

MILTON'S PATRIOTISM:  
AGAINST TYRANNY, SERVILITY AND IDOLATRY

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BY

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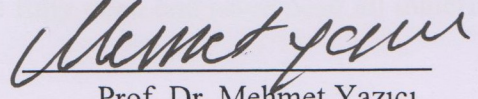
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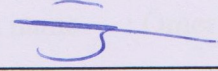
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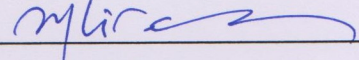
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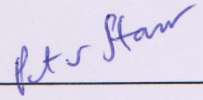
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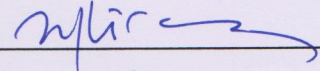
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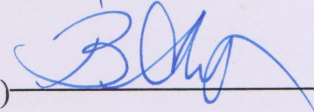
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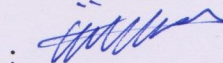


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## **ABSTRACT**

### **MILTON’S PATRIOTISM: AGAINST TYRANNY, SERVILITY AND IDOLATRY**

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Milton’s patriotism is a subject which is often taken for granted or understudied, while its significance for English literature, politics and history is undeniable. In addition, academic literature on the thinker and his patriotism is often polarized between ideas of a revolutionary Milton and an illiberal Milton. This thesis analyses a selection of Milton’s prose works written on religion, divorce, education, free speech and politics to understand the poet’s conception of patriotism. The study argues that Milton’s patriotism is based on earlier forms of republicanism and secularism through various discourses of liberty employed by the poet and creates a bridge between traditional, pre-modern identities and modern national identity grounded in constitutional liberties.

**Keywords:** Milton, patriotism, nationalism, liberty, tyranny

ÖZ

**MİLTON'IN YURTSEVERLİĞİ: TİRANLIK, KÖLELİK VE PUTLARA  
KARŞI**

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Milton'ın yurtseverliği sıklıkla varlığı farzedilen ve yeterince çalışılmayan, bununla beraber İngiliz edebiyatı, siyaseti ve tarihindeki önemi tartışılmaz olan bir konudur.. Ek olarak, düşünürle ilgili akademik literatür devrimci bir Milton figürü ile illiberal bir Milton figürü arasında kutuplaşmış görünmektedir. Bu tez, Milton'ın yurtseverlik anlayışını anlamak amacıyla seçilen ve şairin din, boşanma, eğitim, ifade özgürlüğü ve siyaset konularında yazdığı düzyazı eserlerini incelemektedir. Çalışma, Milton'ın yurtseverliğinin, kullandığı özgürlük söylemleri aracılığıyla, cumhuriyetçilik ve sekülerizm düşüncelerinin erken biçimlerine dayandığını ve geleneksel, modernite-öncesi kimlikler ile anayasal özgürlüklere dayanan modern ulusal kimlik arasında bir köprü oluşturduğunu öne sürer.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Milton, yurtseverlik, milliyetçilik, özgürlük, tiranlık

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>STATEMENT OF NON-PLAGIARISM</b> .....	iii
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	iv
<b>ÖZ</b> .....	v
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	vi
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	vii
<b>CHAPTER 1: Introduction</b> .....	1
<b>CHAPTER 2: Historical Background</b> .....	5
<b>2.1. Historical Developments of the Era</b> .....	5
<b>2.2. Milton as a Political Figure</b> .....	12
<b>CHAPTER 3: Patriotism and Milton’s Political Thought</b> .....	22
<b>3.1. The Concept of Patriotism</b> .....	22
<b>3.2. Patriotism and Nationalism: Pre-modern vs. Modern Conceptions</b> .....	24
<b>3.3. Political Thoughts of John Milton</b> .....	28
<b>CHAPTER 4: Analysis of Milton’s Prose Works</b> .....	32
<b>4.1. Prose Works on Religion</b> .....	32
<b>4.2. Prose Works on Divorce</b> .....	36
<b>4.3. Prose Works on Education and Free Speech</b> .....	39
<b>4.4. Prose Works on Politics</b> .....	42
<b>4.5. Discussion</b> .....	60
<b>CHAPTER 5: Conclusion</b> .....	67
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	71
<b>CV</b> .....	76

