

8-1968

Milton and Cambridge : a new look at an old attitude

Roy S. Riner

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarship.richmond.edu/masters-theses>

 Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Riner, Roy S., "Milton and Cambridge : a new look at an old attitude" (1968). *Master's Theses*. Paper 959.

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Research at UR Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of UR Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact scholarshiprepository@richmond.edu.

MILTON AND CAMBRIDGE: A NEW
LOOK AT AN OLD ATTITUDE

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
University of Richmond

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Roy S. Riner, Jr.
August 1968

Approved for the Department of English
and the Graduate School by

- Samuel W. Stevenson
Director of Thesis

Chairman of the Department of English

Edward Reple
Dean of the Graduate School

Acknowledgment

Grateful acknowledgment must be made to Dr. Talbot R. Selby, Professor of Ancient Languages at the University of Richmond, for his help in drawing parallels between the satire of Milton's Prolusion III and the first Satire of Juvenal, and to Massie C. Stinson, Jr. of Virginia Commonwealth University for his assistance, suggestions for improvement, and for his encouragement in the writing of this paper.

Roy S. Riner, Jr.

August 1968

PREFACE

From the insights gleaned from current research into John Milton's years as an undergraduate and a graduate student at Cambridge University, this writer has found an overwhelming amount of material dedicated to pointing out Milton's total lack of affection for that University. For the most part, those statements bearing on Milton's dislike for Cambridge are unequivocal. For example, one scholar has remarked that John Milton departed from the University in 1632 "weary and disgusted"¹ with the medieval, unbearably antiquated methods of the place. That same scholar continues with the statement that Milton's attitude toward Cambridge was "uniformly unfriendly" and that Milton was obviously not happy as a student there, nor was he a loyal alumnus.²

The prevailing opinion of John Milton is one which depicts him as a zealot on matters of reform--whether political, religious, moral, or academic. Among the scholarly writings of the past century on the Miltonic personality, the consensus seems to be that Milton was ever protesting, calling for reform measures at every opportunity. A number of Milton scholars have "labelled"

¹James Holly Hanford, A Milton Handbook (New York, 1961), p. 364, cited hereafter as Handbook.

²Ibid., p. 355.

Milton. David Masson, for instance, has called him a radical.³ E. M. W. Tillyard prefers to see him as a "young reformer" and a Baconian,⁴ while Douglas Bush calls him a rebel,⁵ and Mark Pattison refers to him as an "experimental reformer."⁶ These tags are used not to describe Milton's general attitude toward life but primarily his attitude toward Cambridge University. From such labels one might easily conceive of Milton as a fiery young rebel arriving at the doors of Christ's College with a single purpose in mind--setting right that which was wrong within Cambridge University.

To substantiate their claims that Milton had no use for Cambridge, these scholars have interpreted, purely for biographical purposes, a number of Milton's prose writings which, when considered as the products of a very adept seventeenth century rhetorician, fail to produce an image of the overbearing zealot of reform which would satisfy their concept of young John Milton. Milton's academic exercises or Prolusions (especially

³David Masson, The Life of John Milton (New York, 1946), I, 272.

⁴E. M. W. Tillyard in the introduction to Milton: Private Correspondence and Academic Exercises, Phyllis B. Tillyard, trans., (London, 1932), xxii, xxiv, cited hereafter as introduction.

⁵Douglas Bush, John Milton: A Sketch of his Life and Writings (New York, 1964), p. 10.

⁶Mark Pattison, Milton (New York, 1900), p. 43.

numbers I, III, IV, and VI), several of his private letters|to friends, his Apology for Smectymnuus, and his short treatise Of Education are the works most often cited. Within these writings, according to the scholars, are many of Milton's bitter attacks upon Cambridge which are cited as proof of his dissatisfaction as a student there and of his continued dislike for his alma mater| in later years.

Now, the picture of the rebel Milton is a romantic one. When considered as a reformer seeking to rectify the many wrongs he found about him, Milton increases in stature both as an intellectual and as a literary artist. Perhaps Arnold Williams' statement|best summarizes the reason why so many scholars admire Milton the revolutionist.

The seventeenth century is not so far away that|the iconoclasm, the individualism, the radicalism of Milton does not still offend the modern conservative.

* * * * *
But the Puritans, and above all Milton, were not of the conservative breed. To Milton the ultimate evil was conformity, the abandonment of the good fight, the reposing of one's salvation, religious or political, in institutions, ceremonies, or traditions.⁷

Much of the evidence evinced by the scholars to show how thoroughly Milton disapproved of Cambridge depends

⁷Arnold Williams, "Conservative Critics of Milton," Sewanee Review, 40 (1941), 90-106.

upon personal interpretation. These interpretations have done much to make Milton's attitude toward Cambridge an ambivalent one, and they have been so widely accepted that, in recent times, little if anything has been written to prove otherwise. This paper, therefore, will be, in itself, a radical undertaking since it will attack the almost universal belief that Milton maintained no fondness in his heart for Cambridge University. This undertaking must be attempted, for it appears that the young John Milton and his so-called anti-scholastic attitude have been misunderstood for a number of years. When viewed objectively and with some insight into the Cambridge curriculum and what was expected of Cambridge undergraduates in the seventeenth century, Milton's Prolusions become mere academic exercises with little of the personal element blended into them. Similarly, the Apology for Smectymnuus, while highly personal, wants reinterpretation as a piece of vehement satire aimed not at Cambridge University but at that man to whom Milton wrote this confutation. And, when considered as a rhetorical composition--tearing down the old and constructing the new in the traditional style of rhetoric--Of Education loses its violent attitude toward Cambridge.

An attempt to clarify Milton's rather complex attitude will be made in the following discussion in the hope

that sufficient evidence will be offered to show that there are little, if any, grounds for believing John Milton had any distaste for his alma mater. This discussion will progress chronologically. It will begin with a consideration of the Prolusions written by Milton as a student at Cambridge (1625-1632), with numbers I, III, IV, and VI receiving the greatest amount of attention because they are the ones most often cited for their "anti-scholastic" elements. Next, the Apology for Smectynus, written during a period of verbal warfare with Bishop Joseph Hall and his sons (1642), will be considered. Finally, this study will culminate with a discussion of two pamphlets: Of Education (1644), a rhetorical pamphlet (sounding much in tone like the earlier Prolusions) written to satisfy Samuel Hartlib, a zealot of educational reform in England; and The Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings (1659), another pamphlet often cited for its disparaging remarks about the English Universities. Other writings, such as private letters and autobiographical passages from works, will be discussed whenever they have relevance to the discussion, but major emphasis will be placed upon those works listed above because they are the ones which scholars summarize as demonstrating Milton's intense hatred for Cambridge.

The primary source for this paper is the Yale University edition of the Complete Prose Works of John Milton, Don M. Wolfe, general editor. However, to the present only three volumes of this work have been completed, covering Milton's writings through 1649. Therefore, the source for The Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings will be John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose, edited by Merritt Y. Hughes.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. The <u>Prolusions</u> --Exercises in Rhetoric	1
II. A New Look at the <u>Apology</u>	36
III. The Rhetorician at Work	52
CONCLUSION	78
BIBLIOGRAPHY	85
VITA	89

CHAPTER I

The Prolusions--Exercises in Rhetoric

In order to make a proper study of Milton's academic exercises or Prolusions, one must first examine the curriculum and methods of instruction at seventeenth century Cambridge University as a framework in which to place Milton and his exercises.

In the seventeenth century, Cambridge University existed primarily to train priests for the Anglican clergy. Tradition dictated what form of education the seventeenth century undergraduate would receive. The curriculum was basically Aristotelian; i.e., the undergraduate studies consisted mainly of logic, ethics, physics, and metaphysics.⁸ Nevertheless, some modification of the curriculum had been made before Milton matriculated as an undergraduate in 1625. Greek was introduced as a first year course along with geometry and physical science.⁹ However, "strong as tradition was, it did not comprise the only influence on university education in these years."¹⁰ Evidence today indicates that the curriculum at Cambridge, in the public schools and the colleges, was far from static. In

⁸Bush, p. 23.

⁹Masson, I, 260.

¹⁰Mark H. Curtis, Oxford and Cambridge in Transition 1558-1642 (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 116.

fact, it was changing as fast as the changing intellectual currents and public demand required. Although academic statutes were rigid in their insistence that the ancients be studied, professors were allowed to modify the statutes in order to teach ancient theories interpreted in the light of modern discoveries. For instance, the statutes for the professorship in astronomy instructed the professor not only to teach Ptolemy's Almagest and Hypothesis of the Planets but to interpret these works according to the new discoveries made by Copernicus and other recent authorities. The same instructions held for other professorships in geometry, geography, navigation, and history.¹¹

Thus, the impression that both Cambridge and Oxford in the seventeenth century were out-dated institutions where only the most abstract and tedious studies were conducted appears to be false, and Milton's depiction of Cambridge as a university steeped in medieval scholasticism (an attitude which is the primary concern of this paper) seems exaggerated. After a close study of the curricula at both Cambridge and Oxford between 1558 and 1642, Mark Curtis offers this opinion of the education provided at those universities:

¹¹ibid., pp. 116-117.

In contrast to what has formerly been believed about Oxford and Cambridge, an examination of collegiate education shows that they were still vigorous in their concern for the 'virtuous education of youth.'¹²

Instruction at Cambridge was conducted under the tutorial system, with one tutor or Fellow being assigned a given number of students. The tutor would make specific assignments to his pupils, who would later attend the tutor in his chamber to report their progress. An account of the procedure of Joseph Mead, a Fellow at Cambridge while Milton was a student there, shows exactly how the method worked.

In the evening they all came to his chamber to satisfie him they had performed the task he had set them. The first question he used to propound to every one in his order was: Quid dubitas? What doubts have you met in your studies today? For he supposed that to doubt nothing and to understand nothing were verifiable alike. Their doubts being propounded, he resolved their Quaere's and so set them upon clear ground to proceed more distinctly. And then having by prayer commended them and their studies to God's protection and blessing, he dismissed them to their lodgings.¹³

¹² Ibid., p. 115.

¹³ Tillyard, introduction, xviii.

"Whether such study was narrow, repetitious, and barren depended a good deal on both tutor and pupil."¹⁴

Besides the tutorial sessions, the students also attended public and private lectures by the professors. The public lectures (in scholis) were held by the University usually in the older schools while the private lectures were held by the individual colleges in the dining hall, chapel, or a tutor's rooms. The Cambridge statutes called for four public lectures each week in theology, civil law, medicine, and mathematics, and five each week in language, philosophy, dialectics, and rhetoric.¹⁵

When not listening to the lecturers, the students were actively engaged in academic debates or disputations. "To qualify for a degree every student had from time to time to maintain or to attack a given thesis before an audience in his college, sometimes in the Public Schools of the University."¹⁶ The disputation developed from the practice in the medieval universities of debating some question the answer to which had been left doubtful by the best authorities.¹⁷

¹⁴ Bush, p. 23.

¹⁵ William T. Costello, The Scholastic Curriculum at Early Seventeenth-Century Cambridge (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), p. 13.

¹⁶ Tillyard, introduction, xvii.

¹⁷ Curtis, p. 88.

To call these disputations merely debates between students . . . is like describing a Spanish bullfight as the killing of a cow. To the twentieth century the disputation is as exotic a performance as a bullfight to a non-Spaniard. The maneuvers of the disputants were as technical as the veronica and half-veronica; the audience was as critically appreciative; the ceremonial was as elaborate. And success as sought for! Fame and fortune often depended upon the disputant's skill¹⁸

Sophisters, students who had not achieved bachelorhood, were the disputants. They were required to appear four times during their four years as undergraduates--twice as the defendant of a question and twice as the objector. The ceremonials surrounding the disputations, either public or private, were lavish, being called quadragésimas, and were held each year during the Lenten season.¹⁹

Each argument of a given question included three separate stages of development. At the beginning, the first participant, called the respondent, proposed an answer to the question and supported it with evidence.²⁰ The logical defense of a thesis in a disputation usually

¹⁸Costello, p. 15.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 14-15.

