puritan oppositions. Under the early Stuarts it became commonplace for wealthy Puritans to endow schools or "lectureships" (unlicensed "preachers" being forbidden) in a more or less conscious attempt to circumvent the influence, and ultimately the authority, of the Anglican Establishment.[4] But irrespective of the teacher's ideological loyalties, the strictness of the moral teaching was much the same.

Milton had no objections in principle to force. He commends the teacher who proceeds by :

> "the art and proper eloquence to catch them with, what with mild and effectual persuasions, and what with the intimation of some fear, if need be, but chiefly by his own example". ("Of Education", p.51).

It would be nice to imagine the Areopagite relying almost entirely on persuasions and example, but John Aubrey tells us that one of the reasons Milton's wife ran away in 1642 was that she "oftimes heard his nephews beaten and cry" in the schoolroom. Again, at a more advanced level of his educational course, where his pupils are furnished with sufficient reason that they may "with some judgement contemplate upon moral good and evil", we still find Milton's recommendations alternating between persuasion and force, with rather more persuasion being used in "human learning" and more force in the "divine" :

> "Then will be required a special reinforcement of constant and sound indoctrinating to set them right and firm, instructing them more amply in the knowledge of virtue and the hatred of vice, while their young and pliant affections are led through all the moral works of Plato, Xenophon, Cicero, Plutarch, Laertius, and those Locrian remnants ; but still to be reduced in their night-

> ward studies wherewith they close the day's work, under the determinate sentence of David, or Solomon, or the Evangels and Apostolic scriptures." ("Of Education", pp.53—54).

The contrasting use of "led through" and "reduced under" is revealing of an ambiguity in Milton's attitude to coercion and how far it should be relied on. This matches his similar ambiguous attitude to moral radicalism and social order that we discussed earlier. It also corresponds to the uncertain way Protestant humanism in general regarded the institutionalisation of truth.

5. Samuel Hartlib's connexions

Apart from the founding of schools and lectureships by individuals, there were also a number of collectively organised attempts in the 17th century Protestant world to use educational reform as a vehicle of social improvement. We shall now look at one individual who was very much involved in movements of this kind. He was Samuel Hartlib, of special interest to us since he was an acquaintance of Milton's, and the addressee of "Of Education".

Hartlib was an Anglo-Prussian, with further family links to Poland, and acquaintances throughout Protestant Europe. He was an advocate of numerous philanthropic, educational and scientific schemes, though on the whole preferring to work as a committee man or seconder to some other person's project. In this respect he differed from the stubbornly independent Milton.

In some questions, Hartlib's and Milton's views nearly coincided. For example, all through the 1630's Hartlib had been campaigning for the pan-Protestant dream of John Dury, whose aim of reuniting the Lutheran and Calvinist churches in face of the Catholic threat reminds us of Milton's similar pleas for mutual toleration among Protestants (in his divorce tracts, "Areopagitica" and elsewhere). Admittedly, Hartlib's idea of what was meant by Diversity in Unity was more institution-conscious than Milton's, and Milton would hardly have approved of some of Hartlib's courting of bishops.

But it was in the education question that Hartlib and Milton had most to say to each other. Milton tells us in his tract that they had several times discoursed on the subject.

Hartlib's special interest in school reform dated from his discovery of Comenianism in the early 1630's.[5] Jan Amos Komenski ("Comenius") was a Bohemian refugee in Poland, who had become famous in 1631 with the publication of the "Janua Linguarum Reserata" ("The Door to Languages Flung Open"), one of the first foreign language courses conceived in terms of the student's learning ability rather than the complexities of the target language seen as a total system. Only the most frequent and useful words were taught at first, and methodically repeated, with further vocabulary being dosed in gradually. The language was taught in use, not as a series of rules. Model texts described simple facts and situations familiar to the students. Unrealistic and literary models were avoided. Lessons progressed from simple and concrete things to more complex and challenging ones. Comenius was an admirer of Bacon, and though his method also had German antecedents, it would not be far amiss to call it lingual Baconianism.

Like the findings of empirical science, the "Janua" language method was universally applicable, not bound to any one target language. That is one reason why it became such a best seller, in the Moslem world as well as in Europe.