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

John Milton is a significant figure in the history of English literature and politics of his country. His works on the political conflicts and debates of 17<sup>th</sup> century England and Europe as well as his literary works have been greatly influential on later generations, students of literature and scholars. Milton's ability to produce great works of art, as "the author of the finest and most influential narrative poem in English" allowed him to become the "the most eloquent polemicist of the mid-century" (Campbell & Corns, 2008, p. 3). John Milton's vast influence and abilities show that he was a versatile and productive thinker, author and poet. Thus, Milton comes forward as an interesting subject of inquiry.

Various studies have been written on political thought of Milton in terms of his republican line of thought, his ideas on what we would call today a secular idea of government, his support for Protestant and Puritan ideals on the control of English religious scene by the Roman Catholic Church, and his choice to intertwine his politics into his poetry (Hawkes, 2001; Rahe, 2004; Worden, 2007; Kıraçlı, 2011). Milton's understanding of patriotism, however, seems to be understudied in comparison to the other aspects of his politics such as his republicanism. As Loewenstein and Stevens put it, Milton's understanding of patriotism seems to be overlooked as a field of study (2008, p. 8). Moreover, existing literature seem to present a polarized picture about Milton who is either seen as a revolutionary and progressive figure (Loewenstein & Stevens, 2008, p. 10; Campbell & Corns, 2008, p. 1) or as an "illiberal" supporter of an aristocratic regime who allows the misuse



of his great artistic abilities for government propaganda (Walker, 2014). In addition, while existing studies accept that Milton's patriotism is relevant, the importance of his patriotism is often taken for granted and the field remains open to further contributions (Loewenstein & Stevens, 2008, p. 7-8).

In order to fill this void in the existing literature on Milton's patriotism, this study investigates Milton's understanding of patriotism mainly through an exhaustive analysis of his prose works on various issues such as education, free speech, religion, divorce and politics. Analysis of the historical background of the era and Milton's prose works were chosen as the main methods of this thesis, because our questions require both a historical understanding and a literary understanding of Milton's texts. This thesis asks the following questions: What is the main character of Milton's understanding of patriotism? What does Milton's patriotism represent in terms of the debate between pre-modern (traditional) identities and modern nationalist thought? Was Milton's patriotism an illiberal aristocratic one or was it a progressive mode of thinking? In its attempt to answer these questions, the study goes beyond a general understanding of Milton's patriotism and suggests that Milton's patriotism presents a clear and coherent stance and direction towards the creation of a republican English nation based on meritocracy and progressive ideals such as a secular understanding of religious liberty and vast civil liberties including freedom of speech and divorce. The present study refers to various discourses employed by Milton as "discourses of liberty," because his main aim remains to create a free English people against his three part *anathema*: tyranny, servility and idolatry. However, the study also underlines that Milton's patriotism is not yet completely modern nationalism, though it anticipates the emergence of modern nation-states and values such as national and popular sovereignty, democracy, secularism and individual liberties. In this sense, Milton has a mediatory role in the emergence of nationalism; thus, he was able to incorporate both traditional and modern values in his patriotism, for instance his patriotism involves a central place for Protestantism as well as a strong defence of freedom of speech.

The questions asked in the thesis require a firm understanding on the history of the subject. Therefore, Chapter 2 focuses on the historical background and main concepts of 17<sup>th</sup> century England and Europe. The conflict between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, the emergence of a language consciousness in England, the English Civil Wars and the Glorious Revolution are presented and discussed in this chapter as all these create the historical ground on which Milton developed his ideas on patriotism and the future of his country. As a continuation of the historical background, also in Chapter 2, the study presents the biography of Milton with an aim to understand the personal conditions through which Milton appeared as a great poet, a polemicist and an influential political figure. This chapter allows us to create a connection between the historical background of 17<sup>th</sup> century England and John Milton himself. His relationships with his father John Milton Sr. and his grandfather Richard Milton, his background in arts and music through his father's interests and investments, his education in English, Greek and Latin, his travel to Europe where he met influential figures of his time are presented in this chapter.

