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The Ideas of Reason, Disobedience, and Liberty in John Milton and Gerrard Winstanley.

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## Introduction

The following thesis considers the themes of reason, disobedience and liberty within the works of John Milton and Gerrard Winstanley. In particular, this thesis will be focusing on John Milton's poem *Paradise Lost* and political pamphlet *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* and it will also concentrate on Gerrard Winstanley's *the True Leveller Standard Advanced*. The themes of Reason, Disobedience and Liberty were identified as prominent in the Narrative of the fall which is central in this discussion because it constitutes the primary event which inspired and essentially, brought to life, John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Additionally, within the context of the political discourse of seventeenth century England and particularly within the political discourse of the civil war period, the themes of Disobedience, Reason and Liberty are often referred to, further enhancing the relevance of these topics within the associated subject matter which is debated in this thesis. Furthermore, despite the fact that all three themes do on occasion appear in isolation, they are in fact interrelated to a certain extent. The focus within each chapter is on Reason, followed by Disobedience and Liberty, respectively.

The civil war period in seventeenth century England was a period of great tumult and strife. The religious movement of Puritanism which in essence demanded a reform within the English church in the image and spirit of the Renaissance; assumed the form of a revolution which eventually resulted in King Charles I being executed and the emergence of parliamentary democracy. Oliver Cromwell was the one chosen to be at the head of this parliamentary democracy. While at first Cromwell seemed to have brought in with him an air of change towards a fairer future for the people of England, he later assumed a more absolutist stance when he established

particular strict laws, which turned him into a persona non grata to the people who were rooting for a better, fairer and more merciful socio-political establishment. Albeit the monarchy was restored not long after this period, no person can contest the fact that Puritanism as a movement and also Milton in particular, made a tremendous impact on the lives of Englishmen.

The three literary works which were selected to be analysed for this thesis are all integral to the historical period mentioned above and associated greatly with the two opposing forces which were at work within seventeenth century England.

The thesis is structured into three chapters, each with an emphasis on a particular literary work. The first chapter is focused on Milton's political pamphlet *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, the second chapter is centered on Gerrard Winstanley's *The True Levellers Standard Advanced* and the final chapter is concentrated on John Milton's epic poem *Paradise Lost*. Finally, an overall evaluation is carried out, of how the themes mentioned earlier on; namely; the themes of Disobedience, Liberty and Reason are depicted and also their influence on historical perceptions.

Within the dissertation, the themes appear in various ways. Specifically, on Disobedience, Adam's first disobedience is examined, with its magnitude being highlighted in Milton's own words, "For what sin can be named, which was not included in this one act" (Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book XI, 341). Adding to this, disobedience is recognized as a social and literary theme in both classical and contemporary works (Bloom, *John Milton 'Bloom's Modern Critical View'*, p. 47).

The theme of Reason was identified by Winstanley (*The True Levellers Standard Advanced*, p.6), Weber (*The Social and Political Philosophy of Gerrard*

Winstanley, p.312) and Hill (*The Law of Freedom' and Other Writings*, p.236), as an important theme in social constructs despite the fact that Winstanley's work on the one hand is based on his seventeenth century worldview, while Weber and Hill's works are formed around their twentieth century worldview. The importance of Reason as a concept was discernible even from the very first stages of the writing process of this thesis; allowing the assumption that both Milton and Winstanley regarded this notion of Reason as fundamental. Winstanley describes human reason as the 'divine principle' (Winstanley, *The True Levellers Standard Advanced*, p.12) and John Milton argues that "lack of God's gift of reason leads humans to be little more than puppets" (Charles R. Geisst, *The Political Thought of John Milton*, p. 61).

Liberty often features as a central theme, since reason and disobedience are both derived from Man's liberty and freedom of choice (*Are Freedom and Liberty Twins*, Pitkin, p. 523). Without Man's Liberty and freedom of choice, man would have never had the option to actually be disobedient, and without Reason, God would have never given man Liberty and freedom of choice, because without Reason to keep man in check, the results for man himself would doubtlessly be catastrophic. (*Liberty in Paradise*, p.3) Surridge explains that within *Paradise Lost*, Milton manifests and unfolds freedom into poetic, political but also religious freedom. Given the above, the themes are not only recognized by fellow scholars as influential and outstanding in literature, but also formed significant concepts held by Milton and Winstanley in their works.

In each chapter of this thesis I strove to answer three questions that I decided best helped in expanding and complementing my arguments. The first question is of course if and how these themes of Disobedience, Reason and Liberty appear in the literary works selected, in a political context. The second research question pertains to

the precise focus of the work, namely how the themes appear in the works, allowing the basis for the majority of the discussion and literary interpretation. The third question, that is, if the themes were prototypical at the time they were written, which in this case is the English Revolution, offers a further platform for discourse. Briefly discussed above, this will help to explain why each specific theme was selected for further study.

After applying the research questions, within the context of each work and further to each specific theme identified, discussion and debate is carried out to offer insight into the repercussions and effects of each. Ultimately an evaluation is made into the perspicacity of Milton and Winstanley, subject to the variable of time since their publications.

**Chapter I:**

The ideas of Reason, Disobedience and Liberty within John Milton's *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*.

In order to begin talking about John Milton's *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* one must inevitably begin by making reference to the period of time in which this political pamphlet was first written. *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* was written at a time of commotion and strife for the Englishmen of seventeenth century England. The Renaissance which had taken root deep into the souls of men of other European countries had made its "debut" in England as well.

The rise of the socio-religious movement of Puritanism demanded the reformation of the English political establishment into a more just and humanitarian system. Nevertheless, the purpose does not justify the means, and this phrase describes quite accurately how this movement was led astray and turned into a full – fledged revolution. This revolution led to the English Civil War which began in 1642 and finally resulted in the execution of King Charles I on the 30<sup>th</sup> of January 1649. The Civil War was fueled by two separate political groups; The Parliamentarians, who mobilized the middle class, small land owners and puritans; and the Royalists who supported the reign of King Charles I. After playing its part the civil war finally gave way to the English Reformation and parliamentary democracy with Oliver Cromwell at its head. However, Cromwell proved to be less than what the English people expected and hoped for and so, at the end of the day the political machinations of the period finally led to the restoration of monarchy in 1660 with the return of King Charles II. While Milton is argued to have sided with the Puritans by many of his biographers, it seems that in some instances he was aiming to retain a more balanced point of view; as if he wanted to show that he was not part of the problem, but also not part of the solution either.

All of these historical events were critical in the development of British literature but also in formulating the ideologies and views of various writers, with



Milton not being immune to their effects. It is unsurprising that this tumultuous political periods in seventeenth century England all the more accentuated the importance of religion and the ability to live and believe freely and thus played a significant part in the growth of literature and for that reason it is also unsurprising that these themes, namely, Disobedience, Liberty and Reason rose to prominence within the works of writers of the time. Later on, and more pertinently to Milton, the English civil war was significant in forming the topics of discourse and debate for writers in and around Milton's era. Fernée explains that: "Milton was an important propagandist during the English civil war and possessed an underlying belief and trust in liberty, in his attempt to distance society from tyranny and monarchy" (Tadd Fernée, *Tolerance or a War on Shadows: John Milton's Paradise Lost, the English Civil War, and the Kaleidoscopic Early Modern Frontier*, 2017, p.4). The overall conditions in the country led to scholars and writers to often refer to or explicitly write about the events, in an attempt to inform and manipulate the public. Therefore, *the Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* is clearly a manifestation of Milton's political and religious ideologies, in his attempt to fuse the two into a functional internal motivation system and external understanding of political fairness.

One of the most important literary works that seems to have had a great impact on John Milton's own political and literary works was *Eikon Basilike*, allegedly written by King Charles the I of England. *Eikon Basilike* was released in 1649 on the 9<sup>th</sup> of February only ten days after King Charles I was hanged; and that is one of the reasons why *Eikon Basilike* is argued to have been written by Charles at the time of his imprisonment in an attempt to justify his actions during the Civil War. Of course the matter of *Eikon Basilike's* author is still not resolved. *Eikon Basilike* supported and justified Royalism, defending the King in his political and military aspirations

and performance. Due to its tone and style, as well as the widespread acceptance and impression generated by the book, Milton was commissioned to write a response, targeting the notion that the book rejects and undermines religion and God, leading the people to be subjected to the ruler and not God. *Eikonoklastes* and *the Tenure of Kings of Magistrates* both attack the monarchy and the King's tyrannical rule, identifying how Milton perceived the monarchy and how he believed society would be best treated under a different regime.

The diverse ideological conflicts of the time, parliamentarians and royalists, obedience and disobedience and Reason and acceptance –even though not entirely antithetical in essence - were highly discussed in works of the time. These conflicts were also present in the works of Milton, who merged the two opposing sides. This came in the form of protecting the traditional values of religion, whilst pushing for independent governance and realistic politics, where involvement was a necessary feature of reasonable perception. In light of this, it could be argued that Milton in a way tried to use the most prominent themes available at the time to generate support.

*The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* is a political pamphlet written by John Milton shortly after the beheading of King Charles I on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1649, and the declaration of the Republic of England. Due to the time of its publication *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* has always been disregarded by several scholars and writers who argue that: “*The Tenure* as a work lacks evidence and full-scale research” and is often described by literary critics as a pamphlet “written hurriedly” (William Talbot Allison, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, p.25). The work's full title reveals its content, reading: “*The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates: proving that it is Lawfull for any who have the Power to call to account a Tyrant or wicked King and after due*

*conviction to depose, and put him to death if the ordinary MAGISTRATE have neglected or deny'd to doe it. And that they, who of late, so much blame Depositing, are the Men that did it themselves*"(Milton, 2). Hence, in the work, Milton's goal was firstly to perform a strike against tyranny, and secondly to attempt a rationalization of regicide. At the same time Milton in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, specifies in his argument that dethronement followed by the punishment of death by execution, is acceptable and expected, subject to the tyrannical monarch being granted a fair trial and found guilty of his heinous crimes.

In this chapter, some of the most prominent themes found in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, namely, the themes of Reason, Liberty, and Disobedience, will be identified and analysed.