²⁰Curtis, p. 88.

scholastically with Eton.²⁷ "The declared purpose of the foundation was the free education in all sound Christian and grammatical learning, of poor men's children, without distinction of nation, to the exact number of 153 at a time" ²⁸ It appears that Milton may have received some private tutoring in his home for a period of time. Some scholars believe that Milton received private instruction from Thomas Young whose tutoring probably supplied Milton with background in the classics, French, Italian, natural science, and perhaps geography.²⁹ Also, in his poem Ad Patrem, Milton points out how he was urged by his father to study.

I will not mention a father's
usual generousities, for greater
things have a claim on me. It
was at your expense, dear father,
after I had got mastery of the
language of Romulus and the graces
of Latin, and acquired the lofty
speech of the magniloquent Greeks,
which is fit for the lips of Jove
himself, that you persuaded me to
add the flowers which France boasts
and the eloquence which the modern
Italian pours from his degenerate
mouth--testifying by his accent to

²⁷ Harris Francis Fletcher, The Intellectual Development of John Milton (Urbana, Illinois, 1961), I, 165.

²⁸ Masson, I, 74.

²⁹ Bush, p. 22.

the barbarian wars--and the mysteries uttered by the Palestinian prophet.³⁰

This early instruction served him well and prepared him for his entrance to St. Paul's.

At St. Paul's, under the supervision of Alexander Gill and Alexander Gill the younger, Milton received a thoroughly "trivial" education. According to the curricula of the academies of ancient Rome, seven Liberal Arts were studied. The first part of such a curriculum, known as the quadrivium, included arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. The trivium, or second part of the classical curriculum, which included grammar, rhetoric, and logic, was the basis for Milton's education at St. Paul's School. "For St. Paul's School, which prepared Milton for Cambridge, was as completely given over to the study of the trivium, in Latin and Greek, as was the grammar school Ovid attended in Rome."³¹ During his years at St. Paul's, Milton became acquainted with not only grammar, rhetoric, and logic, but also history, oratory, philosophy, drama, composition, natural science, French, Italian, Hebrew, and possibly geography and music.³²

³⁰ Merritt Y. Hughes, ed., John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose (New York, 1957), pp. 84-85.

³¹ Donald Lemen Clark, John Milton at St. Paul's School (New York, 1948), pp. 3-4.

³² Bush, pp. 21-22.

Therefore, when Milton entered Cambridge University, he was completely oriented to the types of study which would confront him. Because of the excellence of his early education, it does not seem likely that any of the subjects he encountered at the University were foreign to him.

Milton's years as an undergraduate at Cambridge have been cited as a period of unhappiness, utter dejection, and loneliness. When he entered Christ's College in 1625, Milton was assigned to Fellow William Chappell. He experienced some unknown difficulty with his esteemed tutor and was rusticated in 1626.³³ Nothing is known of the incident which provoked his rustication, and it is not known on whom the blame was laid by the University. According to John Aubrey, one of Milton's earliest biographers, who received the information from Milton's brother Christopher, Milton was "whipped" by Chappell; but this seems more a rumor than a fact. While flogging may have occurred sporadically during the years that Milton was at Cambridge as a student, there is no record in existence of Milton having suffered or even deserved such a punishment.³⁴ Nevertheless, Milton was "sent down" from the University for one term.

³³Hughes, p. 7n.

³⁴Brian W. Downs, Cambridge Past and Present (London, n.d.), p. 237.

He remained at home for that term and spoke of his "exile" in Elegy I, a poem written to his friend Charles Diodati.

At present I feel no concern about returning to the sedgy Cam and I am troubled by no nostalgia for my forbidden quarters there. The bare fields, so niggardly of pleasant shade, have no charm for me. How wretchedly suited that place is to the worshippers of Phoebus! It is disgusting to be constantly subjected to the threats of a rough tutor and to other indignities which my spirit cannot endure. But if this be exile, to have returned to the paternal home and to be care-free to enjoy a delightful leisure, then I have no objection to the name or to the lot of a fugitive and I am glad to take advantage of my banishment.³⁵

In this passage Milton sounds much like an adolescent who, perhaps punished unjustly for some misdemeanor, is suffering more from wounded pride than from punishment. But this elegy has been cited as an early example of Milton's dislike for Cambridge University. He was reinstated after one term, and in a letter to Thomas Young (the date of which William Riley Parker has established with some validity as being 1627),³⁶ Milton

³⁵Hughes, p. 8.

³⁶John S. Diekhoff, ed., Milton on Himself (New York, 1939), p. 40.

writes:

I have written these lines at London among the petty distractions of the city, not, as usual, surrounded by Books. Therefore, if anything in this Letter has not measured up to your expectation, it shall be compensated by another more carefully written, as soon as I have returned to the haunts of the Muses.³⁷

The "haunts of the Muses" refers to Cambridge. Of course, it could be one of Milton's "literary clichés;" but if Milton had been in something less than a "state of grace" with his tutor and fellow students, it seems obvious that he would not have included such a fond epithet in his letter. And, if the letter was indeed written in 1627 as Mr. Parker's arguments seem to establish, then it was written shortly after his rustication and his supposed period of unpopularity. One would assume that Milton would still have been somewhat bitter about his recent "banishment." His bitterness was certainly obvious in his Elegy of 1626 to Diodati.

To support their contention that Milton's dislike for the University was evident as early as his first years as a student there, Hanford, Tillyard, and others have pointed to Milton's academic exercises or Prolusions.

³⁷ Unless noted otherwise, all passages cited from Milton's prose works will be taken from the Complete Prose Works of John Milton, Don M. Wolfe, general editor, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953-).

The autobiographical elements these scholars have found in the Prolusions have been interpreted quite freely. In fact, they appear to have been interpreted too freely. Tillyard especially has a definite tendency to read a biographical literalness into Milton's writings which may not be present at all.³⁸ Therefore, to present an ordered and objective study of Milton's attitude toward Cambridge as seen in his Prolusions, this paper will first discuss the current scholarly opinion of that attitude. Then, some repudiation of the current opinion will be made by demonstrating the looseness of interpretation which has been placed upon each Prolusion studied.

As an undergraduate at Cambridge, Milton read his Prolusions as required disputations before the students and Fellows. Some were read in the Public Schools of the University (In Scholis Publicis); others were read in Christ's College (In Collegio). "The academic exercises, which though they cannot be precisely dated [with the exception of number VI which was given at a vacation exercise in the summer of 1628]³⁹ belong in general to the latter part of Milton's university career and show the poet fully confirmed in his anti-

³⁸Hartman, p. 45.

³⁹Tillyard, introduction, xvii.

scholastic point of view and already a master of the rhetoric of humanistic reform."⁴⁰ At this time, the "poet" was nineteen years of age. Also, since Milton's sixth Prolusion is definitely dated 1628, it would be quite natural to assume that Prolusions I through V were probably presented between 1625 and 1628. Therefore, they would belong to the early part of Milton's university career, as he did not leave until 1632.

In Prolusion I, delivered In Collegio probably in Milton's second year, the topic of the disputation is "Whether Day or Night is the More Excellent." It is in the Exordium or introduction that scholars find the first references to Milton's unhappy status as an unpopular student. As he stands before his fellow students of Christ's preparing to present his oration, Milton gazes at the "unfriendly" faces before him. To those faces he remarks:

For how can I hope for your
good-will, when in all this
great assembly I encounter
none but hostile glances, so
that my task seems to be to
placate the implacable?
(I, 219)

Masson calls these lines a castigation of those students whose animosity toward him Milton could detect while

⁴⁰Hanford, Handbook, p. 356.

facing them.⁴¹ Hanford offers the opinion that these lines depict Milton as an "isolated" being, separated from his fellow students by his "asceticism," by his intellectual arrogance, and, perhaps, by his delicate physical appearance.⁴² And Thomas Hartman holds the same opinion.

Milton must have been deeply hurt during his early years at Cambridge, and, rhetorical rules or no rhetorical rules, he could not smother his chance of public revenge. Whether he was justified in what he did in this speech, [sic] cannot be determined because no one has explained the difficulty between Milton and his fellow students. However, whether his oratorical performance was a success can be determined with certainty. It must have failed; for by turning the will of his audience against himself, he has rendered persuasion impossible from the start.⁴³

The dominant impression of Milton at Cambridge is that of a very sensitive young man who worked diligently and conscientiously at his own private studies and who condemned the follies, vices, and lack of intellectual interests among his fellow students. Such an attitude would surely encourage unpopularity. But in justifying

⁴¹Masson, I, 277.

⁴²James Holly Hanford, John Milton, Englishman (New York, 1949), pp. 38, 30, cited hereafter as Milton.

⁴³Hartman, p. 24.

his position on Milton's lack of comradeship, Hanford takes into consideration Milton's over-active imagination.

One suspects . . . that the dislike which he finds in his associates is largely a figment of his imagination. Everything indicates that Milton was a singularly winning person and that when he met opposition it was usually because he sought it.⁴⁴

It may be assumed, then, that Milton is seeking to cultivate opposition in Prolusion I.

If one examines closely the opening sentences of Milton's first Prolusion, one will see that he begins by announcing that the primary duty of all orators is to win the good will of the audience. He then disregards this duty and states that his approach will be totally unorthodox.

At the outset of my oration
I fear I shall have to say some-
thing contrary to all the rules
of oratory, and be forced to
depart from the first and chief
duty of an orator.

(I, 219)

It is after this statement that he begins his bitter attack on the unfriendly faces in his presence. He sees only a few well-wishers and to them he will address his

⁴⁴Hanford, Milton, p. 38.

remarks. Thus, he reverses what Cicero and all other authorities on rhetoric called for and all but completely abuses his audience.

So provocative of animosity, even in the home of learning, is the rivalry of those who pursue different studies or whose opinions differ concerning the studies they pursue in common.

(I, 219)

This was not an atypical approach to a disputation for Milton.

He consistently opened with an exordium designed to capture the interest of his hearers, whether or not it had anything to do with the subject under discussion (and sometimes it did not). . . .⁴⁵

Then, just as suddenly as he had attacked his hearers, he reverses his attitude and says that if he is considered too vicious and his words too biting, he has opened his discourse in this way intentionally. "He wanted his discourse to resemble the earliest part of dawn, full of clouds from which the day gradually emerges."⁴⁶

⁴⁵ From a note to Prolusion I by Kathryn McEuen in the Complete Prose, I, 217.

⁴⁶ Fletcher, II, 432.

If you consider that I have
spoken with too much sharpness
and bitterness, I confess that
I have done so intentionally,
for I wish the beginning of my
speech to resemble the first
gleam of dawn, which presages
the fairest day when overcast.
(I, 221)

His disputation, after all, was "Whether Day or Night is the More Excellent," and he seems to have argued in favor of the day. There appears to be very little reason to believe that Milton was sincere in his attack on his associates in this Prolusion. If he appears anxious to offend, he appears more anxious to capture the attention of his audience. And, in all probability, there was no more animosity present than that friendly, competitive spirit which an argumentative presentation would inspire. What Milton displayed in Prolusion I was not his unpopular status but his desire to startle in order to persuade.

Milton appears at the peak of his persuasive powers in Prolusion III, a disputation delivered In Scholis Publicis and entitled "An Attack on the Scholastic Philosophy," which has been interpreted as Milton's complete condemnation of the lack of intellectual stimulation at his university. Those who would see Milton as a young reformer cite this exercise as his

statement of thorough distaste for Cambridge, its professors, and its curriculum. "In tone Milton's [third] Prolusion is entirely uncompromising. It is less an argument than a glowing poetical denunciation of scholastic philosophy and a panegyric of the new studies advocated by Bacon."⁴⁷

If I can at all judge your feelings by my own, what pleasure can there possibly be in these pretty disputations of sour old men, which reek, if not of the cave of Trophonius, at any rate of the monkish cells in which they were written, exude the gloomy severity of their writers, bear the traces of their authors' wrinkles, and in spite of their condensed style produce by their excessive tediousness only boredom and distaste; and if ever they are read at length, provoke an altogether natural aversion and an utter disgust in their readers.