In Chapter 3, the study delves deeper into the concepts of patriotism, nationalism, modernity and pre-modern or traditional ties of identity so that we can conceive Milton's understanding of patriotism in order to see both its historical relevance and its contemporary importance. In addition to a general presentation and discussion on the concept of patriotism, this chapter will elaborate on Milton's political thoughts in general so that we will be able to analyse his prose works on the basis of this general framework. We will go back to these themes discovered in this chapter later in our discussion and conclusion sections.

Chapter 4 encompasses the main analysis and discussion of this study. In this chapter, we will analyse Milton's prose works on religion, divorce, education, free speech and politics first under separate sections to be discussed together with contributions from his literary works, i.e. *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes*, later in the discussion section. We have separated the prose works thematically on the basis of different subjects in order to make the analysis manageable and to show the

different discourses of liberty which in turn support the general framework of his patriotism which aspires to the realization of “the majesty of a free people” (Milton, 1660/1847, p. 179).

Finally, implications and conclusions of our analysis of Milton’s prose works for his understanding of patriotism will be discussed and presented in Chapter 5. While it is clear that Milton’s patriotism will continue to lead to debate among scholars, this study is focused on contributing to the academic literature on John Milton and his patriotism because a deeper understanding on Milton’s patriotism will enable us to understand the poet and the era more comprehensively.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Historical Background**

#### **2.1. Historical Developments of the Era**

“Patriotism” is a concept which criss-crosses many disciplines such as literature, history, political science, and sociology. In order to have a clear idea of patriotism in Milton’s life, we must first understand the 17<sup>th</sup> century with its main conflicts, ideological atmosphere and the general trends in England of the era. 17<sup>th</sup> century holds an important turning point in English history in terms of what “religion” and “country” means as the English Civil Wars took place in the middle of the century. In addition to religious and political conflict, scientific developments of the era cannot be overlooked. In this section, we will focus on the historical background which created the conditions for Milton to become an influential political figure and a poet in the 17<sup>th</sup> century with a perspective including religion, politics, and science.

Beginning with the 16<sup>th</sup> century, London experienced a great increase in its population through waves of migration from the countryside with a purpose to lead more prosperous lives which resulted in better education opportunities and diverse ways of life for the sons of these migrants; thus, a “cultural revolution” became possible through great artists such as Shakespeare and Milton (Semenza, 2005, p. vii). These developments were made possible mainly by two important trends which had first Europe-wide then world-wide results. First, development of the mechanical “movable-type printing press” by Gutenberg around 1450, and second, “The growth of the merchant class during the Renaissance” which “allow some potential for greater social mobility” (Semenza, 2005, p. x). As Smith states, Latin was a

language away from “everyday life and the masses” being the language of an intellectual elite, the “antiquarian classical humanists” (Smith, 1998, p. 135). This development made the dissemination of anti-Papal religious convictions possible in a rapid way.

In the Middle Ages the Roman Catholic Church held complete sway over the religious lives of people in Britain, and the Bible was available only in Latin. Very few people could read in any language, and only people who knew Latin—which effectively meant only priests and some aristocrats—were expected to read the Bible. Ordinary people were expected to learn what they needed to know of what was in the Bible from the priests. (Hager, 2005, p. 32)

Printing press allowed factions within society who are not happy with this privileged position of priests to grow stronger than ever, after reading the Bible in English rather than Latin became possible. However, the acceptance of English Bible was not an immediate change. The English Bible was legitimized in 1538 (Whiting, 1989, p. 1), while developments such as the “Marian campaign against vernacular scripture” (pp. 191-2) and the resistance from traditionalist clerics (p. 195) resulted in a repression which ended only with the accession of Elizabeth to the throne (p. 192).