From the offset, Reason and good governance, which fall within the boundaries of political consideration, are mentioned in tandem, with Milton stressing the value of Man's ability to judge when applying reason to governing policies. "If Men within themselves would be govern'd by reason, and not generally give up their understanding to a double tyrannie, of Custome from without, and blind affections within, they would discern better, what it is to favour and uphold the Tyrant of a Nation" (Milton, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, p. 3). On the basis of the above quotation from *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, it seems that Milton argues that individuals should challenge that which is imposed on them, but also their own predisposition, to break free of the chains to which he refers to as "double tyrannie" (Milton, p.3). This double tyranny Milton refers to is 'custom' which comes from the outside and each person's passions which comes from within. "Custom" is that which is "imposed" on man through socio-political constructs; thus it comes from

without, while “the blind affections” are what man “imposes” on himself when he succumbs to his passions and desires which come from within. These two concepts are extremely important to Milton’s understanding of Reason; as he essentially argues that man’s Reason is the only thing which has the ability to help man fight against this “double tyranny”.

As far as political thinking is concerned, Milton seemed to be quite flexible, alternating and changing according to the times. According to Phillips, “Milton does not divide reason and revelation but establishes virtues for the republic by uniting reason and freedom” (Phillips, *John Milton’s Epic Invocations: Converting the Muse*, p.110). This suggests how reason and freedom are not necessarily contradicting terms and given their appropriate adoption, they can benefit political and governing processes. Reason and freedom are not often considered to be co-existing notions, with total freedom and licence being recognized as unlimited, unrestricted choice, whereas reason suggests the existence of ethical and societal boundaries, which should never be crossed in pursuit of individual freedom. In light of this, Milton rejects the assumption that the two concepts cannot be fused, arguing that stability can be achieved when both aspects are in operation. Distinction is made however, between liberty and license. This is of great importance in a political context, since license is often paired with politicians and officers, whose liberty and reason fades over time in office. The same is said to be true of Kings, who even with the right motives, eventually fall to lower tiers. This decline happens because “naturally” when men come into positions of unregulated power and licence, even with the purest intentions of keeping the people and the common good as a priority; at some point they seem to cave in and begin to act in ways that serve first their own agendas and fulfil their own desires. This bow to self-indulgence is what brings the common good

to a second place of importance and thus leads to tyranny both from within and without. As parliamentarian Edmund Burke writes in his *Letter to a member of the National Assembly* in 1791: "Men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains upon their own appetites . . . It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things, that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters." (Edmund Burke, *Letter to a member of the National Assembly in 1791*, p.52). This is something Milton seems to be suggesting as well when he argues that weak men prefer to live with licence rather than with freedom, because they lack the ability to rule over themselves and thus living under someone's licence, whether that be a King or a president in office, is much easier than having the freedom -and at the same time, the duty- to make the right and sensible decisions on their own. Milton in fact believes that true freedom comes from Christ who freed us from the original sin that over-indulgence brought and allows us to live not as servants of God or Man but as His sons who serve Him by choice and not force.

For Milton, liberty and license are primarily distinguished from a theological perspective. True liberty, is a gift granted from Christ, delivering people from sin and allowing them to be free. True liberty, once obtained, sets a person free to live in accordance with mature, self-determined Christian principles". License on the other hand, is when sin leads to licentious indulgence. Milton expresses this clearly in *On Christian Doctrine*, discovered after his death. He states that: "Christian Liberty means that Christ our liberator Frees us from the slavery of sin and thus from the rule of the law and of men, as if we were emancipated slaves. He does this so that, being made sons instead of servants and grown men instead of boys, we may serve God in charity through the guidance of the spirit of truth" (Milton, *Areopagitica, Rights and Liberties*, p.60). In modern society, freedom and liberty, especially in the Western

world are considered to be fundamental rights of the people. However, in the context of true liberty, it would be fair to argue that “Milton’s understanding and interpretation of freedom, is much more diverse and cultivated, to the widespread global concept of freedom of choice or human rights” (Judith Anderson, *Reading the Allegorical Intertext: Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton*, 2014).

This distinction between liberty and license was a common theme in the era prior to the Enlightenment, which scholars and writers picked up from Ancient Greek philosophers and started to apply their own reason and comprehension to civil and personal awareness. Although certain scholars such as Annabelle Patterson in her book *Early Modern Liberalism* and Thomas N. Corns in *Milton and the Characteristics of a Free Commonwealth* suggest that “Milton was in some ways swayed by events in his time, rather than being rigid and true to a single philosophy”, it could be argued that Milton was keen to marry religion and society, making religion a platform and ideal, incorporating and suggesting that a functional society may only prosper within this framework (Thomas N. Corns, *Milton and the Characteristics of a Free Commonwealth*, p.25-42).

The question of Reason is further addressed in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* when Milton states that “who in particular is a Tyrant cannot be determined in a general discourse”, (Milton, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* p.5). In this way Milton argues that determining whether a ruler is a tyrant or not, should be left to the Magistrates and the people, who have proven themselves above right reason and the Law of Nature. Milton accepts that interpretation will vary from person to person and that the majority of people are beneath right reason. He furthermore states that “if such a one there be, by whose Commission whole massacres have been

committed on his faithfull subjects, his Provinces offered to pawne or alienation, as the hire of those whom he had sollicited to come in and destroy whole Cities and Countries, bee he King, or Tyrant, or Emperour, the Sword of Justice is above him ; in whose hand soever is found sufficient power to avenge the effusion, and so great a deluge of innocent blood” (Milton, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, p.5). Thus Milton is accepting that a ruler may be judged as worthy, even if he has caused suffering to his or other people. This sheds light on the diversity of reason, by which different interests and perceptions may alter how an act or behaviour is considered logical or reasonable.

Furthering the argument that the majority of people are distanced from Reason, Milton employs the theme of liberty. He explicitly argues that monarchy supporters automatically forfeit their right to participate in elections and politics and therefore they surrender the freedom granted to them. In essence, by stating that the majority of people are not “rightly qualifi’d” to take part in elections and such people are “past reason and recoverie”, Milton maintains that “they should not be entitled to pursue their auxiliary freedoms, since they have forgone their natural ones” (Myers, *Milton and Free Will: An Essay in Criticism and Philosophy*, p.8). Therefore, in order for a person to possess reason, they must have adequate knowledge and desire, to participate in the decision-making process of selecting a ruler. Underlining that liberty and reason cannot exist without the other; Milton argues the requirement for involvement and pro-active inclusion in politics. Falling global turnout rates in elections would be a concern, where Milton would argue that this is a distancing from reason, since the right to vote and be involved in politics should be all men and women’s concern. At the time, although he would have a small degree of support, this

anti-monarchy attitude would have been frowned upon, especially by sovereign kingdoms that were prospering under a specific ruler.

Turning his attention to the King, Milton scrutinizes the Kings of the past, who he claims feared no one, including God Himself. He wonders: “Or if the King feare not God, as how many of them doe not? we hold then our lives and estates, by the tenure of his meer grace and mercy, as from a God” (Milton, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, p.7). Hence, a King’s reason is warped, and his position is handed down to “Court parasites or men besotted” (Milton, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, p.7), suggesting that the people accepting or living in a monarchy are simply relinquishing their freedom, through lack of reason, education and desire; to a Man, a mortal man, whose morals, ethics and understanding are as limited as the nobles and scholars he surrounds himself with. Therefore, in order for a people to be granted the status of reasonable human beings, Milton argues that they should challenge the inherent privileges and power granted to a ruler by birth. However, publicly scrutinizing a monarchy in his time, may have had significant repercussions and generally be frowned upon.

Although Milton argues heavily for the right of free borne men to choose their ruler, he clarifies that this right is not merely created or allowable due to reason. Scripture also corroborates this assumption and was intrinsic in allowing this fundamental right to materialize, through quotations such as the following: “When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that *are* about me; Thou shalt in any wise set *him* king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: *one* from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over



thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which *is* not thy brother. ” (The Holy Bible: King James version, p.103). This shows that the right given to Man by God to choose his own King, is also applicable in terms of replacing him if he is judged to be obsolete or failing in his duties. Therefore, it could be said that constant reflection and evaluation of those in power or ruling a country or state is required, adding to the responsibility of the People being constantly vigilant over their rulers. Given the persuasions and trust held towards religion, it was an important vantage point for Milton, who corroborated previously held stances on religion, trying to portray and relay this essence into his own time.

In extension to this, Milton states that “it is the vulgar folly of men to desert thir owne reason, and shutting thir eyes to think they see best with other mens” (Milton, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, p.7). He thus claims that men often neglect or abandon their own reason, when surrounded by others. In this historical interpretation of mob mentality, Milton cauterizes men whose reason and will is oblique, faulting them for choosing to close their eyes and simply follow. In terms of politics this is vital and links back to the previous paragraph on the freedom of political involvement and choice to participate actively in elections. Hence, if all men chose to simply follow the few, without applying their own judgement, society would fail. In his attempt to distance men from this shepherding, the ensuing capitalism faced by global society, was a further distancing from God and by extent reason.

As a strong advocate of general disobedience, Milton challenges society to be naturally suspicious, curious and disobedient, urging them to apply their own logic and reason, before accepting that which is imposed upon them. Milton often pairs the notion of obedience with lack of reason and will, suggesting that “blind affections”

diminish the value of society (Milton, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, p.4). It is likely that Milton would be pleased by the growing civil unrest of recent times, such as riots and protests, however, he would maintain that the reasoning must be pure and subject to each individual's own personal realisations and reason. The uncertainty of his time and the lack of widespread education was a challenge, since he himself admits that an individual must hold knowledge, education and experience to achieve what he refers to as Reason.

Milton's first mention of disobedience in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* comes through a reference to obedience, when stating that "consequentlie neither doe bad men hate Tirants, but have been alwaies readiest with the falsifi'd names of *Loyalty* and *Obedience*, to colour over their base compliances" (Milton, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, p.3). His comment therefore indicates that bad men, exploit the term of obedience and loyalty to rulers, to further their own interests. However, this obedience, is displayed in a negative light, since those who apply obedience to unjust or unreasonable rulers, are essentially reducing societal freedoms, by taking advantage of their position to keep the ruler in power. In a political sense, the "vermin", (Milton, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, p.4) solicited to carry out the rulers bidding are the actors who act blindly, without applying their own reason. Hence, it can be argued that Milton condones disobedience against a status quo where a Tyrant is not favouring or promoting the interests of his People. Most important issues are kept shy of the public eye, discussed and carried out in boardrooms behind closed doors. Therefore, even if society as a whole was willing, the information filtered down is insufficient to make rational and reasonable decisions.