* * * * *
 And so it is not likely that the dainty and elegant Muses preside over these ragged and tattered studies, or consent to be the patrons of their maudlin partisans. * * *

(I, 241-243)

His vehemence seems convincing, and because Milton calls for a study of nature in this Prolusion, it has been assumed that he was advocating the overthrow of the study of the classics and that he was strongly ". . . in favour of that real or experimental knowledge (Geography,

⁴⁷Tillyard, introduction, xxiii.

Astronomy, Meteorology, Natural History, Politics, etc.) which it was Bacon's design to recommend in lieu of the scholastic studies."⁴⁸ Proclusion III has been cited also by Tillyard as Milton's alignment with the Baconian movement.

[Milton] was actively opposed to the prevailing system of education, and for years afterwards continued to express that opposition. Indeed Cambridge seems to have evoked all those powers of resistance which in a congenial home and at a school where his talents were appreciated had been quiescent. It is quite possible that the whole trouble arose from his declaring from the first for the Baconians or educational reformers. Milton, exasperated at having to spend time on scholastic subtleties when he wanted to study history or mathematics, probably gave his candid opinion on educational methods.⁴⁹

This statement seems a desperate attempt to make Milton a promoter of scholastic reforms, and Tillyard is an example of those recent scholars who "overemphasize the Baconian possibility to the point where Milton is thrown into a fixed position in the so-called Battle of the Books."⁵⁰ More than calling for the overthrow of scholasticism in favor of more modern studies, Milton gives the impression that he would prefer a purer study of

⁴⁸Masson, I, 282n.

⁴⁹Tillyard, introduction, xxii.

⁵⁰Hartman, p. 42.

the ancients.

These studies are as fruitless as they are joyless, and can add nothing whatever to true knowledge. If we set before our eyes those hordes of old men in monkish garb, the chief authors of these quibbles, how many among them have ever contributed anything to the enrichment of literature? Beyond a doubt, by their harsh and uncouth treatment they have nearly rendered hideous that philosophy which was once cultured and well-ordered and urbane, and like evil geni they have implanted thorns and briars in men's hearts and introduced discord into the schools, which has notably retarded the happy progress of our scholars.

(I, 244-245)

Nor is his call for a study of nature in technological terms.

But how much better were it, gentlemen, and how much more consonant with your dignity, now to let your eyes wander as it were over all the lands depicted on the map, and to behold the places trodden by the heroes of old, to range over the regions made famous by wars, by triumphs, and even by the tales of poets of renown, now to traverse the stormy Adriatic, now to climb unharmed the slopes of fiery Etna, then to spy out the customs of mankind and those states which are well-ordered; next to seek out and explore the nature of all living creatures, and after that to turn your attention to the secret virtues of stones and herbs.

(I, 246)

There is something of a ruse involved in Milton's denunciation of scholasticism. He relies on clever trickery to out-wit his opponents who will defend scholasticism. If Milton's opponents consider him an advocate of modernity, if they interpret his speech as a call for the overthrow of scholasticism and the study of the ancients, Milton has won his argument; for in denouncing the ancients he also calls for a close study of Aristotle. This means that his opponents would be forced to denounce Aristotle in opposing Milton's thesis and would, therefore, defeat their purpose in upholding the study of the ancients in order to win the upper hand in the disputation. Of course, if one is to agree with Hanford, then Prolusion III is a thorough denunciation of Aristotle. "Milton stands with Colet in his devotion to Plato as opposed to Aristotle, with Erasmus in his scorn of the barbarous inanity of the schools."⁵¹ This does not seem true; Milton aligns himself with Aristotle. Milton's third Prolusion involves a deliberate juxtaposition of viewpoints in order to defeat all opposing arguments. He denounces scholasticism and calls for a pure study of Aristotle's teachings at the same time.

In all these studies take as your instructor him who is already your delight--Aristotle, who has recorded

⁵¹Hanford, Handbook, p. 356.

all these things with learning
and diligence for our instruction.
(I, 247-248)

And if Milton is in favor of studying such subjects as geography, astronomy, and natural history, he is interested in them as Aristotle taught them.

Probably, Milton was thinking about one or more of Aristotle's numerous studies of living creatures, his biological tracts on animals--the Historia Animalium, the De Generatione, the De Incessu, or the De Partibus Animalium--and his psychological tract, De Anima; his account of chemical elements in the Meteorologia; and possibly the spurious De Plantis.⁵²

Also, in Milton's call for a study of weather and astronomy, Aristotle's De Coela and his De Generatione et Corruptione could have been used. And the study on the nature of time and eternity is treated extensively by Aristotle in Books III and IV of the Physics.⁵³ Thus, Milton the "Baconian" has hardly left the study of ancient knowledge.

In rushing to judge Milton as a Baconian who totally opposes scholasticism in Prolusion III, scholars overlook several important facts, the most important of which is that Prolusion III is an academic exercise--syllogistic in style and presented in Aristotelian logic.

⁵²Hartman, p. 37.

⁵³Ibid.

And, ironically enough, although it vigorously attacks scholasticism, it is in accurate scholastic form.⁵⁴

Had Milton's attack been considered a serious one, he would probably have faced another period of rustication. During the Commencement exercises of 1631, objections were raised against one Nicholas Ganning, a Fellow of Corpus Christi, because he "railed against school divinity."⁵⁵ Yet, there are no records of any objections to the student Milton's "railings" against the basic method of study at Cambridge. One can easily imagine the Fellows of Cambridge enjoying the superb rhetorical style of the young Milton.

Satire also plays a large part in the tone of Prolusion III. Its satirical sections ". . . show a whimsical, almost rollicking temper, out for fun at the expense of all settled institutions, including colleges and the gods, and ready to break a lance with anyone."⁵⁶ The third Prolusion takes a fun-filled swing at the classical and reverent mythology. "Milton wishes he had not been obliged to struggle through scholastic philosophy, but instead had been forced to

⁵⁴ Donald Lemen Clark, "Milton's Rhetorical Exercises," The Quarterly Journal of Speech, LXVI (1960), 297-301, cited hereafter as Quarterly.

⁵⁵ Tillyard, introduction, xxiii.

⁵⁶ J. N. French, "Milton as Satirist," Publication of the Modern Language Association, 51 (1936), 414-429.

clean out the stable of Augeas."⁵⁷

. . . and I have envied Hercules
his luck in having been spared
such labors as these by a kindly
Juno.

(I, 242)

Now satire does not imply dislike; it is, instead,
a method of approach. And, in his satiric vein, Milton
echoes another ancient--Juvenal, the great Roman
satirist, who writes in Satire I:

Must I be forever only a listener--
never talk back,
Though bored so often by the Theseid
of Cordus, the hack?
Is this man or that, without my revenge,
to pour out a stream
Of love wails, farces, a saga of
Telephus, ream on ream
To waste a whole day, or a hackneyed
Orestes, now distending
All over the margins and onto the back,
without ever ending.
No man knows his own house so well
as I know the grove of Mars
And Vulcan's cave, close to where the
cliffs of Aeolus are.
What the winds are doing, what souls
Aeacus in hell torments,
From where someone is stealing that
Golden Fleece, how immense
Are the ash trees Nonychus hurls
in battle--these epics bombard
Our eardrums, Fronto's sycamores
shake, his statues are jarred,
And the constant reciting cracks
marble pillars and pilasters.
You get the same kind of tripe
from poets or poetasters.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

I too had to learn that stuff in
 school, on pain of the rod;
 I too in my speech gave hindsight
 advice to Sulla to nod⁵⁸
 His dotage away in peace and private
 life. But today
 It's surely stupid indulgence, when
 so many bardlets bray
 All around, to spare the paper they're
 sure to desecrate.⁵⁹

It is quite possible that Milton recalled these words
 when he wrote his own denunciation:

Believe me, my learned friends,
 when I go through these empty
 quibbles as I often must, against
 my will, it seems to me as if I
 were forcing my way through rough
 and rocky wastes, desolate wilder-
 nesses, and precipitous mountain
 gorges. And so it is not likely
 that the dainty and elegant Muses
 preside over these ragged and tat-
 tered studies, or consent to be
 patrons of their maudlin partisans;
 and I cannot believe that there was
 ever a place for them on Parnassus
 unless it were some waste corner at
 the very foot of the mountain, some
 spot with naught to commend it,
 tangled and matted with thorns and
 brambles, overgrown with thistles
 and nettles, remote from the dances
 and company of the goddesses, where
 no laurels grow nor flowers bloom,
 and to which the sound of Apollo's
 lyre can never penetrate.

(I, 243)

⁵⁸ The reference is to the Emperor Sulla who retired
 some one hundred twenty years before Juvenal lived. It
 appears that Juvenal's exercise was to debate whether
 Sulla should have retired. Juvenal took the affirmative
 position.

⁵⁹ Herbert Creekmore, trans., The Satires of Juvenal
 (New York, 1963), pp. 25-26.

The reference to the Muses recalls to mind Milton's letter to Thomas Young in which he referred to Cambridge as the "haunts of the Muses." And in a letter to his former instructor Alexander Gill in 1628, Milton referred to Cambridge as the "cloisters of the Muses." Is Cambridge both the home of the Muses and barren of their presence at the same time? The only answer it would seem is that the letters are personal and reflect Milton's personal opinion; Prolusion III is rhetorical, and filled with phrases of persuasion.

If read and interpreted as Milton's last words on the subject of scholasticism, Prolusion III does appear to be a thorough denunciation of Cambridge and all the ideals for which it stood in the seventeenth century. However, if considered as an academic exercise, as an assigned rhetorical declamation to be refuted by other students, then this exercise loses its personal element. It becomes not Milton's own attitude toward the University but his contribution to an academic disputation.

We cannot, as others have, accept the attack in this prolusion as Milton's confirmed attitude toward all scholastic disciplines. What he says here is confined to this one oratio, and must not be indiscriminately spread over his mind or writings.⁶⁰

⁶⁰Fletcher, II, 471.

Prolusion IV is of interest only in that while discussing the thesis "In the Destruction of any Substance there can be no Resolution into First Matter," Milton interrupts his dialectic with the remark that he is boring himself and expects that he is certainly boring his listeners.

I cannot tell whether I have
bored you, but I have certainly
bored myself to extinction.
(I, 254)

However insignificant such a statement might seem, it is an important one to scholars who insist that Milton hated his scholastic studies. It is certainly not an attack on scholasticism or an opinion of the Cambridge curriculum, but some learned men consider it an insight into Milton's own opinion of the work which he was undertaking at the time. However, the statement sounds more like a rhetorical device aimed at keeping the "good will" of his listeners than another attack on scholasticism. It is enough to say, then, that Prolusion IV offers no evidence of Milton's alleged animosity toward Cambridge.

In a discussion of Milton's academic exercises, something should be said briefly about Prolusion V, delivered In Scholia Publicis. As though warning his listeners against taking him at his word in Prolusion III,

Milton's fifth Prolusion is a completely scholastic oration written on a scholastic topic, "There are no partial Forms in an Animal in addition to the Whole." "It is an oratio, another opponency, and its eloquence cannot be denied."⁶¹ The style of this exercise gives the impression that Milton lingered lovingly over its preparation, and that it was not a dull scholastic argument to be presented in compliance with the antiquated practices of a medieval university.

Every statement he made in Prolusion III about the complete aridity and lack of vitality in scholastic matters is refuted by the rhetoric of this one piece. He might almost seem to be refuting himself, as expressed in Prolusion III; but we must recall⁶² that both topics were set for him.

Finally, attention must be focused upon Prolusion VI, a broad, sometimes bawdy composition in which Milton gives his sense of humor a free rein. This exercise has been cited as proof that Milton's previous unpopularity was ended by 1628, the date of its presentation.