The emergence and rise of a merchant class, on the other hand, made it possible for children who do not belong to the nobility, a class of people who formed only the 2 percent of the whole population in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, to get better education (Semenza, 2005, p. x). This also started to increase awareness about the importance of education as we see in the case of Richard Mulcaster, a “progressive educator,” who argued in 1581 that “all boys and girls should receive the same basic educational training” (p. x). As White indicates, “The number of university men who came to the Elizabethan House of Commons increased from 67 in 1563 to 161 by 1593” (1967, p. 141).

They were neither rustic boors nor exiled courtiers, but men of business educated by the market-place, the petty-assize bench, and some increasing number of them at the universities and the Inns of Court. (White, 1967, p. 141)

This transformation of daily lives and habits of Englishmen during 16<sup>th</sup> century had important impacts on the emerging artists and intellectuals of 17<sup>th</sup> century, one of them being the young John Milton, as we will discuss in detail in the next section on his biography.

When we analyse English history in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, we find that the role of religion, especially the conflict between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, and the religious reformation is decisive on the fate of whole society, as we see in the religious as well as political moves by different sides of the conflict (Semenza, 2005, p. viii). Introduction of the “Book of Common Prayer” by Thomas Cranmer, the protestant archbishop of Canterbury, in 1549 was followed by the death of King Edward and accession of Mary to the throne, who was a staunch Roman Catholic like her mother Catherine of Aragon, and whose burnings of Protestants at the stake earned her the title of “Bloody Mary” (p. viii). Elizabeth’s reign, on the contrary, saw the continuance of the movement of reformation with a “revised *Book of Common Prayer*.” Victory of English fleet against the Spanish Armada in 1588 seemed to guarantee the victory of Protestantism in England, while this actually took another century which involved the English Civil Wars between Royalists and Parliamentarians and the “Interregnum” – meaning the period “between reigns” – which was a form of a republican era without a King and led by Oliver Cromwell (p. ix).

The class roots of English Civil Wars are subject to debate among historians. According to some scholars, even though we may assume that the fractions in England at the time of English Civil Wars were influenced by the general trends which were in effect all over Europe, such as a declining gentry and a rising merchant class, as we also pointed to, and the conflict between Protestantism and

Roman Catholicism, simple explanations regarding the cause of the civil wars should be avoided (White, 1967, pp. 143-4; Haythornthwaite, 2002, pp. 9-10). White argues that it was the “slightly lower ranks of the landed aristocracy” rather than “a capitalist *bourgeoisie*” which challenged the political authority – the King – of the time (1967, pp. 143-4). Haythornthwaite supports this claim by suggesting that even trade centres such as “London, Bristol and Newcastle, controlled by the merchant class and usually regarded as wholly Parliamentary, contained numbers of committed Royalists” (2002, p. 10). On the other hand, Hill, an English Marxist historian, argues that economically more advanced and industrial parts of England, south and east, supported the Parliament predominantly while support for the King came from economically less advanced and agricultural areas, north and west of England (2002, pp. 119-120).

In addition to the class nature of English Civil Wars, which continues to stir debate among scholars, religious and political dimensions of the events were centrally important for historical analysis. Even though movement of religious reformation in Europe is mostly associated with its roots in Germany and Switzerland, the doctrines which laid the foundations for religious reformation took place in England through John Wycliffe (1330–84), and his supporters known as “Lollards,” who advocated the translation of Bible into the vernacular language as well as the idea that “the true church consisted only of the elect, and was therefore invisible” (Bray, 2004, p. 96). In fact, Lollards did translate the Bible into English language. While their influence in England were suppressed with “persecution, which included the introduction of burning as punishment for heresy,” Wycliffe’s ideas reached Europe and Martin Luther through “the Bohemian reformer” Jan Hus (p. 96). According to Bray, English Reformation started after the death of Henry VIII who managed to break ties with Roman Catholic Church yet did little to change the Church of England (pp. 97-8). Protestant reforms became widespread during Edward VI’s era when The Book of Common Prayer was introduced in 1549 and also a revised version in 1552 and the 42 articles of faith by Cranmer, until the reign of Mary who arrested Protestant bishops and Cranmer, who was eventually burnt at stake (pp. 98-9). However, this was only a temporary halt to the rise of

Protestantism in England and lasted until the reign of Elizabeth. Puritanism, as a form of Protestantism which advocates the purification of the church from the remaining Roman influences which were perceived to be corrupt, emerged during the Elizabethan period (p. 100).