Similar to what Locke argued later on, Milton argues that revolution is not only lawful but also commendable when it is trying to overthrow an unfair government. He furthermore suggests that the laws are made not by a monarch but by 'the people' in Parliament. He also proposes the thought that such a government is based on contract and that is why when this contract becomes violated revolution against the one who violates this contract is accepted and expected. This contract would be an agreement of sorts between the citizens and the person whom they appoint as their leader. The citizens expect that their leader will have their best interest in mind when ruling and when this does not happen and the contract is violated, then the people have the right to remove this elected leader in any way they are capable of. Therefore, regarding disobedience, it could be argued that Milton and other scholars condone disobedience, when faced by unjust leadership. Hence, the underlying understanding of this is that disobedience is not automatically frowned upon, but always subject to interpretation. His reasoning for this position is that disobedience ultimately leads to freedom and equality. By challenging rulers, they become more conscious of their position and perform in a more admirable manner.

Very important to the development of the ideologies of Milton was the Dutch Revolution. This was a revolution of the merchant towns which opposed the tyrannical monarchical regime of Spain and it lasted almost eighty years spanning from 1566 to 1648. After eighty years of disputes, the regenerated republic of the Netherlands instituted the probability of a monetary republic in contemporary Europe and extended its help to people who trusted that republics are in fact more Protestant than monarchies. Milton furthermore based his ideologies on the contemporary history of Scotland. It was in Scotland that a Protestant parliament dethroned Queen Mary of Scotland. Generally, Milton suggests that the notion of sovereign clashes

with the idea of a typical human being in possession of a typical human body, who is legally accountable like every other human being, because this would mean that such a person would at no point, be able to become suitably integrated within a commonwealth of self-directing members. (Stocker, *Milton on Free Political Institutions*, 2015).

Milton held the opinion “that rights and powers of kings, is that they are established by covenant with the community and not a divine authority which the community must obey” (Stocker, *Milton on Free Political Institutions*, 2015). Therefore, the notion of liberty should be perceived and socially constructed, and not generated from a warped and distorted interpretation of divine authority. The extract refers to “how humane Laws made without or against God’s Authority, can hinder me from the liberty granted me by the Law of Nature, to defend myself from outrageous Violence” (Milton, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, p. 51). This highlights the point made above, namely, that Milton’s ideals towards protecting ones freedom, should be derived from collective input, rather than from a predestined ruler.

We can see this clearly in Milton’s pamphlet *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, his assertion at the outset – “No man who knows ought, can be so stupid to deny that all men naturally were borne free”– is an announcement that his own political proposal is transparent to reason, self-evident in its truth and its correspondence to nature (Milton, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, p.4).

The depiction of ‘nature’ here is laden with theological imagery and allusions to the story of the original couple. It was in the Garden of Eden that the first humans were brought into being in God’s image, and were divinely authorised to rule over creation. As bearers of the divine image they were “born to command and not to

obey” (Myers, *Milton and Free Will: An Essay in Criticism and Philosophy*, p.5). This is what Milton means by the ‘natural’ freedom of human beings: already in the Garden of Eden, man is constituted as a particular kind of political agent. It belongs to human nature to command and to rule; and that is the reason why Milton considers it “a duty for human beings to form alliances, become self-governing entities made up of individual units and forge cities and commonwealths” (Myers, *Milton and Free Will: An Essay in Criticism and Philosophy*, p.5).

Cities and commonwealths were formed however not all individuals remained faithful to the social contract, these early societies “saw it need full to ordaine som authoritie, that might restrain by force and punishment” (Milton, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, p.7) any violation against peace and the common good. And so Milton arrives at the crux of his historical narrative: the people’s appointment of a sovereign is simply a transmission of the “authoritie and power” that exists “originally and naturally” in each member of the society. Whereas Thomas Hobbes depicts the appointment of the sovereign as a willing divestment of the people’s individual rights. In light of this, although both argue that society should be the one choosing or establishing the form of rule, both in terms of appointments and in terms of legislation, they accept that not all members of society will operate or perform rationally and reasonably.

Milton sees the appointment of the monarch as a ‘communication’ of rights which occurs “naturally” in the individual. No rights are relinquished in the process; the sovereign exists merely “for ease” (Milton, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, p.4). In short, Milton’s sovereign has no intrinsic necessity in the social order; he is contingent and dispensable, appointed for the mutual convenience of the governed.

Authority continues to reside ‘naturally’ in the individual, through an unbreakable ‘bond of nature’. In contrast, the power of kings is “only derivative, transferr’d and committed to them in trust from the People ..., in whom the power yet remains fundamentally, and cannot be taken from them, without a violation of thir natural birthright” (Milton, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, p.6).

Furthermore, Milton insists on a God who is commensurate with natural reason. Like many early advocates of natural law, Milton was indebted here to the discourses of anti-Calvinist theology, which stressed God’s rational transparency and a close correspondence between the divine nature and the natural order.

According to Jacobus Arminius, God “is not freely good”, but he always wills what is good by a natural necessity. Thus, all God’s acts find their “foundation” and “immediate principle” in God’s own rational essence (Jacobus Arminius, *On Predestination*, 1588). Taking the word of God and Christ as the utmost ideal and value to possess, he argues that people should reflect this Reason, which is the only acceptable approach. “Since humans are created in God’s image, the compulsion of the human will is an unthinkable violation, a vitiation of God’s own image. As Adam tells Eve in the Garden: “force upon free Will hath here no place”” (*Paradise Lost*, Book IX, 1173–74). Therefore, free will is Man’s birthright. However, in order to exercise this right and be considered truly free and fulfilled, reason within the framework must follow the word of God. This could be said to be contradicting, since it challenges true free will, obligating Man to follow a specific set of morals. Therefore, free will is not practically applicable if it comes with the nuance that only a certain degree of free will and performance is acceptable.

On the basis of such a theological reading of the Genesis story, Milton establishes a direct link between political liberty and the created liberty of human nature. As he puts it in *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*: “For if natures resistlesse sway in love or hate bee once compell’d, it grows carelesse of it selfe, vitious, uselesse to friend, unserviceable and spiritlesse to the Common-wealth.” (Milton, *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, chapter XXI). That is to say: interference with spiritual liberty results in political incapacitation.

Milton most notably discusses the ideas of liberty, license and righteous self-control in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*. In the very first paragraph of the political pamphlet Milton asserts: “For indeed none can love freedom heartily, but good men; the rest love not freedom, but license; which never hath more scope or more indulgence than under Tyrants.” For Milton, “bad men” are “all naturally servile,” they hunger “to have the public State conformably governed to the inward vicious rule, by which they govern themselves,” and they “color over their base compliances” with “the falsified names of Loyalty, and Obedience.” (Milton, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, p.3)

Overall it seems that Milton suggests that tyrants and bad men get on very well because bad men who love license, are directed by vice, and are unable to control themselves, do not pose a threat for tyrants but in fact readily bow to them as long as they do not disrupt their lives of self-indulgence. On the other hand, tyrants “fear in earnest” those men “in whom virtue and true worth most is eminent.” This kind of men whose lives are led with righteousness, are treated with “hatred and suspicion” by the tyrants (Milton, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, p.3) People who have the power to control their worst enemies, that is, themselves, intimidate tyrants

because, their love for liberty and goodness allows them to see that tyrants hinder the freedom to lead a life in accordance to a righteous conscience.

Burke followed suit with Milton on his stance on freedom, writing that “Men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains upon their own appetites” (Burke, *A Letter from Mr. Burke, to a Member of the National Assembly: In Answer to Some Objections to His Book on French Affairs*, 1971). Therefore, in order to be allowed or privileged to enjoy civil freedoms, a man must have the reason and awareness to be able to control and mediate his own behaviour. The self-indulgence of exploitation was coined as license, as discussed above. What is drawn from this is that a distinction was drawn throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century between the two concepts. Furthering on this, not only are license and liberty opposite notions, but giving into self-indulgence, is a fervent rejection of freedom and reason (Urban, 2014). Moving even deeper, Milton cauterizes the Roman Empire, subject to the ‘licentious’ Tiberius. Christ, the Son of God in *Paradise Lost* and throughout the passage of *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* is seen as making the ultimate sacrifice and is of idealistic reasons, leading to the notion that it is a waste of time to be concerned with men who are slaves to themselves.

Liberty itself is the highest form of ideal for Milton. This is derived from the notion that liberty and freedom are what will truly energize and strengthen a man, to pursue higher purposes, thus, a man will be able to cultivate his knowledge, skills and life in order to improve the value created for society. Within this pursuit for liberty, the sanctity of the individual, his thoughts, performance and indulgences are discussed, leading to the characterization of ideal society as a machine of man heads, rather than one ruling over the other.



Overall, the themes of reason, disobedience and liberty are closely intertwined in *the Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*. Milton promotes that all people should pursue personal fulfilment and knowledge, in order to achieve the highest status of reason, likened to that of Christ. In applying his concepts to his time, he heavily scrutinizes the monarchy, arguing that accepting a ruler with inherent ruling power is a rejection of reason. Man should be constantly challenging his ruler, forcing him or her to make the most beneficial decisions for his or her People. A tougher stance is generally held in his views, which alternate depending on their context, use and situation he was currently facing. Therefore, it could be said that he often used the events he was facing as convenient, to portray his messages in a manner which would achieve or gain more exposure and following. Nevertheless, Milton, being one of the most remarkable and highly-regarded writers of English literature, his ideologies and writings cannot be ignored, with his input being intrinsic in creating a platform for the era of Enlightenment and self-realization to emerge and for that reason his voice will echo through the ages.

## Chapter II:

Monarchy, the importance of Reason and Gerrard Winstanley's *The True Levellers Standard Advanced*.