Prolusion VI was presented "In the College Summer Vacation" in the summer of 1628. It is a satirical piece done in fun, and it is not to be taken at its

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid.

face value. The vacation exercise seems to have been a rollicking affair in tone much like the mock ceremonies honoring the boy bishop or the boy pope of the Middle Ages. The Prolusion is presented in mock solemnity with prose of a sober style, but it is filled with seeming nonsense.

Milton was asked to serve as Dictator of the affair, and he sets the mood for merriment with his Prolusion. He mentions that there are enough fools in the world without adding himself, and he admits that the whole affair is somewhat silly. However, he hastens to add that it is intended to be silly, and there is no reason for him to refrain from playing the part of the fool.⁶³

. . . as if the world were not already full of fools, as if that famous Ship of Fools, as renowned in song as the Argo herself, had been wrecked, or finally as if there were not matter enough already to make even Democritus laugh.

But I ask your pardon, my hearers; for though I have spoken somewhat too freely, the custom which we celebrate today is assuredly no foolish one, but on the contrary most commendable, as I intend to make plain forthwith.

.
 . . . there is assuredly no reason why I should be ashamed to play the wise fool for a while, especially at the bidding of him whose duty it

⁶³ Ibid., p. 446.

is, like the aediles' at Rome, to organise these shows, which are almost a regular custom.

(I, 266-267)

It is interesting to note, also, that Milton's fondness for Cambridge is nowhere more obvious than in the lines of this Prolusion.

On my return from that city which is the chief of all cities. . . I looked forward to enjoying once more a spell of cultured leisure, a mode of life in which, it is my belief, even the souls of the blessed find delight. I fully intended at last to bury myself in learning and to devote myself day and night to the charms of philosophy. . . .

(I, 266)

He then mentions that he has recently received enough kindnesses from his fellow students to warrant his agreeing to any request made of him. It appears that some time previously he had delivered an academic oration which he felt would never succeed. But much to his surprise and delight it was received well by the students.

For, when, some months ago, I was to make an academic oration before you, I felt sure that any effort of mine would have but a cold reception from you, and would find in Aecus or Minos a more lenient judge than in any one of you. But quite contrary to my expectation, contrary indeed to any spark of

hope I may have entertained, I heard, or rather I myself felt, that my speech was received with quite unusual applause on every hand, even on the part of those who had previously shown me only hostility and dislike, because of disagreements concerning our studies.

(I, 267)

This statement appears to be a reference to Prolusion I in which Milton had attacked his audience but had later stated that it had been his intention to do so.⁶⁴ The mention of hostility toward him by certain students is interesting but seems minor. It is unlikely that any student would spend four or more years in college and not clash with another student at one point in his career.

While the entire exercise is filled with fun and nonsense, it still seems to hint at a fondness in Milton's heart for his fellow students and for the University. And while he never makes a specific statement to the effect, that fondness is sensed in the general language of Prolusion VI and in such passages as the following.

Certainly I do not consider that I need beg and implore the help of the Muses, for I find myself surrounded by men in whom the Muses and the Graces are incarnate, and

⁶⁴Ibid.

it seems to me that Helicon and all
 the other shrines of the Muses have
 poured forth their nurslings to
 celebrate this day, so that one might
 believe that the laurels of Parnassus
 pine and fade for lack of them,
 (I, 270)

If the opinions of such scholars as Masson, Till-
 yard, and Hanford are to be accepted, then Milton's
Prolusions not only show the young rebel's low opinion
 of the medieval curriculum of Cambridge but also point
 out his rather unpopular status among the students at
 Christ's College for holding fast to that opinion.
 Masson summarizes what he considers Milton's attitude
 toward Cambridge while a student there by stating:

For the present it is enough to
 say that, as Milton came to be one
 of those who advocated a radical
 reform in the system of the English
 Universities, and helped to bring
 the system as it existed into popu-
 lar disrepute, so the dissatisfaction
 which then broke out so conspicuously
 had begun, and had been already mani-
 fested by him, while he was still at
 Cambridge. In other words, Milton,
 while at Cambridge, was one of those
 younger spirits--Ramists, Baconians,
 Platonists, as they might be called,
 collectively or distributively--who
 were at war with the methods of the
 place, and did not conceal their
 hostility.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Masson, I, 272.

If Milton conducted a "war of reform" while he was a student at Cambridge, it must have been a weak one. For nothing in the way of radical reforms occurred either during his time in residence there or after his departure in 1632. Again, as if substantiating pre-conceived ideas with misinterpreted passages from Milton's writings, Bush draws a conclusion very similar to that of Masson about the student Milton.

In and between the lines of his academic speeches and private letters and his early Latin and English poems we get a picture of a strong, sensitive, and morally fastidious young man who rises from some initial unpopularity to the enjoyment of friendly esteem; an ardent, liberal humanist who rebels against the scholastic curriculum and has a large and thrilling vision of a new era in England and the world that he may help to inaugurate. . . .⁶⁶

Mr. Bush's "picture" is so perfect that one is inclined to remark that he has read more between the lines than in them. These are both rather idealized pictures of young John Milton.

However, if viewed objectively, the Prolusions cannot be viewed as Milton's definite opinion of Cambridge. They were exercises in the art of rhetoric and oratory, and Milton was quite a polished rhetorician.

⁶⁶Bush, p. 10.

In the college exercises he demonstrated his unusual ability to manipulate words oratorically and eloquently, since, in essence, that was his purpose, in order to persuade his audience to agree with his proposition. At one point he deliberately insulted all who refused to accept his proposition, or even those who had some possible doubts about its merit.

He was partisan; he was unfair; he ranted; he was witty, even humorous; but above all he was eloquent. He embarked on flights of words in his prose that soar and almost sing. He insisted that he was only being reasonable, but damned anyone who did not instantly agree, whether reasonably convinced or not.⁶⁷

His wit was usually rhetorically light, but occasionally he slipped into coarser humor which was almost slapstick, even bawdy, appearing primarily as scorn and scoffing.⁶⁸ He used every possible rhetorical device at hand to persuade his listeners to accept his views. Milton's Prolusions, then, were almost universally academic, with little of the personal element in them. And, when viewed objectively, they do little to prove that Milton had no fondness for his alma mater while a student within her walls.

⁶⁷Fletcher, II, 435.

⁶⁸Ibid.

CHAPTER II

A New Look at the Apology

If Milton's academic exercises do not sufficiently satisfy those scholars who would prove how vehemently Milton disliked Cambridge University, then the violent railings against that institution in a pamphlet entitled An Apology Against a Pamphlet Called A Modest Confutation of the Animadversions of the Remonstrant against Smectymnuus add considerable fuel to the fire. Passages from the Apology have been cited as Milton's open and frank statements concerning the "sickness" of the University and the utter lack of intellectual vigor among the Fellows and students there. Yet, as in the case of Milton's earlier Prolusions, the Apology has, in some instances, been misinterpreted and read strictly for its biographical content, which often does not exist except in the mind of the interpreter.

The Apology for Smectymnuus appeared in 1642 during a time in which Milton was involved in a public controversy concerning church government. The controversy grew in intensity when, in 1641, Parliament, with a strong Puritan element present, began to debate the question of church reform. Into this debate was introduced the Root and Branch Bill calling for the total abolition

of the Episcopacy in the Church of England. As a result of the introduction of this bill, two factions sprang up, one advocating the abolition of the Episcopacy and one clamoring for its preservation; and the controversy raged in the form of public pamphlets for and against the impending reform measure. Bishops Joseph Hall and James Usher, prominent leaders of the pro-episcopal faction, between them published a number of pamphlets which argued for the preservation of the Episcopacy. Among Hall's pamphlets was one entitled An Humble Remonstrance to the High Court of Parliament, which appeared in 1641. At this point the "Smectymnuus" controversy took form. Hall's pamphlet was answered by a group of Puritan ministers who signed their pamphlet with the word "Smectymnuus"--a word composed of the initials of the various ministers.⁶⁹

The Smectymnuans were answered in pamphlets by both Bishop Hall and Bishop Usher. Hall's pamphlet was entitled Defense of the Humble Remonstrance against the frivolous and false exceptions of Smectymnuus.⁷⁰ Shortly thereafter, Milton joined in the controversy and answered

⁶⁹Hanford, Handbook, p. 77. The five ministers were Stephen Marshall, Edmund Calamy, Thomas Young, Matthew Newcomen, and William Spurstow. For further information about these men see Masson, II, 219-220.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 82.

Hall with a pamphlet entitled Animadversions upon the Remonstrant's Defense against Smectymnuus in which he attacked Bishop Hall with ridicule and scorn.⁷¹ Some time passed before Milton's pamphlet was answered. It was not until March or April of 1642 that A Modest Confutation of the Animadversions of the Remonstrant against Smectymnuus appeared.⁷² In this pamphlet, Milton is attacked and his reputation as a scholar at Cambridge University is smeared. It is said of him that his Cambridge years were filled with wild, indecent revelries, that he was an unpopular student of whom the University eventually ridded itself by "vomiting" him forth, after which he proceeded to reside in a "suburb sinke" of London, i.e., a neighborhood of some ill repute. One can imagine the indignation Milton experienced as he read through the pages of the pamphlet. In a short time, Milton set out to answer the charges brought against him in the Modest Confutation. His reply appeared in the form of the Apology for Smectymnuus.

In the pages of the Apology, Milton takes great care to vindicate his reputation against the vicious charges made in A Modest Confutation. As he discusses his youthful years, he mentions Cambridge University in

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Masson, II, 398.

several places. Two of these passages have been cited by scholars as attacks upon Cambridge as scurrilous in nature as those in Prolusion III. The first passage supposedly attacks not only Cambridge but also "her sister" Oxford.

As for the common approbation or dislike of that place, as now it is, that I should esteeme or dis-esteeme my selfe or any other more for that, too simple and too credulous is the Confuter, if he thinke to obtaine with me, or any right discerner. Of small practize were that Physitian who could not judge by what both she or her sister, hath of long time vomited, that the worser stuffe she strongly keeps in her stomack, but the better she is ever kecking at, and is queasie. She vomits now out of sicknesse, but ere it be well with her, she must vomit by strong physick.

(I, 884-885)

The second passage appears to be a reference to Milton's own opinion of his fellow students at Cambridge.

There while they acted, and over-acted, among other young scholars, I was a spectator; they thought themselves gallant men, and I thought them fools, they made sport, and I laught, they mispronounc't and I mislik't, and to make up the atticisme, they were out, and I hist.

(I, 887)

In order to distinguish the tone of this piece it must be remembered that Milton's reputation had been attacked in A Modest Confutation, and Milton takes the opportunity which the Apology offers to set the records straight. He does so with sharp sarcasm, bitter wrangling, and pettiness.⁷³ However, against whom was Milton defending himself? The entire tone of the Apology--its acceptance as an autobiographical account of Milton's college years or as an attempt to refute the Confuter's charges--is dependent upon the answer to this question.

A Modest Confutation has been attributed to the pens of a number of men. Some scholars believe it to have been the work of Bishop Hall, while others consider it the work of Hall's eldest son, the Reverend Robert Hall. Masson is among the latter.⁷⁴ There is reason to believe, however, that two men co-authored the Confutation. In his Apology Milton at times is careful to distinguish between two different writers. He believes he sees both the hand of Bishop Hall, the Remonstrant, and that of his son, the Confuter, both of whom he addresses frequently.⁷⁵ According to Milton's

⁷³From a preface to the Apology by Frederick L. Taft in the Complete Prose, I, 866.

⁷⁴Masson, II, 394.