Comenius' great ambition was to extend his language teaching principles to the total education curriculum, which could be made simple enough in its early stages to permit a universal education system for rich and poor, male and female, from nursery school up. The early years would be in the vernacular, and teaching would of course progress from the near-at-hand and concrete to things more abstract. Curriculum content would be decided on the criterion of usefulness. Literature would be abridged, and there would be much use made of time-saving digests of knowledge (ancestors of the modern Ministry approved textbook). Mathematics and science, sport and vocational training would all be upgraded in importance. Usefulness, of course, was to be understood in a religious and social context:

> "All . . . must be brought on to the point at which, being properly imbued with wisdom and piety, they may usefully employ the present life and be worthily prepared for that to come." ("Great Didactic", published 1657).[6]

The "useful employment of life" varied in scope according to social rank and sex. After a similar primary schooling for all, the commoners would leave school and start work, leaving the gentlemen to get down to studies in Latin and Greek. Like the primary course, however, this advanced stage would still be soundly utilitarian and moral.

A scheme of universal education, such as this was, demanded administration and therefore state sponsorship. Recommending Comenianism to the English Parliament in 1647, Hartlib declares categorically that it is the magistrate's duty:

> "to order the means of their education aright, to which effect he should see schools opened, provided with teachers, indued with maintenance,

> regulated with constitutions, and he should have inspectors and overseers to look to the observance of good orders in this business." ("Considerations Tending to the Happy Accomplishment of England's Reformation", 1647).

In practice this meant that Comenius' vision had to be peddled around in reduced versions to power-jealous rulers in various countries, many of whom viewed schoolmasters as ideological village policemen.

Comenianism was never adopted by any state as an ideology. But, predictably, the more strictly authoritarian regimes did see social advantages in having government approved schools in every parish. Massachusetts passed a law in 1647 requiring settlements of fifty households upwards to set up town schools. Other colonies followed, as did Scotland in 1696 (building on an already strong tradition of local schooling).7) Ultimately these schools did much to raise literacy and technical skills among the people, but in the beginning their main achievement was stiffer social control.

6. Milton's Academies as schools of freedom

At the start of his tract, Milton most pointedly disowns Comenianism :

> ". . . to search what many modern "Januas" and "Didactics", more than ever I shall read, have projected my inclination leads me not." ("Of Education", p.48).

Obviously he knew something of the two works. After hours of discussion with Hartlib, the leading English Comenianist, it would be a miracle if he did not have some fair idea of their contents. After all, the "Janua" was only a school textbook, and the whole gist of the "Didactic" was readily available from a three or four page abstract that Hartlib had printed three times since 1637. When we add the fact that Comenius had been in London as recently as 1641—2 negotiating (unsuccessfully) the establishment of a Comenian college, and that Hartlib had organised the entire operation, it seems certain that Milton, a practising London schoolmaster, knew what Comenius stood for and was deliberately denying any connexion with him. There was something in Comenianism which repelled him.

Similarities between Milton's and Comenius' educational schemes exist, but are fairly superficial. Both men attack the wasteful traditional method of teaching Latin as mere verbiage divorced from its communicating functions. But then so did Erasmus a century or more before. Both place importance on the teaching of natural science. But a great chorus of critics in the 1630's and 40's were doing just the same thing. They both stress the link between knowledge and morality, but in different ways, as we shall see.

One of the great differences between them is that Milton aims to encourage versatility in his pupils and therefore guards against early specialisation, while Comenius' emphasis is more narrowly vocational. Milton offers a very broad general knowledge in many subjects, before concentrating finally on logic and rhetorical style. This, though expanded in scope, is essentially the traditional humanist approach, except in that the logic and rhetoric are held back to the end, when the pupils are mature and have a lot of reading experience to guide their style and judgement. It is an education for the gentleman of leisure, the landowner or citizen, who may act as an amateur Justice, as a Poor Law administrator, as a Member of Parliament or as a militia commander, but has no specialised profession in view. Alternatively, it is the education of a Church minister, who needs facility of thought and speech, a knowledge of virtue and an understanding of the ways of the world. Comenius is more prosaic, only hoping to make "serious exercises the preparatives of serious employments". He aims to teach things that are "real, and fit to enlighten men's minds and to prepare them for action", and, above all, to avoid "the disease of schools, whereby all the time of youth is spent in grammatical, rhetorical and logical toys"——the very rhetoric and logic (admittedly stripped of grammar) that comprise the crowning glory of Milton's course.