Set in early modern Britain, the True Levellers were subject to many of the diverse influences of the time. Within this time period, written and acted information gained the attribute of convertibility to propaganda and this had a significant impact on the Diggers and the manner in which they conducted their efforts and supported their arguments. The British Civil war which lasted from 1642 to 1651 was waging and although *The True Levellers Standard Advanced* was issued towards its end, that is, in 1649 which was the year of the beheading of King Charles I and the temporary end of monarchical rule for England. The motivations and effects were obvious even so. Separation and discontent between Royalists and Parliamentarians led to general unrest, which by extent created and was fuelled by a growing public curiosity for a true understanding of freedom and desire for involvement and equality (Bradstock, 2015). It is therefore clear that the materials published in and around this time, were heavily influenced by these events. Adding to this, the Bishops war highlighted the growing unrest which existed. With the two opposed groups, the Parliamentarians and Royalists growing in prominence, support and power, their publications and declarations grew in stature and exposure. Winstanley himself was influenced by various factors, but also faced strong opposition in his time, even by groups of terribly similar ideologies and beliefs. The Levellers, unlike the True Levellers or Diggers, were led by Lilburne, who believed in levelling laws; that is, he believed that every single individual being should be equal and subjected to the same law of justice. Lilburne sought to allow land ownership, whereas Winstanley took this to another extreme, demanding levelling of land ownership as well.

At forty years old, Gerrard Winstanley was actually alive at the time of King Charles I's execution. He incorporated and drove the Diggers from an ideological standpoint. The Diggers, or self-proclaimed True Levellers, were a progressive left-

wing party during the English Revolution. The Digger movement, which spanned between 1648 and 1650 came into existence via three interlinked processes, all of which contributed to the volatile and highly revolutionary climate in Britain; the transition from feudalism to capitalism, a sequence of bad harvests and finally King Charles' execution.

From the off-set of the *True Levellers Standard Advanced*, Winstanley uses the term Reason. He affirms that: "In the beginning of Time, the great Creator Reason, made the Earth to be a Common Treasury, to preserve Beasts, Birds, Fishes, and Man, the lord that was to govern this Creation; for Man had Domination given to him, over the Beasts, Birds, and Fishes; but not one word was spoken in the beginning, That one branch of mankind should rule over another" (Winstanley, *The True Levellers Standard Advanced*, p.1). Winstanley refers to God as the "Creator Reason", hence highlighting the underlying belief that reason is a privilege possessed and created by God and the interpretation of what is considered reasonable can only be derived from his words, and not the words of Man. As such, the internal ability of an individual to comprehend and carry out what he refers to as reasonable assumptions, is a gift granted by God. More plainly put, Winstanley aims to show that each human being created by God is equally equipped with the ability for reason and that is why he is entitled to a right of equally enjoying the earth and all its riches.

Winstanley continues by clarifying that Man is only subject to his God and his own reason, and this reason is derived from the spirit within, which is granted to man by God himself. He explains that:

"...The Reason is this, Every single man, Male and Female, is a perfect Creature of himself; and the same Spirit that made the

Globe, dwells in man to govern the Globe; so that the flesh of man being subject to Reason, his Maker, hath him to be his Teacher and Ruler within himself” (Winstanley, *The True Levellers Standard Advanced*, p.2).

Reason and Righteousness are explicitly referred to in the same sentence, underlining how the two notions must complement each other in the eyes of Winstanley. He argues that all men should be free to work righteously, cultivating the earth that God provided them with, as is their right and duty. He furthermore argues in favour of the dissolution of private property and suggests that the Earth is a “common treasure” for all the people. His main concern in light of these was the fact that Man was becoming obsessed with objects of God’s creation, rather than focusing on their responsibility towards protecting their earth and community. He goes as far as suggesting that private ownership is a curse, as it could only be secured through theft, murder or oppression and argues that following this covetousness and self-inflicted shackling of man, the loss of reason and the spirit residing in each Man, resulted in men being slaves of their own creation, and of each other, much like the beasts were to man.

According to Winstanley: “Reason is that living power of light that is in all things” (Winstanley, *The Saints Paradise*, abstract in *Works*, p. 96.) Reason is considered to be an active force which helps to guide justice, wisdom and love. In its absence, madness and disorder would ensue and in order for love and justice to prevail, reason should be preserved and pursued at all times. This pursuit of Reason however, is self-contradictory; much like positive discrimination is merely a form of discrimination itself. Therefore, pursuing reason, suggests that it has never been established, and thus the actions and beliefs which encompass it, will vary for those imposing it.

The source of human reason is derived from the Spirit, the epitome of Reason, as written by Winstanley. Therefore, a distinction is made between the true and pure concept of Reason, and human reason, described as formulating due to its filtration or passing through flesh, which allows imagination and thought to darken or cloud that light. And although the notion of Reason was spiritual and helped light the candle as a vessel for human reason, the candle does not remain an exact reflection of its originator. Hence, Winstanley put forth his argument that men are either pursuing or distancing themselves from reason. God was also often brought into context with Reason, in some cases identified as being the same thing.

Reason is described as purity of heart and mind, with an ability to recognize that slavery and exertion of power between and over another human being is a lack of reason. Therefore, the notion of reason itself should revert all men to be free, only subject to their own righteous and God pronounced values. As Murphy states: “Salvation was attainable only through the inner experience of God, not by means of works or through any visible church organization” (Murphy, *The Political Philosophy of Gerrard Winstanley*, 1957, p.219).

As Winstanley himself states:

“...Reason, the living king of righteousness, doth only look on, and lets thee alone, That whereas thou counts thy self an Angel of Light, thou shalt appear in the light of the Sun, to be a Devil, A-dam, and the Curse that the Creation groans under; and the time is now come for thy downfall, and Jacob must rise, who is the universal Spirit of love and righteousness, that fills, and will fill all the Earth.”

(Winstanley, *The True Levellers Standard Advanced*, p.4)

Therefore, it can be identified that Reason is the fundamental principle which should drive human perception. Within this context, reason is what truly drives and allows equality, freedom and righteousness. His understanding of office and a residing Parliament suggests that Reason fades the longer an officer is in a position. His Reason and righteousness will become degenerate, replaced by covetousness. Hence, the notion of Reason is recognized as a core theme in the works of Winstanley.

Many writers have suggested common ground between Winstanley and modern-day communism as Winstanley felt that any advantage or interest held by an individual over another, was automatically a defiance of God's initial reason, since it created a platform for exploitation. As Walter Murphy argues: "According to Winstanley, true freedom, a necessity of the ideal state, could be attained only where every man had an unrestrained opportunity to use the land and gain his livelihood from it" (Murphy, *The Political Philosophy of Gerrard Winstanley*, 1957, p.226). An ardent opponent to capitalism and monarchy, Winstanley's writings and movement urged society to wake up and join the movement to create a world of equality. According to Walter Murphy "Winstanley made religion the vehicle which transported a communist theory of society into existence" (Murphy, *The Political Philosophy of Gerrard Winstanley*, p.219). Although not applicable in modern society, given the diversity of cultures and beliefs, there are those who even today seem to follow suit; Mills puts forward the idea that "Winstanley's utopia embodied many of the concepts of modern constitutional democracy (Concepts largely formulated by the Levellers also): extensive public education, frequent elections, rotation in office, universal manhood suffrage, a form of federalism, legislative supremacy, and a demand (seldom realized) for simple, understandable laws" (Mills, 2014). This contributes to the understanding that reason and liberty are closely

connected in the eyes of Winstanley, since true freedom and liberty, are unobtainable without inherent reason.

Providing further evidence as to Winstanley's suggestion that any man who is in a position that renders him above the rest of his fellow men is unfair and sinful, is the following:

“All kingly power (in one or many men's hands), reigning by the sword, giving the use of the earth to some of mankind (called by him his Gentry) and denying the free use of the Earth to others, called the younger brothers, or common people, is no other but Cain lifted above Abel; the Prerogatives Lawes is Belzebub....The Attorneys, and priests, and Lawyers, and Bayliffs are servants to Belzebub, and are Devils....the sincere and meek in spirit, is trod underfoot.” (Winstanley, “Watchword to the City of London and the Armie,” *Works* p.324)

The common people are also to blame according to Winstanley, because they are the ones who “have lifted up their Landlords and others to rule in Tyranny and oppression over them” (Winstanley, “New Law of Righteousness,” *Works*, pp.159-160). In the *New Law of Righteousness*, Winstanley creates the framework upon which society should be based, yet scrutinizes all people, for allowing and uplifting a status quo of dependency and control over one another. In his eyes no man is above another, and he even embraces the fact that even the clergy was unnecessary, for the reason that each man should be able to communicate with God in his own way without any mediators who would no doubt attempt to achieve personal gain out of their posing as emissaries of God.



Reference is made to the fact that within the context of Reason, within which lies the construct of the divine, or God, the world was created for equal use by all its inhabitants (Empson, 2017). Winstanley believed that humanity had distanced itself from the relationship with God, where the responsibility was to protect and utilize the world offered to them and that furthermore humanity should strive to return to this relationship (Hill, *Winstanley "The Law of Freedom" and Other Writings*, 1996); however in order for this to be achieved, Winstanley proposed a highly democratized for the time system of political participation, with annual elections for officers, who would oversee small family farm operations and household manufacturing.

One of the most important reasons for Winstanley's exposure and prominence were the conditions at the time. As Sharpe and Lee clarify, Britain faced a situation where culture and politics were heavily intertwined and never truly separate (Sharpe and Lee, 1988). Adding to this, "instability and uncertainty existed, brought on by the execution of King Charles I and his desire to exclude parliament and establish what was widely considered a period of tyranny" (Bulman, *The Practice of Politics: The English Civil War and the 'Resolution' of Henrietta Maria and Charles I*, 2010). These factors "enlightened" the British people to the injustices which existed and "paved the way for revolutionaries such as the Levellers and the Diggers to gain momentum and exposure" (Russell, *The British Problem and the English Civil War*, 1987). Winstanley's views are considered to be stable and pragmatic for the time. The difference in time and conditions must be taken into account however, since his perception was shaped by the variables of the time.

Overall, the notion of Reason is rigidly viewed by Winstanley as being of divine origin, often referring to God as the ultimate source of reason. The Diggers

were often seen as a mystic group, drawing upon divine inspiration, with many at the time choosing to incorporate notions of sense perception and applied reason (Murphy, *The Political Philosophy of Gerrard Winstanley*, 1957). Human reason, according to Winstanley, is derived from God but because it is inextricably linked with the physical hypostasis of human beings, it is in a manner constricted and tainted “darkened by the imagination of the flesh”(Winstanley, *The Saints of Paradise*, abstract in *Works*, p. 96) Furthermore he asserts that in order to live in righteousness and follow the “light” of Reason, there were certain requirements to be met and these requirements involved primarily the right of usage and exploitation of land equally by all those living on it.