⁷⁵Milford C. Jochums, crit. ed., "John Milton's An Apology Against a Pamphlet Called A Modest Confutation of the Animadversions upon the Remonstrant against Smectymnus," Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, XXXV, Nos. 1-2 (Urbana, University of Chicago Press, 1950), 3.

own intuitive glimpses into the authorship of the Confutation, the Confuter, in Milton's mind, is a rather young man just recently graduated and still at the "University." If Milton is correct in assuming that the Confuter is a young man, then the Reverend Robert Hall could not have been a co-author of the Confutation, for Hall was about two years Milton's senior and may have been at Cambridge as an undergraduate with him. It seems likely that Milton had a younger man in mind. Although Hall proceeded to take his M. A. and D. D. degrees at Oxford,⁷⁶ for such men as Masson and Hanford he is the ideal candidate for Confuter because his undergraduate work was done at Cambridge. Therefore, according to their opinions, whenever Milton makes a derogatory remark about the University, he is obviously aiming that remark toward Cambridge. However, if the Confuter was someone other than Robert Hall, which seems to be the case if Milton's opinion about the Confuter's youth is to be accepted, then the references to the University may not, in all instances, apply to Cambridge.

According to Milford C. Jochums, who has brought forth a critical edition of Milton's Apology, there is substantial evidence to lead one to believe that the Confuter is A Modest Confutation was one of Bishop

⁷⁶Masson, II, 394.

Hall's younger sons. In his earlier pamphlet Animad-
versions, Milton suggested that those Bishoprics and
 Deaneries which encouraged young scholars to take
 orders in the hope of gaining an appointment should be
 abolished. The Confuter, in A Modest Confutation,
 answered this suggestion with the statement that he was
 "one of those young scholars." Thus, according to
 Jochums, if the Confuter meant that he had received
 such encouragement by being offered a high church post,
 then the Confuter cannot be Hall's son, Robert, for Hall
 and his eldest son were Pensioners at Emmanuel College,
 Cambridge.⁷⁷ But Hall had five other sons, four of whom
 may be dismissed as prospective Confuters. Joseph,
 Bishop Hall's second oldest son, was a layman; and
 George was a commoner at Exeter College, Oxford. Of
 Hall's three younger sons, Samuel had been appointed a
 sub-Dean at Exeter in 1634 but "seems not to fit the
 situation," and John's involvement in law disqualifies
 him.⁷⁸ It is Hall's youngest son, a young scholar at
 Oxford, to whom Jochums assigns the role of Confuter.
 "Edward, who probably took his B. A. in 1640 at Oxford,
 who had a fellowship until his death on December 24, 1642,
 and who apparently held the position of 'Artium Professor'

⁷⁷Jochums, p. 3.

⁷⁸Ibid.

at Oxford, appears most nearly to fit Milton's description."⁷⁹ Jochums believes that since Milton mentions in the Apology that the Confuter has a "worse plague in his middle entrails" than that plague which the Confuter had stated raged in Milton's "suburb sinke," he may have had some knowledge of an illness which the Confuter suffered. Edward Hall was dead a few short months after the appearance of the Apology.⁸⁰

Now, if parts of A Modest Confutation were written by Edward Hall instead of his brother, Robert, then some of Milton's vituperative statements against the University might be explained in a different light.

Milton begins his self-vindication by thanking the Confuter for the "commodious lye" that he was "vomited" from the University.

. . . for it hath given me an apt occasion to acknowledge publickly with all gratefull minde, that more then ordinary favour and respect which I found above any of my equals at the hands of those curteous and learned men, the Fellowes of that Colledge wherein I spent some yeares: who at my parting, after I had taken two degrees, as the manner is, signifi'd many wayes, how much better it would content them that I would stay; as by many Letters full of kindnesse and lov-

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

ing respect both before that time, and long after I was assur'd of their singular good affection towards me. Which being likewise propense to all such as were for their studious and civill life worthy of esteeme, I could not wrong their judgements, and upright intentions, so much as to be still encourag'd to proceed in the honest and laudable courses, of which they apprehended I had given good prooffe. And to those ingenuous and friendly men who were ever the countnancers of vertuous and hopefull wits, I wish the best, and happiest things, that friends in absence wish one to another.

(I, 884)

If one is to accept Milton at his word here, then his description of his associations at Cambridge contradicts what one scholar has said of his relationship with the men at Cambridge.

He shows, in his references to Cambridge, little sign of ever having appreciated the stature of the many able, learned, and very individual scholars who peopled the University in his time. His tone is usually one of complaint, often of contempt.⁸¹

The passage from the Apology hardly seems one of complaint or of contempt. Rather, the words reveal a fondness for the place where Milton spent most of his

⁸¹Rose MacCauley, Milton (New York, 1935), pp. 7-8.

adolescent years, where he worked diligently, and where he gained the friendship of many able, worthy men. Yet, they also contradict the feelings Milton expressed in a letter to Alexander Gill in 1628.

Indeed whenever I remember your almost constant conversations with me (which even in Athens itself, nay in the very Academy, I long for and need),⁸² I think immediately, not without sorrow, of how much benefit my absence has cheated me--me who never left you without a visible increase and growth of Knowledge, quite as if I had been to some Market of Learning.

(I, 314)

If, in 1628, Milton is longing for the friendship he had enjoyed with Gill, in 1642 he is fondly recalling the friendships he cultivated during his seven years at Cambridge. There is little reason to believe that he would lie in a public pamphlet. The lie could have easily been refuted by the Fellows at Christ's College.

His next mention of the University is to state that of little merit would be that physician who could not determine by what illness both Cambridge and Oxford "vomit" and that "the worsar stuffe she strongly keeps in her stomack, but the better she is ever kecking at,

⁸² Even in despair, however, young Milton can fondly refer to his alma mater as the "Academy" at Athens--a reference which, in Milton's classical turn of mind, is most complimentary.

and is queasie," With tongue very much in cheek, Milton seems to be referring to himself as being made of "better stuff." He implies that it is the worthwhile students who are "vomited out thence" and that the poorer ones are kept within the walls of the University. His "attack" seems to be not so much on Cambridge as on those students who are obviously not college material and who must be removed by a "strong physick." Also, that "worser stuffe she strongly keeps in her stomach" may refer to Edward Hall, the Confuter, who resided at Oxford. There seems to be a play on the word "sickness," which induces the "vomiting" of such as Milton while it will take a stronger "physick" such as his pamphlets to remove the likes of the Confuter from both Cambridge and Oxford. The mention of Oxford here is of great importance, for in discussing Milton's attitude toward Cambridge as it is seen in the Apology, scholars have confused his attitude toward Cambridge with his opinion of Oxford University.

The Confuter had accused Milton of patronizing riotous places in suburban London, to which Milton replies that his "suburb sinke" would seem a more fit place than "his university. Which, as in the time of her better health and mine owne younger judgment I never greatly admired, so now much lesse." The word

"his" appears to be the key to this passage. It should be noticed that Milton does not say "my" university, nor does he use the more formal "our." The word "his" refers to the Confuter's university. Edward Hall was a product of Oxford--an Oxonian. Oxford was "his" university. The question now arises: is Milton striking a satiric blow at Oxford? It would appear so. Perhaps there is something of the old school rivalry in evidence here. Such rivalry did exist in the seventeenth century. On July 10, 1652, one Master Morland of Wadham College, Oxford, made the following statement:

The Cantabrigians call us
Oxonians boys: we generously
confess that the Cantabrigians
are senile old men to rave so
madly.⁸³

Besides the college rivalry, there is evidence that Milton did not think highly of Oxford University. In a familiar letter dated 1656 to Henry Oldenburg, who had apparently retired and was pursuing scholastic studies at Oxford, Milton writes a less than laudatory opinion of Oxford.

What advantages that retirement affords, however, besides plenty of books, I know not; and those persons you have found there as

⁸³Costello, pp. 30-31.

fit associates in your studies
 I should suppose to be such
 rather from their own natural
 constitution than from the dis-
 cipline of the place--unless
 perchance, from missing you
 here, I do less justice to the
 place for keeping you away.
 Meanwhile you yourself rightly
 remark that there are too many
 there whose occupation it is to
 spoil divine and human things
 alike by their frivolous quib-
 bings, that they may not seem to
 be doing absolutely nothing for
 those many endowments by which
 they are supported so much to
 the public detriment.⁸⁴

It appears, then, that in the Apology Milton's "attack"
 on Cambridge is more an attack on Oxford and something
 of a defense of Cambridge since he does have fond words
 to say about his friendships there.

As for his comments about certain students' behavior
 at Cambridge, Milton is in keeping with the secondary
 purpose of his pamphlet--arguing against the Episcopacy.
 Those students whom Milton views on the stage are none
 other than divinity students.

But since there is such necessity
 to the hearsay of a Tire, a Periwig,
 or a Vizard, that Playes must have
 been seene, what difficulty was
 there in that? when in the Colleges
 so many of the young Divines, and
 those in next aptitude to Divinity
 have bin seene so oft upon the
 Stage writhing and unboning their
 Clergie limmes to all the antick

⁸⁴Diekhoff, pp. 67-68.

and dishonest gestures of Trinculo's, Buffons, and Bawds; prostituting the shame of that ministry which either they had, or were nigh having, to the eyes of Courtiers and Court-Ladies, with their Groomes and Madamoisellaes.

(I, 887)

In describing the lack of dignity which the divinity students possessed on stage, Milton is not attacking his fellow students so much as pointing out to what depth the clergy-to-be has fallen. It is a deliberate slap in the face for both Bishop Hall and his son. Furthermore, those scholars who cite this passage as Milton's condemnation of his associates, fail to recognize that his purpose here is to degrade those who have slandered him. To say that this passage reflects Milton's opinion of the students around him is to make a very narrow and biased statement. It is to judge all of the students at Cambridge on the basis of what Milton had to say about a particular group. In another work, The Second Defense of the People of England, Milton recalled his friendships at Cambridge in this manner:

After this I . . . retired to my father's house, whither I was accompanied by the regrets of most of the fellows of the college, who showed me no common marks of friendship and esteem.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Hughes, p. 828.

It should be noted that the word "fellows" is not capitalized as it is in the Apology when Milton refers to the professors at the University. In this instance fellows may refer to the students whose friendships he enjoyed as well as to the professors.

Like Prolusion III, The Apology for Smectymnuus has been read too closely, too literally, by scholars seeking some autobiographical hints in Milton's writings; and while the evidence is sparse, it is, nevertheless, enough to dissuade one from believing that in this prose pamphlet Milton expresses a genuine, personal dislike for Cambridge.

Like other controversialists of his time, Milton brings to bear every resource at his disposal from the ennoblement of himself to the consummate degradation of his opponent in order to maintain his position. The biographical passages in An Apology are, no doubt, very valuable to the student of Milton, but they must be accepted with some reservations for they are propaganda. That the propaganda is based on actual experience is quite possible; that it is a precise and accurate record of Milton's experience is improbable. The very orderliness of the development of Milton's inner thought as portrayed in the Apology suggests⁸⁶ retrospective rationalization.

⁸⁶Jochums, p. 4.

The University on trial in the Apology is not Cambridge. The one being attacked is Oxford. The attack is made at times, perhaps, in the spirit of school rivalry and at times rather vindictively and scathingly in order to hold Edward Hall before the public as an example of that which causes Oxford's "queasiness," and that at which she is "ever kecking" in an attempt to remove its presence.

CHAPTER III

The Rhetorician at Work

Part I

Of Education

Two years after he had defended his reputation and vindicated his name as a student at Cambridge University, in the Apology for Smectymnus, Milton published anonymously a short treatise in which he expressed his ideas on education. Its title was simply Of Education, and it was dedicated to one Master Samuel Hartlib.

Hartlib, Prussian born but of English and Polish parentage, was a man dedicated to the reformation of educational practices, and he was a strong advocate of educational reform in the schools and universities of England. He was an energetic disciple of the Moravian John Amos Comenius, an educational reformer of great renown in the seventeenth century.⁸⁷ Besides his advocacy of Comenian reforms in English education, Hartlib also solicited treatises from other reformers of his acquaintance. He urged and supported the writing of such pamphlets as Motion Tending to the Publick Good of This Age, The Reformed School, and The Reformed Librarie-Keeper, with a Supplement to the Reformed-

⁸⁷ Complete Prose, II, 184.