It is true that Comenius is describing a universal education to include dukes to dairymaids, while Milton is only considering the governing classes. When it comes to the common people, Milton speaks in quite a different voice, merely demanding that they :

> "may be at once brought up to a competence of learning and to an honest trade ; and the hours of teaching so ordered, as their study may be no hindrance to their labour or other calling". ("Considerations Touching the Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings", 1659).

But this is precisely the point : Milton clearly distinguishes between the educational needs of the different classes, while Comenius tries to fit all into the same basic frame. The rulers' education would be wider and deeper, but not qualitatively distinct.

Aesthetically pleasing as Comenius' scheme is, there is something constricting about it. Behind it hovers the spirit of determinism. Human knowledge reflects the immutable thoughts of God. Once existing histories and philosophies have been squeezed and concentrated into a more rational encyclopaedic form, the original works can be discarded as literary packaging. The accidental will be superseded by the essential. Comenius calls this perfect compendium of knowledge the "Pansophia" ("All-wisdom"). It certainly resolves Milton's dilemma of freedom and order, but at the price of enslaving posterity and denying fresh beginnings.

To be fair to Comenius, he saw his Pansophia as Bacon saw his New Organon: as a beacon for decisive course-setting in the here and now. Too close scrutiny of the final goal would only weaken the urge to progress. But that holds good for all social ideals: they need an aura of mysticism if they are to inspire action.

Milton, for his part, was firmly immersed in a mysticism of his own. He was a man of the past, not the past as it was, but as it might and ought to have been. In "Of Reformation in England", he saw the failures of the Reformation, but went on to suggest how they could still be remedied so as to allow the happy beginning to bear fruit. We see the same pattern in "Paradise Lost", where past disaster is transmuted into future promise. "Of Education", too, aims at the recovery of past ideals.

Milton's Academies do not profess loyalty to any single ancient tradition, but are ideologically eclectic:

> "The course of study hitherto briefly described is, what I can guess by reading, likest to those ancient and famous schools of Pythagoras, Plato, Isocrates, Aristotle . . ." ("Of Education", pp.55—56).

A too logically-minded reader would object that such a synthesis of ideas and methods is quite absurd. The same is true of Milton's reading list for law study:

> "After this they are to dive into the grounds of law and legal justice, delivered first and with best warrant by Moses, and, as far as human prudence can be trusted, in those extolled remains of Grecian Law-givers, Lycurgus, Solon, Zaleucus, Charondas; and thence to all the Roman edicts and tables, with their Justinian; and so down to the Saxon and common laws of England and the statutes". ("Of Education", p.54).

But of course all these disparate elements could be reconciled within a single tradition after the lapse of time had worn away their jarring corners. This is what had happened, at a rudimentary level, in the humanist grammar schools of the Renaissance. A student needing law merely in order to be a lawyer was welcome to go to Law School (p.50). Milton's more general course was intended to exercise the student's reason and moral sense by confronting him with a vast mass of varied, yet broadly related matter, with which he was to cope as best he could. Milton's presentation of materials, thematically arranged yet making no attempt to resolve the differences of outlook of the various authors, was as open as Comenius' was closed. Always subject, of course, to the "determinate sentence of David" and other scriptures (for Milton's frankness had its bounds), final judgements in intellectual and moral matters were to be left to the God-aided and humanistically trained consciences of at least the more mature students.

Milton's apparently original idea of holding back logic and rhetoric until the end of his course, and his determination to ignore (or perhaps abolish) the Universities are in full accord with his radical, and yet conservative Christian humanism. Aristotle, after all, had viewed logic as a tool to knowledge, not a system to worship for its own sake. The Universities, a creation of the Middle Ages that Milton so despised, had made of logic a web of "subtle trivialities" barring the way to the real world of physics and metaphysics which Aristotle, precisely, had wanted mankind to explore. (See Milton's Prolusion III "Against the Scholastic Philosophy", which he wrote as a student.[8]) Logic could operate properly only on facts and principles already mastered.