Within this understanding of Reason as an internal driving force, the theme of disobedience is firstly portrayed in reference to obedience to Reason. In other words, obedience to God should be upheld, given that God and Reason are one and the same. Hence, it can be seen that distinction is made between obedience to a ruler or a system and obedience to the internal light and power of Reason.

One important issue Winstanley faced was that of pride. Considered the “worst of the seven deadly sins” (Burns, *Augustine on the Origin and Progress of Evil*, p. 85, 1988), pride as a concept played an important part in the rejection of several assumptions put forth by Winstanley. The driving force for rebellion and revolution is often pride. In *Leviathan*, Hobbes (1651) argues that pride is a force which heightens or lowers Man’s desire to give something up and therefore enabling or disabling his intentions to enter a status of peace because: “Fear of pride always can transform rebellion into obedience” (Shulman, *Radicalism and Reverence: The Political Thought of Gerrard Winstanley*, 1988). In conjunction with Winstanley’s

idea that internal reason derives from God; awareness should be raised in people urging them towards self-determination and rejection of the status they are facing which is contradictory.

The notion and concept of Communism does eliminate pride. However, in order to re-establish society from the state of utter submission to the will and whim of a human monarch that it was in, rebellion and upheaval was necessary according to Winstanley. Hence, pride must be invoked, or even provoked to enable this to take place.

Obedience itself, according to Winstanley, is owed only to God. Therefore, he challenges how the system of governance in place was currently in line with the restrictions of land ownership and use (Morgan, 2013). The fact that the system was set up in a way that protects land ownership, allowing exploitation of land by certain individuals, and that the law itself was in place to protect them, was the primary cause for conflict between the people. Despite this, Winstanley upheld a consistent optimism, that the people would eventually be restored to a situation of spiritual wholeness (Rogers, *Gerrard Winstanley on Crime and Punishment*, 1996).

As previously mentioned, the theme of pride featured strongly together with obedience in the work of Winstanley. Winstanley argues that "...the god of this world is Pride and Covetousness, the rootes of all Evil" (Winstanley, *The True Levellers Standard Advanced*, p.2) and criticizes Man for being subject to Pride and Covetousness describing this as being the source of all evil. He even goes as far as suggesting that these concepts are the gods of this world, overtaking internal human reason and creating a situation where obedience to tyrannical monarchy for the masses is obvious.

With this in mind, what Winstanley was actually perceived as pursuing was in essence “conformity and obedience to a divine power, despite that in his later works he did accept that to a certain extent conformity to temporal forms of power was required” (Shulman, *Radicalism and Reverence: The Political Thought of Gerrard Winstanley*, 1988). Hence, obedience is only present when pride is undermined. This aspect is continued where he claims that Pride and Covetousness are:

“from whence flowes all the Wickedness that is acted under the Sun, as Malice, Tyranny, Lording over, and despising their fellow Creatures, killing and destroying those that will not uphold their Lordly Power, Pride and Covetousness.” (Winstanley, *The True Levellers Standard Advanced*, p.2).

He therefore claims that the lack of obedience to God and Reason is what drives man to Pride and Covetousness and those notions are the fuel for all other actions which drive humanity further away from their Creator and further away from each other. Failure to uphold this desire for Pride ostracizes individuals and those who are truly driven by this Evil promote the killing and persecution of those who are against it.

In Winstanley’s time civil and ecclesiastical powers which should have been separate, were instead governed by sentiment, enabling magistrates to punish so called ‘sinners’, in response to what the church considered to be against God, with examples such as “ungodly murderers, pimps, thieves, liars and perjurers” (Hessayon, 2011). Winstanley held that God’s Ordinance existed to deter evil and preserve peace, rather than punish wrong-doers. Hence, his stance was that God himself would be responsible for judging those who did wrong in his light, but the government should be responsible for dealing and punishing in terms of matters of the state.

Calvin (1540) had previously supported this view, claiming that the Church could indeed refuse communion to unrepentant sinners, however had no power to punish by the sword, imprison, fine or restrain them. This, along with Winstanley's views, suggested that the Magistrates were given the authority to carry out these actions of 'punishment'. Of course this presupposes that the Magistrates who actually possessed the authority to punish wrong-doers were themselves virtuous and uncorrupted, but was this actually probable?

Winstanley did not believe in the probability of the Magistrates' sheer purity and feared their corruption, leading to his reflection that certain subtle and crafty workings of the flesh and the internal pride held by Man, could often distort their rational and reasonable thinking, forcing them into making wrong or unjust decisions.

“Oh that Reason might sit upon the throne of your hearts as judge; I am confident there is nothing written in anger or hatred to your persons, but in love to them as fellow Creatures; but against that which have bound up your own Spirits in slavery.” (Winstanley, *The True Levellers Standard Advanced*, p.2)

Winstanley also criticizes human reason, in that even in cases where an individual is aware of what is right or wrong, pride, tyranny and jealousy prevail and the consequence of this is the destruction of their own life. He argues that should people have the ability to be honest with themselves and speak impartially, challenging that Man's conscience to be witness, they would recognize that they themselves are shackling their own spirits in slavery and now allowing the emotions and reasonable feelings of love for one another to blossom. “If you could speak

impartially” Winstanley contends, “your own Consciences can bear me witnesse, and only bears sway in your forcing you to exercise Tyranny, scourging and trampling underfoot your fellow Creatures, especially those whose eyes are opened and can cleerly discover the great Devil, Tyranny, Pride and Covetousnesse working to and fro upon your Spirits, and raining in you, which will prove your own destruction” (Winstanley, *The True Levellers Standard Advanced*, p.2)

Winstanley was not far from an advocacy of pacifism yet considerably distant from a pledge to obey authority (Curelly, *An Anatomy of an English Radical Newspaper*, p.15, 2010). This was a driver for him in that the authority given to landowners to exploit land was unjust, and contradicted the sanctions of God, but he did openly clarify that violence itself was only a solution when the opposing party is challenging the innate reason held by those of pure motivation.

“O thou A-dam, thou Esau, thou Cain, thou Hypocritical man of flesh, when wilt thou cease to kill thy yonger Brother? Surely thou must not do this great Work of advancing the Creation out of Bondage; for thou art lost extremely, and drowned in the Sea of Covetousnesse, Pride and hardness of heart. The blessing shall rise out of the dust which thou treadest under foot, Even the poor despised People, and they shall hold up Salvation to this Land, and to all Lands, and thou shalt be ashamed” (Winstanley, *The Law of Freedom' and Other Writings*, p.83).

Above, Winstanley highlights the value of land, claiming that the true blessings offered to man can be achieved from using the land given to him by God. This should

be the focus and drive of a person, he claims, and not how to control over, kill or manipulate those around him for selfish gain.

Although often associated with communist reform, Winstanley was not drawn to the concept of: each according to their abilities, and each according to their needs. He had a slightly different vantage point, claiming that each and every individual brought onto this earth is entitled to be fed and nurtured by Earth, which he refers to as a mother, and this itself is derived from God, the ultimate source of reason. He actively tries to argue the merits of looking upon each other and working as one, instead of ‘Lording’ over one another and enforcing obedience. Winstanley only has room for obedience if it is directed to the Spirit, Reason and God.

Sandell rightly suggests that “human history” has two fundamental traditions, one being “of control, harmony and discipline and another of expression, liberty and the pursuit of justice” (Sandell, *Gerrard Winstanley and the Diggers*, p.1, 2011). Although Winstanley and the Diggers are by default associated with the latter, practical implementation or initial establishment of such beliefs required them to shift dangerously close to the former (Sandell, *Gerrard Winstanley and the Diggers* p.1,2011). Freedom was obviously a fundamental principle for Winstanley, with one of his works being titled *The Law of Freedom in a Platform*. This does not, however, divert to absolute freedom or indiscriminate decision-making. Thomas More’s *Utopia* set down a framework for workers and their rights. Given momentum and exposure by the sudden explosion of written and printed word, the words of Gerrard Winstanley: “And hereupon, The Earth (which was made to be a Common Treasury of relief for all, both Beasts and Men) was hedged in to In-closures by the teachers and rulers, and the others were made Servants and Slaves” (Winstanley, *The True Levellers Standard Advanced*, p.4), will surely continue to echo through the ages

with their ideals of an equal right for all to a pursuit of happiness and political freedom.

Webb explains that Winstanley's work *The Law of Freedom in a Platform*, "came after his own acceptance of defeat for his movement, causing him to re-evaluate how he perceived the notion of freedom" (Webb, *The Bitter Product of Defeat? Reflections on Winstanley's "Law of Freedom"*, p.4,1994). In *The True Levellers Standard Advanced*, his ideals are much more radical and, in a way, imposing. Although most of his ideals refer to religion and scripture, he does draw upon previous scholars such as More. Nevertheless, he often brings perspectives in reference to A-dam, the condition which exists when Man chooses to restrict and reject reason, ignoring the spirit of peace and liberty. By imposing conditions or exercising power over another human being, man not only imprisons the other person, but also imprisons himself and in a way punishes himself. Winstanley explains this when he contends that:

"But this coming in of Bondage, is called A-dam, because this ruling and teaching power without, doth dam up the Spirit of Peace and Liberty; First within the heart, by filling it with slavish fears of others. Secondly without, by giving the bodies of one to be imprisoned, punished and oppressed by the outward power of another." (Winstanley, *The Law of Freedom and Other Writings*, p. 78)

Freedom is also a concept for Winstanley which cannot easily be understood and defined. He explains that the spirit, which ultimately allows man to break the shackles of sin, is something that comes with age and experience. Only with



experience and growth can one understand what is important and how the best way to live life is. He accepts that the current state of the world is suffering from the teaching of man, who has used wit and power to make laws which reject or alienate universal Liberty. Therefore, the laws themselves are those which restrict true freedom from unfolding and that are what Winstanley profoundly expresses in the following quotation from *The True Levellers Standard Advanced*:

“O thou teaching and ruling power of the earthy man, thou hast been an oppressor, by imprisonment, impoverishing, and martyrdom; and all thy power and wit, hath been to make Laws, and execute them against such as stand for universal Liberty.