School by John Dury; A Continuation of Mr. John-Amos-Comenius-School-Endeavours by Cyprian Kinner; and The Right Teaching of Useful Knowledge by George Snell (the latter two were translated by Hartlib).⁸⁸

Where or when Hartlib and Milton became acquainted is not known. Some scholars have suggested that they were introduced through Milton's tutor, Thomas Young. Both men were interested in education. Hartlib had established a short-lived school in Chichester in 1630, and Milton had taught for a while in his home in London.⁸⁹ Milton suggests in the opening sentences of the pamphlet that Hartlib had asked him, on several occasions, to put his ideas concerning education on paper. These urgings seem to have been Milton's only motivation. As one scholar remarks, "[the pamphlet] was written down because Hartlib pressed upon him the public need and the possible opportunity of starting a reform. Milton had taken up the prose pen in the cause of reform, and he would not neglect this occasion."⁹⁰ So, to oblige Mr. Hartlib, Milton expressed his ideas in Of Education.

Many scholars point to Of Education to cite, once again, Milton's ambivalent feelings for the universities,

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 187.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 362. For a complete discussion of Hartlib's interests in educational reform, see Volume I, 151-166.

⁹⁰John Milton, Of Education, Areopagitica, The Commonwealth, Laura E. Lockwood, ed., (Boston, 1911), xi.

and toward Cambridge especially. Throughout the treatise Milton makes reference to the method of instruction in practice at the universities and how that method does much to turn students against learning. Often the denunciations are reminiscent of Prolusion III. However, it appears that Milton makes an erroneous or misleading statement at one point in his denunciations. This error has been corrected and will be discussed later in this paper.

Milton was a rhetorician at heart. In Of Education he displays his superb power of rhetoric, but there are many weaknesses present, and occasionally fallacious statements occur.⁹¹ As in most rhetorical compositions, Milton's exposition, which constitutes the first two paragraphs of the treatise, begins with his own self-justification and praise for the great wisdom and prestige of his audience (Samuel Hartlib).

I am long since perswaded, that to say, or doe ought worth memory, and imitation, no purpose or respect should sooner move us, then simply the love of God, and of mankinde. Neverthelesse to write now the reforming of Education, though it be one of the greatest and noblest designes, that can be thought on, and for the want whereof this

⁹¹Robert Herbert Quick, Essays on Educational Reformers (New York, 1904), p. 218.

nation perishes, I had not yet at this time been induc't, but by your earnest entreaties, and serious conjurements; as having my minde for the present halfe diverted in the persuance of some other assertions, the knowledge and the use of which, cannot but be a great furtherance both to the enlargement of truth, and honest living, with much more peace.

* * * * *
 And, as I hear, you have obtain'd the same repute with men of most approved wisdom, and some of highest authority among us. Not to mention the learned correspondence which you hold in forreigne parts, and the extraordinary pains and diligence which you have us'd in this matter both heer, and beyond the Seas. * * *

(II, 362-363)

Even his flattery, however, sounds forced, and Milton makes it clear that the proposals for sweeping educational reforms were not burning within him. As he begins his proposition, he makes it even more obvious that he will take a different viewpoint from that of Comenius and Hartlib. Alluding to Comenius' Janua linguarum reserata and Great Didactic, Milton comments:

To tell you therefore what I have benefited herein among old renowned Authors, I shall spare; and to search what many modern Janua's and Didactics more then ever I shall read, have projected, my inclination leads me not.

(II, 364-366)

This statement leads one to believe that Milton was not particularly impressed with the writings of John Amos Comenius. "It is as if he had said, 'I know your enthusiasm for your Pansophic friend; but I have not read his books on Education, and do not mean to do so.'" Thus writes David Masson. However, Masson continues, "Hartlib was a man of sense; and he would be glad, in reading on, to find that, with whatever independence Milton had formed his views, not even Comenius had out-gone him in denunciations of the existing system of Education."⁹² Masson goes on to imply that while some of Milton's ideas on education differed from those of Comenius, many others were in complete accord. "Might not Comenius himself, in his retirement at Elbing, be interested in hearing of an eminent English scholar and poet who had views about a Reform of Education akin to his own?"⁹³ As a Milton scholar, Masson led the way-- along with Foster Watson--in placing Milton among those seventeenth century reformers of education whose leader was Comenius.

However, Ernest Sirluck, in the introductory chapter of the Complete Prose, Volume II, proposes an opposing

⁹² Masson, III, 235.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 232.

view. It is his contention--and a logical one when Milton's educational background is considered--that Milton's viewpoint on education is fundamentally opposed to that of Comenius. In his discussion, Mr. Sirluck points out a number of differences between the two men's ideas.

Comenius called primarily for state supported educational institutions in which both boys and girls, regardless of social station, would receive their complete education. The subtitle of the Great Didactic is A certaine and exquisite way for the erecting of such Schooles in all Cities, Townes, and Villages of any particular Christian Kingdome, as that all young ones, whether males or females, none excepted, may be brought up in learning.⁹⁴

As for the education the youngsters would receive in Comenius' institutions of universal education, stress was placed upon vocational training, which would best prepare the children to earn a living. Special measures were taken in order to create more time in which the students might learn their trades. One such economy was the creation of an effectual means of speeding up the teaching of Latin.

But the main economy was to be made by eliminating from

⁹⁴Complete Prose, II, 186-188.

the curriculum the whole literature of western civilization, considered as a literature. . . . It was in fact not reluctantly, nor solely as a spendthrift of time, that the Comenians abolished literature. They disliked it in its own right. It was an enemy of 'science.'⁹⁵

On the other hand, in his scheme for the education of youngsters, Milton makes no provisions for the teaching of girls or of lower class boys. Nor is he interested in the support of the state in the creation of his academy. His will be a school for the sons of noblemen. He has no interest in vocational training.

Milton certainly emphasizes the material advantages that may be expected to flow from his plan: the reading of the authors of agriculture should ultimately lead to the improvement of the country's tillage, the study of medicine and of military science to the better condition and use of the armed forces; of political science and rhetoric to the improvement of Parliament, bar, and pulpit. But all these applications to external use, however desirable in themselves, are happy by-products of studies whose primary function is not to make good farmers or soldiers or legislators or lawyers or preachers of the students, but to serve as the materials of a liberal education.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Ibid., pp. 190-191.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 194.

And any reading of Milton's pamphlet on education will prove that he considers a study of classical literature a necessity in the education of a youth, not only as a source for poetry and oratory but for natural and social science, philosophy, and ethics. Thus, although Milton's ideas are sometimes in accord with those of Comenius and his disciples, especially in moral and religious training, he cannot be placed so completely in the Comenian camp of reform as indicated by Masson.

With his dismissal of Comenius' varied reform measures, Milton removes himself completely out of consideration as a Comenian. Mr. Hartlib, who obviously felt that he and Milton were in agreement on certain points of method, must have been disappointed; and "much of Milton's tract could hardly have been welcome to a thorough-going modernist."⁹⁷ Surely such a complete reformer as Milton has been described as being would have taken a considerable interest in the writings of Comenius.

After he has thoroughly dismissed the Comenian reformers, Milton begins his denunciation of the method of teaching in the English universities. His condemnation of the curricula includes many of the same

⁹⁷ Bush, pp. 90-91.

sentiments he had expressed in Prolusion III.

And for the usuall method of teaching Arts, I deem it to be an old error of universi- ties not yet well recover'd from the Scholastick grossnesse of barbarous ages, that instead of beginning with Arts most easie, and those be such as are most ob- vious to the sence, they present their young unmatriculated novices at first comming with the most in- tellective abstractions of Logick & metaphysicks: So that they hav- ing but newly left those Grammatick flats & shallows where they stuck unreasonably to learn a few words with lamentable construction, and now on the sudden transported under another climat to be tost and turmoild with their unballasted wits in fadomes and unquiet deeps of controversie, do for the most part grow into hatred and contempt of learning, mockt and deluded all this while with ragged notions and babblements, while they expected worthy and delightfull knowledge; till poverty or youthfull yeers call them importunately their several ways. * * *

(II, 374-375)

As a rhetorical device his denunciation is quite appropriate since it arouses the feelings of his readers.⁹⁸ Who would not feel contempt for a univer- sity still "barbaric" and "gross" in its practice of instruction? However, in his emotional attempt to prove the methods of study at the universities worthless,

⁹⁸ Wilbur E. Gilman, "Milton's Rhetoric: Studies in His Defense of Liberty," The University of Missouri Studies, XIV (1939), 50.

Milton appears to have made an error. When he criticizes the universities because they thrust upon their first-year students "the most intellective abstractions of Logick & metaphysicks," he seems more intent on gaining the sympathy of his audience than basing his argument on fact. According to William T. Costello, whose study entitled The Scholastic Curriculum at Early Seventeenth-Century Cambridge takes into consideration Milton's various attacks on that university, there is no evidence available today to prove that any first-year students were subjected to large amounts of logic; and under no conditions were they taught metaphysics.

First, according to the notebooks, Holdsworth's 'Directiones,' D'Ewe's autobiography, and the official statutes, the freshmen spent at least half their time on 'rhetoric,' that is, on poetry, history, the precepts of rhetoric itself, classical oratory, and such. Secondly, logic was administered in graduated doses, and in no case do we find⁹⁹ a freshman studying metaphysics.

One wonders if Milton's opponents, had Of Education been presented as an academic disputation at Cambridge, would have caught the erroneous statement and confronted him with it in their speeches of opposition.

⁹⁹ Pp. 43-44.

Many of the scholars who proclaim Milton the great reformer of English education have overlooked this mistake. They are too much interested in creating an image of Milton as they would like to see him to view him as he really shows himself through his writings. They make broad, sweeping statements about Milton's "protests." For instance, William A. Webb remarks about Of Education:

The tractate, like most of his prose pamphlets, was a protest--Milton was ever a protestant--in this case a protest against the prevailing methods of education which, instead of offering nourishing food to the young, too frequently placed before them only 'an asinine feast of sow-thistles and brambles.'¹⁰⁰

Mr. Webb continues with these comments on the usefulness of Milton's proposed reforms in Of Education.

. . . it gives verbal expression to the very genius of the Anglo-Saxon race; and where it has been tried out, either in Great Britain or in those newer commonwealths, including our own, which have sprung from her loins, it has had a great and profound influence in determining the character and molding the destiny of the English-speaking nations of the earth.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ William A. Webb, "Milton's Views on Education," Educational Review, LV (1918), 137-148.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

However, the scholars fail to recognize the rhetorical nature of Milton's pamphlet, and they also fail to see that when he denounces the universities, he is following the first rule of rhetoric. Since he is discussing education and attempting to persuade his readers that his proposals are best, he must first tear down the existing educational system by pointing out its weaknesses before he can construct his own system. Such is the tradition of oratory--to attack, destroy, and rebuild ideas, attitudes, or institutions. The attack on the universities cannot be interpreted as Milton's personal feelings; it is an emotional appeal to his audience. In Of Education, "Milton presents an expository subject with sufficient logical and emotional support to persuade the skeptical that his plan is both sound and practical."¹⁰²

Nor is Milton's proposed plan so radical or Comenian in nature as to be readily tagged revolutionary. In fact, Milton's proposals are steeped in humanistic tradition. It has been said that in his academy Milton attempted to combine the military training of Sparta and the humanistic training of Athens with the discipline taught by Christianity.¹⁰³ Perhaps such a capsulization is too

¹⁰²Gilman, p. 61.

¹⁰³Quick, p. 215.

overstated, but its aim is in the right direction, for "[Milton] was a sound adherent of the humanistic tradition which, as he recognized in the Tractate, is solidly rooted in the schools of Plato, Isocrates, and Aristotle. His inclination did not lead him to the Janua's or Didactics of Comenius, or to any other modern innovator."¹⁰⁴ In making his proposals, Milton was adapting classical educational principles to the needs of a Christian nation.

In the classical tradition, Milton proposes an academy for the education of noblemen's sons from the ages of twelve to twenty-one. The sons of commoners are not included, and girls are not considered at all.