Comenians and other "realists" might try either to reform existing institutions, or to found improved colleges, like the short-lived university in Durham which Hartlib and others tried to establish in 1659, or like the Royal Society which with its broader social base proved more lasting. But Milton instinctively preferred to revert to the ancient tradition of privately maintained Academies at which Greece had trained her greatest philosophers and rhetoricians. The nearest comparable institutions in the 17th century were the grammar schools, largely based on classical concepts, and to some extent free of the kind of state and Church control that so constricted the Universities. At the end of the Commonwealth period Milton was to make some concessions to central administration, recognising the right of the gentry in each county to order local education through setting up "schools and academies at their own choice", the choice apparently being made in a political assembly ("The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth"). But here, still, we can see his determination to uphold local independence and resist the powers of state authority.

Just as Milton's picture of the ancient Greek Academies came to him through the filter of Renaissance humanism, so too, many of the details of his proposed syllabus and organisation seem heavily to reflect his own boyhood experiences at St Paul's, the school founded by Colet under Erasmus' influence, later headed by Mulcaster: altogether one of the jewels of the English Renaissance. The strangely precise figure of 150 that Milton suggests as being the optimum for his Academies' population recalls Colet's endowment of 153 places at St Paul's. Masson reminds us that "153" was inscribed above the schoolroom door. It stood for the five loaves and three fishes with which Christ fed the multitude. Milton loved his school, and held his schoolmaster Gill in great respect. The loaves and fishes of St Paul's must have ill prepared him for the "asinine feast of brambles and sowthistles" that he tells us awaited him at Cambridge.

Notes

1. I am stressing here Catholicism's repressiveness as far as concerns the permissible bounds of thought. Catholic scholastic philosophy, on the contrary, was much reformed in the 16th century, and educational methods were modernised by the Jesuits so successfully that Francis Bacon sighed: "utinam noster esses" ("Would you were on our side!"). ("Advancement of Learning", ed. A. Johnston, Oxford, 1974, p.19).
2. About two thirds of healers and surgeons were licensed by bishops. The Church was also strongly represented in the Universities which licensed the more highly qualified third. (See C. Hill, "Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution", Oxford, 1965, p.83).
3. See the chapter on Nowell's Catechism and its echoes in literature in J. Mulder, "The Temple of the Mind", Pegasus, New York, 1969, p.106—129. The Protestant catechising tradition started with Luther's "Shorter Catechism" of 1529.
4. These lectureships are briefly described in "The Age of Milton", ed. C. Patrides and R. Waddington, Manchester U P, 1980, p.127—8.
5. Not having the standard edition of Comenius' "Great Didactic" (Keatinge, 1896) to hand, I have relied mainly on summaries and extracts from D. Masson, "The Life of John Milton", Macmillan, London, 1881, Vol.III, p.199—214, and E. Sirluck's account in "The Complete Prose Works of John Milton", Yale U P, 1959, Vol.II, p.184—216. I have also drawn on Sirluck's account and on Masson Vol.I, p.73—84 for information on St Paul's School for my sixth section.
6. Quoted from "The Age of Milton", p.108. The passage on p.107—8 describes a widespread demand for a less narrowly based, more practical, moral and vocational education, the main arguers being Comenius, Hartlib, Dury, William Petty and Milton.
7. See "Encyclopedia Britannica", 1968, Vol.VII, "Education, History of", p.991, p.1003. I am not suggesting that Comenius was the sole inspiration of these laws. Both they and his scheme owed much to Calvin, as far as moral education is concerned.
8. This was a kind of oral exam exercise in disputation form. Parallels can be found between it and the attack on scholasticism on p.50 of "Of Education". The recurrence of the brambles image is striking. (See "The Complete Prose Works of John Milton", Vol.I, p.240—8).

Texts used in quoting from Milton

"Of Education"	"Areopagitica" and "Of Education", ed. K. Lea, Oxford Paperback English Texts, Oxford, 1973.
"Of Reformation in England"	"The Complete Prose Works of John Milton", Vol.I, ed. D. Wolfe, Yale, 1953.
"Paradise Lost"	"Paradise Lost", ed. S. Elledge, Norton, New York, 1975.
"The Christian Doctrine"	Ibid. (Translated excerpts appear on p.304—351.)
"Considerations Touching the Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings"	Quoted from the general survey of mid 17th century education in "The Age of Milton", ed. C. Patrides and R. Waddington, Manchester, 1980, p. 108.

Acknowledgement

My thanks to the staff of the English Department at Tokai Gakuen Junior. Women's College, Nagoya, for allowing me to raid their library on several occasions.

(Received January 25. 1986)