O thou Powers of England, though thou hast promised to make this People a Free People, yet thou hast so handled the matter, through thy self-seeking humour, That thou hast wrapped us up more in bondage, and oppression lies heavier upon us; not only bringing thy fellow Creatures, the Commoners, to a morsel of Bread, but by confounding all sorts of people by thy Government, of doing and undoing.” (Winstanley, *The True Levellers Standard Advanced*, p.6).

Winstanley was a great critic of sovereignty, throughout history, arguing that the progress of the world has constantly undermined true freedom. As seen above, he believes that man is now subject not only to himself, but also to the system and laws which all cause man to be a slave to the land and to beasts he was initially given rule over. Oppression and bondage is growing ever more and instead of pressing for freedom, which is often a promise made by governing powers, the reality is very

different. Simply the fact that a Revolution was taking place, underlines that civil liberties were being undermined. Therefore, the platform upon which Winstanley operates highlights the fact that the majority felt they were not truly free to utilize the land and were being exploited.

Winstanley also feels that man has been deceived and his inherent ability to trust and lack of reason make him blind to the understanding of this. Man is simply acting on what he knows and not on how he was “designed” to be. Therefore, the governing powers use the term liberty or freedom, to coerce and force people to act a certain way in order to gain or achieve freedom. Revolution itself, cannot comply or be within the rules of the governing power since the governing powers have set up the playing field in a way in which they will always win. This is also true of the English Revolution, where man was promised liberty, but the system proposed, even with success of the revolution, would still imprison and oppress him. As Winstanley notably states, or rather accuses:

“First, Thou hast made the people to take a Covenant and Oaths to endeavour a Reformation, and to bring in Liberty every man in his place; and yet while a man is in pursuing of that Covenant, he is imprisoned and oppressed by thy Officers, Courts and Justices”

(Winstanley, *The True Levellers Standard Advanced*, p.6).

Furthermore, liberty and Freedom, similar yet not identical terms for Winstanley, are a birth right, given to us by God. However, he argues that from the moment we are born, the system in place tries to distance us from these, due to expectations and requirements. The reformers, who promise changes in the current situation all struggle with the different deviations of who will end up being oppressed.

This identifies how the notions of reason, disobedience, pride and liberty are all intertwined. Winstanley's strongest criticism on this point is that freedom and liberty were promised through the revolution and despite the fact that the people gave their sweat and blood, they did not receive what they were promised. In Winstanley's own words:

“And all this, Because they stand to maintain an universal Liberty and Freedom, which not only is our Birthright, which our Maker gave us, but which thou hast promised to restore unto us, from under the former oppressing Powers that are gone before, and which likewise we have bought with our Money, in Taxes, Free- quarter, and Bloud-shed; all which sums thou hast received at our hands, and yet thou hast not given us our bargain.” (Winstanley, *The True Levellers Standard Advanced*, p.6)

It is clear that Winstanley does not believe freedom will exist, until all, including the poor, are able to “dig and labour” land and “the commons”, to “live comfortably” and equally without any excesses, but merely with what is necessary to remain free (Winstanley, *The True Levellers Standard Advanced*, p.6). All considered, this is what Winstanley was truly pursuing, a situation where people are not forced to do anything but they should use reason to acknowledge that all human beings were created by God as equals and for that reason social and economic distinctions must be obliterated. That is why he explicitly states that:

“...England is not a Free People, till the Poor that have no land, have a free allowance to dig and labour the Commons, and so live as

Comfortably as the Landlords that live in their Inclosures”.

(Winstanley, *The True Levellers Standard Advanced*, p.8)

According to Winstanley “Poor peoples hearts” should be “comforted by an universal Consent of making the Earth a Common Treasury, that they may live together as one House of Israel, united in brotherly love into one Spirit; and having a comfortable livelihood in the Community of one Earth their Mother”. (Winstanley, *The True Levellers Standard Advanced*, p.8). It is indisputable it seems, that Winstanley accepts that certain parties will be required to give up their advantages and control over other people, as well as their hold of land and luxuries and embrace the fact that all the earth should become “a common treasury” (Winstanley, *The True Levellers Standard Advanced*, p.6), not subject to private ownership or singular use.

**Chapter III:**

The ideas of Reason, Liberty, and Disobedience & The Fall of Adam and Eve in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

*Paradise Lost* is an acclaimed epic poem, written by John Milton between 1658 and 1663. Milton uses the classical Greek tradition to evoke the soul of blind prophets. He cited Homer, the author of the first great epic in the history of Western literature, and Tiresias, the prophet of Thebes, when he begins his poem by evoking the aid of the muses:

“Sing Heav'nly Muse, that on the secret top

Of *Oreb*, or of *Sinai*, didst inspire

That Shepherd, who first taught the chosen Seed,

In the Beginning how the Heav'ns and Earth

Rose out of *Chaos*: or if *Sion Hill*

Delight thee more, and *Siloa's* brook that flow'd

Fast by the Oracle of God; I thence

Invoke thy aid to my adventurous Song,

That with no middle flight intends to soar

Above th' *Aonian* Mount, while it pursues

Things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhime.” (*Paradise Lost*, Book I, 6-17).

*Paradise Lost* was written shortly after *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* and Gerrard Winstanley's *The True Levellers Standard Advanced*. As in these two aforementioned literary works, *Paradise Lost* is also filled with references to the main concepts which this thesis aims to tackle; that is, the themes of Reason, Liberty and Disobedience.

The years in which Milton was writing *Paradise Lost* were the years of the Restoration. Milton was feeling that the purpose of the Rebellion and the reformation which was promised had been defeated and twisted into something that Protestants had not essentially desired and this eventually led to the reconstitution of monarchy. Following the collapsing of the Protectorate in the hands of Oliver Cromwell, monarchy was finally restored in 1660, with King Charles II ascending to the throne. *Paradise Lost* was Milton's way of expressing what he felt living through all these important political events.

Despite the difference in style and tone between Milton's *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* which is a political treatise and *Paradise Lost* which is a poem, Milton's desire to cauterize and shine light upon political matters is evident, even enhanced in many ways in *Paradise Lost*, taking a deeper more spiritual understanding on Reason and Disobedience, than the rather more accepting nature in the *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*.

Reason first appears in Book I of *Paradise Lost*, where Milton identifies that reason can be achieved by man by the individual internalizing a sanctum where he can dwell in peace, subject only to his or her own reason and interpretation of the world, within the scope of the Lord's reason. Donne's Holy Sonnet XIV describes and highlights how humans are totally dependent on God, to a certain extent agreeing with many of Milton's ideals. Donne also upholds this particular ideal, furthering that this Reason generated internally by man should be upheld and protected by all means necessary (Donne, 1631). Failure to do so, both Milton and Donne agree, is weakness and forgoing for the easy choice, which Milton constantly refers to as the devil within.

Bringing with him features of the *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* and the *True Leveler's Standard Advanced*, the Devil is also quoted many times describing the situation where humans abuse power and go beyond reason and obedience to satisfy their own personal desires, trespassing the rights of others: "Whom reason hath equald, force hath made supream, Above his equals." (Book I, *Paradise Lost*, 210). This can be seen as accepting how force, in many cases can overshadow Reason and be a tool to gain dominance over other, even more reasonable people.

Milton also refers to Reason as a mindset, suggesting in Book II that in higher thoughts of deeper reason, fate and free will can be achieved. In Milton's own words: "In thoughts more elevatèd, and reason'd high Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will and Fate, Fixt Fate, free will, foreknowledg absolute And found no end, in wandring mazes lost. Of good and evil much they argu'd then, Of happiness and final misery." (*Paradise Lost*, Book II, 555-65).

Achieving the 'status' of being reasonable he comments, is to be able to embrace the differing aspects of good, evil, happiness and misery.

Milton also narrates that God has given Man free will, but, free will when carried out with reason. Being able to choose, he suggests, is not for God's vain purposes but rather to enable man to carry out choices. God speaks to his Son while watching Satan approaching earth to set in motion his plan to condemn humanity for eternity, and rhetorically asks Him:

"What pleasure I from such obedience paid,

When Will and Reason

Useless and vain, of freedom both despoild,

Made passive both, had servd necessitie,



Not mee. They therefore as to right belongd,  
So were created, nor can justly accuse  
Thir maker, or thir making, or thir Fate,  
As if predestination over-rul'd  
Thir will, dispos'd by absolute Decree  
Or high foreknowledge; they themselves decreed  
Thir own revolt, not I: if I foreknew," (Book III, 107-117, *Paradise Lost*).

Reason, which God explains is the ability to choose, is what is considered to be the most powerful privilege of man, making it of the utmost importance to keep it distant from necessity. Klimt also explains this from a different perspective, suggesting that "choice is devised from Reason, and being able to carry out a reasonable thought process is what gives value to a choice" (Klimt, *Reason Is but Choosing': Freedom of Thought and John Milton*, 2018, p.48).

There are also occasions in the poem where Milton takes the speech of characters to suggest that free will and reason are simply ways in which humans impose a lack of freedom upon themselves, usually in the light of 'negative' characters such as demons and the devil.

Milton's underlying drive was a firm belief in intellectual freedom, a form of human enlightenment and awareness. By achieving or being on the path of God's given reason, the ability is created for man to make choices. But the question posed by many academics over the years is what choice exactly Milton refers to. The interpretation varies, but the popular view is that this will always essentially come down to deciding between good and evil.

In his interpretation of the figure of God in *Paradise Lost*, Bush explains that “God himself is the supreme manifestation of Reason, yet makes a distinction between Reason and right and goes even further to explain that reason in isolation is not sufficient” (Bush, *Ironic and Ambiguous Allusion in "Paradise Lost"*, 1961, p.13). Through his experiences, Milton grew more wary of human choice, suggesting that human reason is warped and distorted, not allowing clarity, which will lead to reason. Satan upon his arrival to earth and seeing the beauty of Paradise realizes that it is he and his own reasoning that forbid him from finding repentance and so he states that:

“Thank him who puts me loath to this revenge  
On you who wrong me not for him who wrongd.  
And should I at your harmless innocence  
Melt, as I doe, yet public reason just,  
Honour and Empire with revenge enlarg'd,  
By conquering this new World, compels me now

To do what else though damnd I should abhorre” (Book IV, 388-392, *Paradise Lost*)

In Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Book IX, lines 205-209 quoted below, the reader becomes witness to an exchange of Adam and Eve and their decision to divide their work. The consequences of this conversation and the conduct of the first couple reveal Milton's idea that Man is a unified and complex entity:

“One night or two with wanton growth derides  
Tending to wilde. Thou therefore now advise  
Or hear what to my minde first thoughts present,  
Let us divide our labours, thou where choice

Leads thee, or where most needs, whether to wind”

(Book IX, *Paradise Lost*, 205-209).