First to finde out a spacious house and ground about it fit for an Academy, and big enough to lodge a hundred and fifty persons, whereof twenty or thereabout may be attendants, all under the government of one, who shall be thought of desert sufficient, and ability either to doe all, or wisely to direct, and oversee it done. This place should be at once both School and University, not needing a remove to any other house of Schollership, except it be some peculiar Colledge of Law, or Physick, where they mean to be practitioners; but as for those general studies which take up all our time from Lilly to the commencing, as they term it, Master of Art, it should be absolute.

(II, 379-380)

¹⁰⁴ Donald Lemen Clark, John Milton at St. Paul's School (New York, 1948), pp. 108-109.

In this academy the boys would study a varied and a difficult curriculum, ranging from grammar and logic to agriculture and military science, with time provided for music and sports activities. The ancient authorities--Aristotle, Plato, Horace, Virgil, Quintilian, to cite a few--would be read thoroughly.

The like accesse will be to Vitruvius, to Senecas natural questions, to Mela, Celsus, Pliny, or Solinus.

* * * * *
Then also those Poets which are now counted most hard, will be both facil and pleasant, Orpheus, Hesiod, Theocritus, Aratus, Nicander, Oppian, Dionysius, and in Latin Lucretius, Manilius, and the rurall part of Virgil.
(II, 390-391, 394-396)

Here Milton is proposing instruction in the classical literature which the modern Comenians would abolish in favor of vocational training.

All this was alien to the modernist Puritan and Comenian combination of practical training and practical piety. Comenian ideas, whether derived from Comenius, appealed strongly to various kinds of Puritans who disliked traditional education as pagan, aristocratic, and useless. No doubt the Comenian plan had something to be said for it, on its own drab and stuffy level. But Milton was concerned with

education, with individual cultivation and growth and public responsibility.¹⁰⁵

Although Milton fashioned his academy after those of ancient Greece and Rome, it most assuredly would have been a formidable one had it been established. One is inclined to agree with Rose MacCauley when she says that, in all appearances, "his Academies were to be the most laborious cramming-schools that ever afflicted schoolboys."¹⁰⁶ Even Tillyard concedes that study in Milton's academies would not have been easy. "The impossible demands Milton makes of ordinary human nature in his educational scheme are too well known to need further comment. . . ."¹⁰⁷

In projecting his academy, Milton appears to have taken the very best of all scholastic disciplines (this, although he was supposedly opposed to scholastic disciplines) and blended them into his ideal institution; and he seems to have been influenced not only by the ancients but also by the Courtesy Books of such sixteenth century men as Castiglione, Elyot, and Ascham.¹⁰⁸ In

¹⁰⁶ p. 92.

¹⁰⁷ E. M. W. Tillyard, Milton (London, 1966), p. 131.

¹⁰⁸ In his study Milton's Rhetoric, Wilbur Gilman draws some interesting parallels between the writings of such men as Castiglione and Elyot and Milton's ideas in Of Education. See especially p. 50 ff.

fact, Of Education has been called the last of a long series of treatises on education written by European humanists of such renown as Erasmus, Budé, and Vives.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, Foster Watson has established a sound and an interesting case for arguing that Milton was greatly influenced by the De Tradendis Disciplinis of the Spaniard Vives.¹¹⁰ However, as Watson speedily points out in his discussion, so heavily does Milton rely on the classical authorities that ". . . he ignores for the most part, in his treatment of subjects like 'Mathematics' and 'Natural Philosophy,' the very differentiations which had taken place between the age of Vives and his own age."¹¹¹ In other words, Milton, a man supposedly very modern in his thinking, very interested in establishing the modern studies advocated by Bacon, was very much a classicist in thought. When assigned to denounce the ancients in Prolusion III, he did so. Yet, when he is given the opportunity to hypothesize the type of educational institution he would consider ideal, he relies almost entirely on the writings of those same men as the sources of a good education. Perhaps Milton felt that the universities spent too much time empha-

¹⁰⁹ Bush, p. 91.

¹¹⁰ For a complete discussion of this matter, see "A Suggested Source of Milton's Tractate Of Education," Nineteenth Century, LXVI (1909), 607-617.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 615.

sizing the importance of logic and rhetoric, but he was not so much a modern thinker as to advocate the abolition of those studies. If Milton had been able to reform the universities in any way, it is likely that he would have made their curricula more classical than they were. But Of Education was not written with major reform measures in mind. It was Milton's expression of what studies he believed to comprise the best education a seventeenth century youth could receive, and, in truth, the pamphlet did not advance the science of education, nor did it move any group of reformers to follow its premises.¹¹²

A thorough study of Milton's ideas in Of Education shows them to be too idealistically conceived to be transformed into reality. Even Milton, "with one side of his mind," is aware of the practical impossibility of his educational ideals.¹¹³

Only I believe that this is not
a bow for every man to shoot in
that counts himselfe a teacher;
but will require sinews almost
equall to those which Homer gave
Ulysses,
(II, 415)

In short, Of Education is a rhetorical composition. It is an example of the type of prose of which Milton was

¹¹²Quick, p. 217.

¹¹³Roy Daniells, Milton, Mannerism and Baroque (Toronto, 1963), p. 169.

a master. He is given the happy task of theoretically renovating the English educational system. But he was not writing with the goal in mind of establishing his academy as a reality. He wrote simply to satisfy the persistent requests of Hartlib, and he satisfied those requests with an awkward, sometimes erroneous example of "deliberative rhetoric."¹¹⁴

To interpret Milton's rhetorical denunciation of the existing university system as his own personal opinion of the universities' worth and merit is to miss his point completely. In order to substitute his own plans and ideas he had to attack and tear down the existing ones; therefore, his assault on the universities was in order. And while his own educational ideas were perhaps too lofty and unrealistic, Milton proved that, as a rhetorician, he had not lost that power of oratory which he developed so carefully and skillfully as a student within the walls of Christ's College, Cambridge.

¹¹⁴Gilman, p. 45.

Part II

The Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings

In the Apology for Smectymnuus Milton attacks the divinity students who were his associates at Cambridge University for their looseness, pettiness, insincerity, and general lack of admirable qualities. In 1659 he is still attacking such students in his prose pamphlets. One such composition entitled Considerations touching the likeliest means to remove Hirelings out of the Church. Wherein is also discour'd of Tithes, Church-fees, Church Revenues; and whether any maintenance of ministers can be settl'd by law, suggests that ministers be self-supporting and not dependent upon the state and their parishioners for their livelihoods. Some scholars have also cited certain passages from this work as another denunciation of the English universities. But to consider this pamphlet another attack on those institutions is to read into its lines ideas which are not present.

Like most of his other prose writings, The Likeliest Means is somewhat rhetorical. Milton is again trying to persuade a certain group of people to his point of view. As he had offered certain "reform" measures in Of Education, Milton again offers reforms which might be undertaken for the betterment of the Church (according

to his own beliefs, of course). These measures he proposed in August, 1659, to the newly restored Rump Parliament.¹¹⁵ While this paper's primary interest in The Likeliest Means is Milton's remarks about the universities, Milton's basic ideas in the pamphlet should be mentioned.

In the opening lines of his treatise Milton addresses the members of Parliament by acknowledging their great wisdom and worthiness to govern England. Next, he launches his supplication for the separation of church and state and announces his opposition to the current system of legally enforced tithing, which was used to support the churches and their ministers. He urges that ministers should receive no pay for their ministerial duties--either from the state or from their parishioners--but should, instead, depend for their livelihoods upon their own private resources or upon some skill or trade.¹¹⁶ Throughout the treatise, it is Milton's contention that ". . . it would be better for the world if religious doctrine, or in fact doctrine of any kind, were never bought or sold, but all spiritual teachers wher to abhor the very touch of money for their lessons, being either gentlemen of

¹¹⁵The Rump Parliament--the original Parliament Cromwell had dissolved in 1641--had been recalled in May, 1659. See Masson, V, 605.

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 608.

independent means who could propagate the truth splendidly from high motives, or else tent-makers, carpenters, and bricklayers, passionate with the possession of some truth to propagate."¹¹⁷ What Milton advocates is a type of lay ministry, and in stressing this idea he denies the belief that "hirelings" need formal, university training. In fact, he attacks them for preparing at the universities and then expecting a substantial livelihood from their parishioners to make reparation for their university training.

They pretend that their education either at school or university, hath been very chargeable and therefore ought to be repaired in future by a plentiful maintenance: whenas it is well known that the better half of them (and oftentimes poor and pitiful boys of no merit or promising hopes that might entitle them to the public provision, but their poverty and the unjust favor of friends) have had the most of their breeding at school and university by scholarships, exhibitions, and fellowships at the public cost, which might engage them the rather to give freely as they have freely received.¹¹⁸

Scholars who attempt to prove Milton's contempt for the English universities have cited Milton's dis-

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 609.

¹¹⁸ Hughes, p. 876. All quotations from The Likeliest Means will be taken from this source, with page reference appearing in parentheses after the quotation.

cussion of a divinity student's education at those institutions as another attack on the entire university system. For example, Milton has this to say about the education received by "ministers of the gospel" at the university.

Next, it is a fond error, though too much believed among us, to think that the university makes a minister of the gospel; what it may conduce to other arts and sciences, I dispute not now: but that which makes fit a minister, the scripture can best inform us to be only from above, whence also we are bid to seek them: Matt. ix, 38, 'Pray ye therefore to the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.'

(p. 876)

He then proceeds to compile an extensive list of references from the scriptures to support his belief that "spiritual knowledge and sanctity of life" are sufficient knowledge for ministers.¹¹⁹ Perhaps it might be noted that this viewpoint of education in The Likeliest Means is quite different from that given in Of Education, in which he had stated:

I call therefore a complete and generous Education that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully and magnanimously all

¹¹⁹ Arthur E. Barker, Milton and the Puritan Dilemma (Toronto, 1942), p. 232.

the offices both private and public
like of peace and war.

(II, 379)

Such a "generous" education would require a number of years of study in Milton's "academy" until completion of the requirements for a Master of Arts degree. But Milton apparently does not consider it necessary for ministerial students to receive the education other young scholars receive. Perhaps university training is necessary for other students, but for ministerial students Milton prefers a practical education.

All this is granted you will say: but yet that it is also requisite he should be trained in other learning; which can be nowhere better had than at universities. I answer that what learning, either human or divine, can be necessary to a minister, may as easily and less chargeably be had in any private house.

.....
And the small necessity of going thither [to the university] to learn divinity, I prove first from the most part of themselves, who seldom continue there till they have well got through logic, their first rudiments; though, to say truth, logic also may much better be wanting in disputes of divinity, than in the subtle debates of lawyers and statesmen, who yet seldom or never deal with syllogisms. And those theological disputations there held by professors and graduates are such as tend least of all to the edification or capacity of

the people, but rather perplex and leaven pure doctrine with scholastical trash than enable any minister to the better preaching of the gospel.

(p. 877)

Any objective study of these comments on the university training which divinity students of the seventeenth century received can only prove that Milton makes no emotional attack on the universities themselves. He is attacking those students who waste their time studying subjects which, in his mind, will be of no use in ministering to the needs of the people. Yet, some scholars continue to insist that in The Likeliest Means Milton is again attacking the universities with that same "contempt for scholasticism which the younger Milton shared with the Christian rationalists."¹²⁰ Such a statement is another attempt to label Milton and to read suggestions into the lines of The Likeliest Means which are not there.

Milton does attack the divinity students; he does believe that the university is no place for a minister to receive his training. The minister of God is a minister of the people, one whose best education comes from ministering to those people.

. . . and to speak freely, it were much better there were not one divine in the universities,

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 230.

no school divinity known, the idle sophistry of monks, the canker of religion; and that they who intended to be ministers were trained up in the church only, by the scripture and in the original languages thereof at school; without fetching the compass of other arts and sciences more than what they can well learn at secondary leisure and at home.

(pp. 877-878)

The scholasticism, the corrupt teaching of the universities, or his own "contempt" for them, never enters Milton's argument. In fact, before concluding his treatise, Milton takes great care to point out that he does not hold learning in contempt.