As illustrated in many paintings that portrayed episodes of Genesis, the “original state of Adam and Eve, and, therefore, the proper position of Reason and Passion, is that of a harmonious embrace, a pragmatic co-existence” (Saif Patel, *Through the Narrow Gate: Impassioned Reason and Rational Passion in Milton's “Paradise Lost”*).

As a result, the first step towards the fall occurs when this “embrace” is shattered. Adam obviously recognizes the probable consequences of becoming separated from Eve and that is obvious in the following quotation from book IX of *Paradise Lost*:

“But other doubt possesses me, lest harm Befall thee sever'd from me; for thou know'st What hath been warn'd us, what malicious Foe Envyng our happiness, and of his own Despairing, seeks to work us woe and shame . . . His wish and best advantage, us asunder, Hopeless to circumvent us join'd, where each To other speedy aid might lend at need.” (Book IX, *Paradise Lost*, 251-260).

As Saif Patel argues: “Man and Woman exist together for each other, as decreed by God. In the same way that being together, being in love, would create harmony, so would being disjointed, bring in sin, and create harsh discord” (Saif Patel, *Through the Narrow Gate: Impassioned Reason and Rational Passion in Milton's “Paradise Lost”*).

Adam is aware of the fact that they need to be united in order to stand against Satan and his evil and that is why he strives to demonstrate this to Eve, by explaining

to her that he and her have interdependent capabilities to aid each other where and when necessary. This is evident in Book IX in particular when Eve speaks to Adam and tells him that she is fond of his idea to "... divide our labours, thou where choice, Leads thee, or where most needs..." (*Paradise Lost*, Book IX, 213-214) Moreover, it seems that Milton utilizes the allegory of Passion and Reason to show the reader that Man is broken down and his "integrated perception of Existence" (Saif Patel, *Through the Narrow Gate: Impassioned Reason and Rational Passion in Milton's "Paradise Lost"*) has been lost. Eve as well seems to be aware of the fact that they she and Adam are stronger together, and she blames the serpent with "his foul esteem/ Of [their] integrity" (*Paradise Lost*, Book IX, 328-329) who has become the reason for their separation. Nevertheless, she is unable to fathom that if they are torn from each other, their power is crippled, and is void of its base of a "structured harmony" (Saif Patel, *Through the Narrow Gate: Impassioned Reason and Rational Passion in Milton's "Paradise Lost"*). In this manner, Milton seems to be demonstrating a clash between Adam and Eve, and between Passion and Reason. A clash which brings the Self in disharmony from its natural state, the one in which it was created to be in. This is depicted in Jesus's own words in His "Sermon on the Mount" which reads: "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money." (*Holy Bible*, Matthew 6:24).

What Eve is craving is utter freedom. She would like to have the one thing that God her creator forbids her to have, and that leads to the dissolution of her union with Adam: "If this be our condition, thus to dwell In narrow circuit strait'n'd by a Foe, Subtle or violent, we not endu'd Single with like defense, wherever met, How are we happy, still in fear of harm?" (*Paradise Lost*, Book IX, 322-326).

But what is this narrow circuit that Eve refers to? Jesus referred to this narrow circuit when he instructs his apostles to “Enter through the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it.” (*Holy Bible*, Matthew, Chapter 7, Verse 13). Yet this creates a paradox when considering Milton’s regard that freedom is a provision carried inherently in Man, given on the day of his creation; a paradox that Adam appears to resolve when he asserts that: “For God left free the Will, for what obeys/ Reason, is free, and Reason he made right.” (*Paradise Lost*, Book IX, 351-352). Milton on the other hand, using Eve as a delegate, argues through Eve’s words that a happiness which is confined is not in fact happiness. According to Milton and Eve, ignorance is not bliss. At the same time Adam seems to be accepting the notion that a Man should allow Passion to “dominate” his existence but only when Reason is present which will be able to help Man not to deviate from the course set by God the creator.

Just like Adam requires Eve to be a complete person and vice versa, so, Passion requires Reason to achieve its purpose. Although passion is what gives human lives their “brilliance” in a manner of speech; because essentially being able to act on a passion serves as the epitome of what it means to be free; Reason is also required to play the part of the final judge, who will put a stop to something that crosses the boundaries of the teachings of God.

Just before the Fall from Paradise, Eve requests that Adam and she separate their work, giving her reasons and rationalizing her thoughts. Adam, not wanting to scold his partner, consents to the request, essentially giving in to his passion to comfort Eve. A clear reversal of roles is then depicted in this scene between the archetypal couple. By conceding to Eve’s wishes, it is understood that Adam shares an equal part of the load of being responsible for the Fall of humanity from Paradise.

Not only did Adam not stop Eve from going into the garden and eating from the forbidden tree of knowledge, but he also ate from the fruit of the tree, completely conscious of his choice and the consequences of his actions. That is something we cannot say for Eve as well, because some may argue that she acted on impulse not fully understanding or in fact not even trying to fully understand the aftermath of her actions.

It isn't until Book X that this reversal of roles between Adam and Eve is resolved; when at the beginning in his argument for Book X, Milton states that:

“Adam more and more perceiving his fall'n condition heavily bewailes, rejects the condolment of Eve; she persists and at length appeases him: then to evade the Curse likely to fall on thir Ofspring, proposes to Adam violent wayes, which he approves not, but conceiving better hope, puts her in mind of the late Promise made them, that her Seed should be reveng'd on the Serpent, and exhorts her with him to seek Peace of the offended Deity, by repentance and supplication.” (*Paradise Lost*, Book X, Argument)

Adam and Eve only came to terms with what their actions had wrought after Adam began to adopt a more reasonable approach to what their future might entail and how they will be able to even begin to come to terms with God and try to rectify the situation in which they brought themselves.

It seems that the precept Milton is trying to bring through with his depiction of the Fall of Adam and Eve from Heaven, is that Man in his life needs to have both Passion and Reason in order to make it worthwhile. Neither one of these two extremely important qualities should be in any way abandoned; but instead they should become inextricably intertwined serving each other and of course serving

together to make Man's life the best it can be, by constructing the framework through which Man may develop an appropriate view of the world in which he lives.

In Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the theme of obedience to God is quite heavy. Milton creates two separate paths that the reader can take, and then decide for him or herself which would be the best. This idea is frequent in the Bible also. Basically is it a better choice for us to disobey God? Or should we obey and await the good things to arrive?

*Paradise Lost* is successful in showing the two contrasting paths in life. The first one is that of God and the other is the path of Satan. As Beckman suggests, Satan was God's first creation and was not provoked to disobey God and that is why this was almost worse than Adam and Eve because he, felt no remorse (Beckman, *Milton's Evolving Faculty of Conscience: 'On the New Forcers of Conscience,'* 2010, p.44). The other path is the path of redemption shown by Adam and Eve: they show that in the end humans are sinful, and may fall at times but ultimately they are looking to serve God. To show obedience to God is the one thing that God asks, he will forgive if you repent and admit your sin. But, it is the reader's choice to decide what path is right for them. In *Paradise Lost*, humankind's strife eventually brings on the deliverance of humanity. Disobedience will not earn you any point when it comes to God, but if you atone, then God will forgive.

The one thing, at which Eve has failed in her obedience to God, is that she does not worship God as much as Adam. She does love and praise her creator quite a few times while performing her daily tasks. But because of her mediated connection to God, she is not able to appreciate or obey Him in the same manner that Adam can. In fact Milton attributes to Adam superiority in terms of knowledge and morality.

Raphael tells Adam in Book VIII that: “Of these skills, the more thou know’st,/ The more she will acknowledge thee her Head” (*Paradise Lost*, Book VIII, 573-574). Eve seems to recognize this difference when she addresses Adam as “My Author and Disposer” and asserts that , “what thou bidst / Unargu’d I obey; so God ordains, / God is thy law, thou mine” (Book IV, *Paradise Lost*, 635-637). She makes it clear then that it is through Adam that she is obedient to God. Since Eve was created from Adam’s rib, it is Adam that is her physical creator. And it is for this reason that she ascribes to him the power of creation. In this manner, she forms stronger attachment to her husband than to God. Despite this, Eve still seems to be loyal to God even if it is through Adam’s loyalty in Him.

*Paradise Lost* tells the story of the expulsion of God’s first creations, that is, Adam and Eve from Paradise. The story line is greatly affected by the representation of Satan’s rebellion against the heavenly monarch of God and that is the reason why a lot of battles are depicted in Milton’s poem. Satan sets in motion a plan to deceive the Heavenly couple, get them to eat the fruit of the tree that God forbidden them to eat from, that is, the Tree of Knowledge so they will ultimately fall from God’s grace. This one deed of disobedience results in the “fall of Man and the Christian explanation for all the suffering and evil in the world” (Schwartz, *Milton's Hostile Chaos: "... And the Sea Was No More"*, 1985).

Undoubtedly in Milton’s world, disobedience and rebellion are punishable acts. Despite the fact that eventually God shows his merciful side when He makes the decision to send His own Son to restore the fate of humanity, he still generates boundless anguish as a consequence of the act of eating one single piece of fruit, and he does not demonstrate any leniency whatsoever when punishing Satan.



The universe's order and God's supreme authority must be must be preserved, because anything resulting in the disorder of this order will bring torment and suffering. Of course, considering Milton's involvement and support of the rebellion against monarchy during the years of the Civil Wars in England, it is clear that he makes a distinction between disobedience of God and disobedience of earthly power. Clearly, disobedience of God is unacceptable but disobedience of earthly power (when said power becomes tyrannical) is not only acceptable but also expected of man.