Neither speak I this in contempt of learning or the ministry, but hating the common cheats of both; hating that they who have preached out bishops, prelates, and canonists, should, in what serves their own ends, retain their false opinions, their pharisaical leaven, their avarice, and closely their ambition, their pluralities, their nonresidences, their odious fees, and use their legal and popish arguments for tithes. . . .

(p. 878)

In The Likeliest Means, Milton the rhetorician is interested in changing established Church procedures for the education and maintenance of ministers. Only if the reader misinterprets Milton's brief mentionings

of the universities can there be any suggestion that The Likeliest Means contains any elements of Milton's "anti-scholastic" attitude--an attitude which has been created for him rather than by him.

CONCLUSION

That Milton was a rhetorician cannot be denied. When he attacked anything--idea or institution--he did so with the enthusiasm of an orator intent on winning his audience to his point of view. Because he frequently attacked Cambridge University in his orations, he has been considered a man who had little love for his alma mater. Indeed, quite often he raised objections to particular aspects of college life and often denounced others, as the Prolusions show.

Too much has been made of Milton's Prolusions; too much importance has been placed upon them as autobiographical sources. They have been called the words of "the young reformer, naively trusting in a root-and-branch policy, too little suspicious of the insensibility of human nature, and over-confident in the power of rules and institutions to hasten or delay an Age of Gold."¹²¹ On the basis of particular passages from the Prolusions, the assumption has often been made that what Milton was saying was what he sincerely believed. Milton's attacks on the methods of study at Cambridge have been used to make the seventeenth century Cambridge curriculum appear worthless. Tillyard, in his almost passionate desire to create an image of Milton the Grand and Admirable

¹²¹Tillyard, introduction, xxiv.

Rebel, denounces seventeenth century Cambridge because it seemed to stifle the genius of the young John Milton.

If for Donne the new philosophy had called all in doubt it had entirely failed to penetrate the ears of those in authority at Cambridge. To a young man eager to learn the changes in thought and the new discoveries of science it must have been agony to be kept for years to the treadmill of scholastic logic.¹²²

Yet, as Chapter I of this paper disclosed, Cambridge University in the seventeenth century changed as rapidly as public interest demanded. It was not buried in medieval scholasticism as Milton would have his audience believe in Prolusion III. All of the Prolusions are arguments written in the spirit of competition to affirm or deny a given thesis. They should not be considered autobiographical compositions in which Milton laid open his soul. Agreed, certain passages in Prolusion III do appear autobiographical; but too frequently these passages are ". . . seldom understood as the writer's response to the conventional expectation of his public that he should prove his right to be heard by 'ethical argument' or vindication of his own

¹²²Ibid., xix.

character."¹²³ But just as that vindication is an oratorical device, so, too, are the varied denunciations.

In Prolusion III the denunciation of Cambridge is a violent one, but the reader must not be misled by it. It has been taken too seriously and has not been considered for what it is--an objection, a rejection, an attempt to tear down that which he was attacking and to rebuild it in his own design.¹²⁴ He attacked his fellow students in Prolusion I, but, as he later explained, he did so for the purpose of being oratorical and not because he was an unpopular person.

Throughout his works, whenever Milton attacked anything, idea, person, procedure or method, institution, creed or cult, he was doing it in a systematic manner, and in the spirit of controversy in which he had been so well trained in school and college.¹²⁵

That "spirit of controversy" is quite evident in the Apology for Smectymnuus. But, in all probability, Milton's attack was on young Edward Hall and his father and not on Cambridge, as scholars would believe. Occasionally Milton mentioned Cambridge with no signs

¹²³ Merritt Y. Hughes, "Milton as a Revolutionary," A Journal of English Literary History, X (1943), 87-116.

¹²⁴ Fletcher, II, 154.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 155.

of vehemence. The Second Defense of the People of England was such an occasion. In discussing his education, Milton tells how his father had sent him to Cambridge, where he took his degree.

He then, after I had acquired a proficiency in various languages, and had made a considerable progress in philosophy, sent me to the University of Cambridge. Here I passed seven years in the usual course of instruction and study, with the approbation of the good and without any stain upon my character, till I took the degree of Master of Arts.
(p. 828, Hughes edition)

Milton makes no implication in this passage that his attitude toward Cambridge is anything but friendly. Would not a man who hated his university with so great a passion have attacked it at any opportunity and under any circumstances? It is difficult to believe otherwise.

However, the point to be emphasized is that Milton was a rhetorician, an orator, who thoroughly delighted in arguments. He stated in Areopagitica, "Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties." "And argue freely he would until his dying day. He was trained for it and assumed great value in testing, turning, trying all things."¹²⁶ For Milton, to argue and not attack was to lose half the battle.

¹²⁶ ibid.

When Milton attacked Cambridge in his third Prolusion he was arguing--arguing against the scholastic philosophy as he had doubtless been instructed to do. He was arguing again in the Apology, where his argument took the form of a personal vindication and, perhaps, an indirect argument not against Cambridge but against Oxford as the university which had produced the likes of his opponent. When he attacked the universities in Of Education, he was again arguing--offering a rhetorical argument (much like Prolusion III) against the existing educational system and substituting a plan of his own creation. And finally, when he mentioned the universities in The Like-liest Means to Remove Hirelings, it was with no vehemence. He was arguing against divinity students who spent their time studying subjects unnecessary for the education of a minister of God. All were formal, rhetorical arguments in which Milton attempted to persuade others to his own point of view.

Thus, the evidence offered to substantiate the position that Milton had no use for Cambridge University is of little consequence when viewed objectively. Scholars have based Milton's "uniformly unfriendly" attitude toward Cambridge upon assumptions--assumptions which do much to fit Milton into the mold of the Grand Rebel whose causes were all divinely inspired. Hanford, as

one final example, closes his eyes and dreams a vision of the Milton who best impresses him.

We see him as a young idealist, learned, brilliant, full of creative energy, but open to injury and in need of wise guidance from some really mature person capable of recognizing at once the strength and the weaknesses of his personality.¹²⁷

To create an image of a rebellious Milton who, throughout his works, never failed to attack his alma mater, its students and curriculum, is to increase the size of the mold. But it must be remembered that this mold has been formed from vague assumptions and personal interpretations which appear to have little basis in fact. Let it suffice to say, then, that the traditional idea of Milton's distaste for Cambridge is founded more on tradition than on fact. And, while he never made a direct statement to the effect but merely alluded to it in an incidental fashion, there appears to have been a fond spot in his heart not only for Cambridge University but also for his own years spent there as a student within its walls.

¹²⁷ Hanford, Milton, p. 21.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. Primary Sources

- Milton, John. Complete Prose Works of John Milton, gen. ed. Don M. Wolfe, 3 vols. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953-.
- Milton, John. John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes. New York: The Odyssey Press, 1957.

B. Secondary Sources

- Adams, Robert Martin. Ikon: John Milton and the Modern Critics. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1955.
- Ainsworth, Oliver M., ed. "Milton on Education," Cornell Studies in English XII. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1928.
- Barker, Arthur E. Milton and the Puritan Dilemma. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1942.
- Belloc, Hilaire. Milton. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1935.
- Bush, Douglas. John Milton: A Sketch of his Life and Writings. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1964.
- Clark, Donald Lemen. John Milton at St. Paul's School. New York: Columbia University Press, 1948.
- _____. "Milton's Rhetorical Exercises," The Quarterly Journal of Speech, LXVI (1960), 297-301.
- Clark, J. Scott. A Practical Rhetoric. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1886.
- Costello, William T. The Scholastic Curriculum at Early Seventeenth-Century Cambridge. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1958.

- Creekmore, Herbert, trans. The Satires of Juvenal. New York: The New American Library, 1963.
- Curtis, Mark H. Oxford and Cambridge in Transition 1558-1642. Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1959.
- Daniells, Roy. Milton, Mannerism and Baroque. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963.
- Diekhoff, John S., ed. Milton on Himself. New York: Oxford University Press, 1939.
- Downs, Brian W. Cambridge Past and Present. London: Methuen and Company, Ltd., n.d.
- Fletcher, Harris Francis. The Intellectual Development of John Milton. 2 vols. Urbana: University Illinois Press, 1961.
- French, J. Milton, ed. The Life Records of John Milton. 5 vols. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1949.
- _____. "Milton as Satirist," Publication of the Modern Language Association, LI (1936), 414-429.
- Genung, John Franklin. The Working Principles of Rhetoric. Boston: Ginn and Company, 1900.
- Gilman, Wilbur E. "Milton's Rhetoric: Studies in his Defense of Liberty," The University of Missouri Studies, XIV (1939).
- Hanford, James Holly. A Milton Handbook. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1961.
- _____. John Milton, Englishman. New York: Crown Publishers, 1949.
- Hartman, Thomas Rae. Milton's Prolusions: A Study. An unpublished dissertation at New York University, 1962.
- Hughes, Merritt Y. "Milton As A Revolutionary," A Journal of English Literary History, X (1943), 87-116.

- Jochums, Milford C., critical ed. "John Milton's An Apology Against a Pamphlet Called A Modest Confutation of the Animadversions upon the Remonstrant against Smectymnuus," Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, XXXV, nos. 1-2 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1950).
- Larson, Martin A. The Modernity of Milton. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1927.
- Laurie, S. S. Studies in the History of Educational Opinion from the Renaissance. Cambridge: at the University Press, 1905.
- MacCauley, Rose. Milton. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1935.
- Mason, M. G. "The Tractate Of Education by John Milton," Education, LXXIV (1953), 213-224.
- Masson, David. The Life of John Milton: Narrated in Connexion with the Political, Ecclesiastical, and Literary History of his Time. 7 vols. New York: Peter Smith, 1946.
- Milton, John. Of Education, Areopagitica, The Commonwealth, ed. Laura E. Lockwood. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1911.
- Nelson, James G. The Sublime Puritan. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1963.
- Nicolson, Marjorie Hope. John Milton: A Reader's Guide to his Poetry. New York: The Noonday Press, 1963.
- Pattison, Mark. Milton. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1900.
- Quick, Robert Herbert. Essays on Educational Reformers. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1904.
- Raleigh, Sir Walter Alexander. Milton. London: Edward Arnold, 1900.
- Raymond, Dora Neill. Oliver's Secretary. New York: Minton, Balch, and Company, 1932.
- Saurat, Denis. Milton: Man and Thinker. London: Johnathan Cape, Ltd., n.d.

- Smith, Logan Pearsall. Milton and His Modern Critics. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1941.
- Tillyard, E. M. W. Milton. London: Chatto and Windus, 1966.
- _____. Studies in Milton. London: Chatto and Windus, 1951.
- Tillyard, Phyllis B., trans. and ed., with an introduction by E. M. W. Tillyard. Milton: Private Correspondence and Academic Exercises. London: Cambridge University Press, 1932.
- Watson, Foster. "A Suggested Source of Milton's Tractate Of Education," Nineteenth Century, LXVI (1909), 607-617.
- _____. trans. Vives: On Education. Cambridge: at the University Press, 1913.
- Webb, William A. "Milton's Views on Education," Educational Review, LV (1918), 136-148.
- Wendell, Barrett. The Temper of the Seventeenth Century in English Literature. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904.
- Williams, Arnold. "Conservative Critics of Milton," Sewanee Review, XL (1941), 90-106.
- Wolfe, Don M. Milton and the Puritan Revolution. New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1941.

VITA

Roy S. Riner, Jr. was born in Lynchburg, Virginia, on June 21, 1944. He received his elementary and secondary education in the public schools of Amherst County. Upon graduation from Amherst County High School in 1962, he enrolled in Lynchburg College, from which he was graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English in 1966.

In Lynchburg, Mr. Riner taught ninth grade English at Dunbar Junior High School from 1966 to 1967. In June of the latter year he enrolled in the Graduate School of the University of Richmond, from which he expects to receive the Master of Arts degree in English in August, 1968. Currently he is a member of the United States Air Force, and he will serve a four-year tour of active duty after graduation.