These matters are most specifically discussed by Eugene Fish in his *Surprised by Sin* book. In this book Fish extensively discusses these matters through his interpretation of the way in which Milton represented the Fall of Adam and Eve from Paradise in book IX of *Paradise Lost*. Even if Fish recognizes that this interpretation in *Paradise Lost* suggests that God gifted Adam and Eve with Reason, and that it is this capacity of Adam and Eve which differentiates them from the animals in God's creation. Nevertheless, Fish also asserts that this capacity of Adam and Eve obviously expresses the opinion that Reason "is irrelevant to any decision concerning the forbidden fruit" (Stanley Eugene Fish, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost*, p.242). This is in fact attested to by Eve, who as reported by Fish, responds to Satan's temptations in this manner:

"But of this Tree we may not taste nor touch; God so commanded, and left that Command Sole Daughter of his voice; the rest, we live Law to ourselves, our Reason is our Law."(Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book IX, 650).

She states in this way that, as stated by Fish, "in this instance alone, reason is not her law" (Fish, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost* p. 254). The

rationale behind God's decision to issue to Adam and Eve "a command beyond reason" is that He wants to see in them what Fish calls an "act of faith" (Fish, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost*, p.243-245). But what is this act of faith Fish is referring to? It is the consequence of an employment of their own will which doesn't have anything to do either with the notion of Reason or experience: "the arbitrariness of God's command ... its unreasonableness, is necessary if compliance is to be regarded as an affirmation of loyalty springing from an act of the will" (Fish, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost*, pp. 242, 270). As readers we must not forget that God is asking His first creations "to perform an act of the will, signifying faith, not understanding, and that lapses in logic do not affect her sufficiency" (Fish, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost*, p. 254). Even though Fish doesn't go on about how Adam and Eve are allowed to abandon their Reason in order to follow this command, he does imply that "this faith is a freely willed belief in an omnipotent and beneficent deity who is always to be obeyed". By describing Adam and Eve's faith and reasoning in this manner, Eugene Fish suggests that in this representation of his in *Paradise Lost*, Milton is integrating his belief which he expresses in *On Christian Doctrine* that "the seat of faith is not in the understanding, but in the will" (quoted in Fish, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost*, p. 254).

William Walker also heavily discusses aspects such as Reason and Liberty which are important in two aspects for this work (*On Reason, Faith, and Freedom in "Paradise Lost"*, p.44, 2007). Firstly, it further validates and highlights the prominence of the themes of reason and liberty chosen to be discussed; and secondly offers a further platform for discussion. This further platform is created by the different interpretation Walker has to those previously scrutinizing the traditional

critics and this means that modern interpretations of Milton and Winstanley's works, give much more emphasis on Reason and Liberty than earlier interpretations.

Hence, it can be seen that Adam and Eve have the freedom to act in according to these beliefs about God. This freedom and what they are going to do with it is not based on Reason, but in fact it is based entirely on their will. God by giving them an order which seems to be unjustified and pointless, God is testing Adam and Eve by forcing them in essence to demonstrate their freedom to believe, their loyalty, by heeding His command freely. Consequently, Fish understands the disobedience of Adam and Eve as a failing of their faith and not as a failing of their reason. He asserts that: "the error of substituting the law of reason and the evidence of things seen for the law of God is repeated by the reader if he regards Eve's failure as a failure of reason and declines to judge her in accordance with the terms of God's decree" (Fish, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost*, p. 254). Eve should have trusted in her faith instead of her reason and follow the command given her. Fish while trying to shun the idea that "she might not have fallen, had she been a better logician" he stands firm on "the reality of the Fall as a failure of will, free and spontaneous" (Fish, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost*, p. 255-256).

J.B. Savage also speaks out by suggesting that Milton believes freedom to be synonymous with bravery and wisdom, (Savage, *Freedom and Necessity in 'Paradise Lost'*, 1977). The position shown by Milton as a requirement for freedom is human's ability to be authentic and possess moral passion. The order God gives to Adam and Eve, is logical because as Milton asserts "the more unreasonable seems the command, the more obvious it should be that its rationale lies in its source. This holds true also for fallen man who must affirm his faith in the same way, independently of reason" (Fish, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost*, p.243). It seems that Fish here

is trying to show that it is not just Adam and Eve but all the humans who have been expelled from Paradise even if they did not all make the decision not to obey God. It was only Adam and Eve who made that decision and it was all human beings who enjoyed the liberty to have their own beliefs when it came to God and they also had the liberty to take action according to these beliefs. As Fish asserts: “Like the faith of Adam and Eve, the faith of all fallen human beings is essentially the product of an act of free will that is properly independent of Reason, as is the act of proving that belief” (Fish, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost*, p. 241). The fact that Fish generalizes in this manner is an indicator of his effort to prove how when it comes to *Paradise Lost* religious faith both for human beings and for angels comes down to their ability to employ a certain internal freedom without regard to Reason (Fish, *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost*, p. 241).

Overall, *Paradise Lost* is in many ways consistent with Milton’s articulated political views in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*. Firstly, he is clearly advocating against earthly monarchies which he identifies with Satan and his followers; while accepting monarchy in Heaven. The reason why this happens is that Milton believes that it is only in Heaven that the monarchs, namely, God and His Son, can be more worthy than those they govern. On earth this can never happen since all men were created equal; and so monarchy on earth should be obsolete. Secondly, the idea which is expressed in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* that man possesses the God-given ability to assign political authority to whoever he chooses; is communicated in *Paradise Lost* as well through Adam when he states that:

“O execrable Son so to aspire  
Above his Brethren, to himself assuming  
Authoritie usurpt, from God not giv'n:

He gave us onely over Beast, Fish, Fowl  
Dominion absolute; that right we hold  
By his donation; but Man over men  
He made not Lord; such title to himself

Reserving, human left from human free.” (*Paradise Lost*, Book XII, 64-71)

But the epic’s most important dialectic about liberty, license, and self-regulation is witnessed in the encounters between Satan and the angel Abdiel. Abdiel is the only angel not swayed by Satan’s words. He remains faithful to God and is generally understood as a character with whom Milton identified with. Abdiel answers to Satan with much courage that: “That Golden Scepter which thou didst rejected Is now an Iron Rod to bruise and break Thy disobedience.” (*Paradise Lost*, Book V, 886-888). Furthermore, in Book VI when Satan arrives at the camp of the good angels he provokes the angels by calling them to arms claiming that those who rebel following him are the ones seeking true liberty. Abdiel alone stands against him and is ready to battle him when Satan accuses him of being servile. Abdiel then tells Satan that: “Apostat, still thou errst, nor end wilt find /Of erring, from the path of truth remote” (*Paradise Lost*, Book VI, 172-173) and he continues by stating that: “This is servitude, To serve th’ unwise, or him who hath rebelld/ Against his worthier, as thine now serve thee/ Thy self not free, but to thy self enthrall’d;” (*Paradise Lost*, Book VI, 178-181). In both of these quotations from *Paradise Lost*, Milton is emphasizing how truthfulness needs no pomp to shine (Abdiel) while falseness as pompous as it can be, can still not shine (Satan). Furthermore, Satan’s accusations of servility are a direct allusion to the idea of license, against which Milton speaks in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, even though in *Paradise Lost*

it is turned around; since it is Satan who lives under license, and Abdiel who possesses true liberty, because he is serving the true monarch, God.

Stephania Chrysanthou

## Conclusion

This paper's aim was to consider the themes of Reason, Disobedience, and Liberty within the works of John Milton and Gerrard Winstanley. In particular, this thesis focused on three main texts: John Milton's epic poem *Paradise Lost* and his political pamphlet *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* and another political pamphlet, namely, *The True Levellers Standard Advanced* written by Gerrard Winstanley. These works are firstly linked by the time in which they were written; that is, the seventeenth century, and secondly by the country in which their writers lived, which is England. Both Milton and Winstanley wrote at a time of great political unrest with the rebellion having taken its toll on the people of England but also, on the country itself. Furthermore, both *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* and *The True Levellers Standard Advanced* are ridden with references to the concepts of Reason, Disobedience and Liberty and that is also a reason why the two texts can be linked. Another opinion which is shared in both of these works is that only God should be above other human beings and not other humans. *Paradise Lost* which is not in fact a political text but a literary one; has constituted the perfect platform for Milton to reiterate his political beliefs and even enhance them through the extensive use of allegory and that is why it was also chosen to be analyzed in this thesis.

In the first chapter of this thesis Milton's *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* is examined and interpreted. The theory which is extracted from the text testifies to Milton's struggle firstly to speak against the institution of monarchy when that is falsely turned into an institution of tyranny; and secondly to reinforce the idea that regicide is accepted if a monarch is given a fair trial for his crimes and is judged as

guilty of tyrannical actions that go against the common good of the people.

Furthermore, in this chapter the concepts of Liberty, Obedience/disobedience, and Reason were discussed and analyzed as they appear in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*.

Gerrard Winstanley and his political pamphlet *The True Levellers Standard Advanced* was the work on which the second chapter of this thesis focused on. Winstanley asserts the immense importance of Reason as a concept for each and every individual human being and even likens Reason to God Himself, asserting that it is only God who is endowed with Reason and He is the only one who can offer it to His flock. In this manner Winstanley accentuated his belief that because of this, it is only natural that every human being who is blessed with Reason should be able to enjoy the abundance of the earth and its riches. Furthermore, Winstanley asserted that liberty and Reason are practically inextricable since one cannot exist without the other.

Finally, in the third chapter of this thesis John Milton's *Paradise Lost* came into focus and despite the fact that it is not a political text as *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* and *The True Levellers Standard Advanced*, it comprised of a successful means through which Milton was able to convey his political convictions. Echoing the ideas he had previously expressed in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, Milton used the character of Satan to discuss tyranny and the way in which humans abuse power and go beyond Reason and Obedience to satisfy their own personal desires, trampling over the fundamental rights of their fellow humans. Furthermore, the extremely important to Milton's epic poem narrative of the fall, was considered. The narrative of the fall was fundamental to our discussion on the concepts of Reason and Disobedience in this chapter, as it was Eve's first disobedience that caused the



expulsion of Man from Eden, and also, it was through the narrative of the fall that Milton was able to express his argument that without Reason to act as a filter, humans can never be genuinely free, but they can only live under license. As Milton himself argues: “The mind is its own place, and in itself / Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.” (*Paradise Lost*, Book I, 254-255).

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