The Puritans had significant support in the House of Commons, a fact which led to increasing conflict between the lower house of parliament and the crown. They concentrated on trying to raise the educational level and preaching standard of the clergy, and this gained them considerable support. (Bray, 2004, p. 100)

Puritan emphasis on education and the growing merchant class's aspirations to get their children more education appear to be parallel developments, which is also reflected in young John Milton's life as it is seen in his family life.

Another important dimension of both English Civil Wars and the religious conflict was the factor of Scots and Scottish Presbyterianism. Within the Puritan movement, which was the leading power in England between 1649 and 1660, there were two main factions which were Presbyterians, "supported by the Scots", and Independents "who wanted a congregational form of church government" (Bray, 2004, p. 102).

To make things even more complex, some of these Independents rejected the practice of infant baptism, thereby becoming the nucleus of the future Baptist church. But even these early Baptists were divided into Calvinists, who agreed with the Presbyterians on most doctrinal matters, and the so-called 'Arminians', named after the Dutch theologian Arminius (1560–1609), who rejected the doctrines of unconditional election and predestination. Before long, the Puritan movement was divided along many criss-crossing lines, and all too often the Puritans fought each other rather than their common enemies. (Bray, 2004, p. 102)



Protestant movement was clearly not a completely unified movement in their religious and political stances, while there was an alliance with its main point that England cannot be left to influences from Roman Catholic Church. Presbyterianism was rooted in Scottish Reformation after which Scottish religious scene was divided into Presbyterianism – Scottish Protestants – and episcopacy which was perceived to be “reminiscent of ‘Romish’ religion” by the former (Roxburgh, 2004, p. 111). While Presbyterians were “conservative Parliamentarians,” independents, on the other hand, were closer to a political faction that advocates “religious toleration:” “Or, as an anonymous Royalist pamphleteer put it, ‘He that would rightly understand them must read for Presbytery, aristocracy; and democracy, for Independency’” (Hill, 2002, p. 164).

After the National Covenant was drafted and episcopacy was abolished by Scottish Presbyterians in 1638, The Bishops’ Wars took place in 1638 and 1639, just before the English Civil Wars, which were won by Scottish Presbyterians and Puritans against the King Charles I; thus, generating an important turning point for the Puritan movement in England (White, 1967, p. 148).

The English Civil Wars were mainly a power struggle between the King Charles I, whose supporters were called Royalists or “Cavaliers”, and the Parliament, which was supported by the Parliamentarians or “Roundheads” (Semenza, 2005, p. ix). Royalists, “The aristocratic supporters of King Charles I,” were called “cavaliers” because they were “gentlemen” who were “trained in arms and horsemanship” (Hager, 2005, p. 75) while Parliamentarians were called “roundheads” because of “the short haircuts favoured by Puritans” (Haythornthwaite, 2002, p. 8). In terms of religion, Royalists were supporting a “a more conservative form of worship” which was found by the Parliamentarians as “Popish,” while Parliamentarians were advocates of a “congregational form of government” against the strict “hierarchical” form of government supported by Roman Catholicism (Semenza, 2005, p. ix) which was called “Episcopalian” form of church government (Patrides, 2004, p. 240). The English Civil Wars ended in 1649 as The King Charles I was executed by the Parliamentarians Interregnum, or

the Commonwealth of England, which continued to exist until the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 with Charles II, the son of Charles I, as the king. In 1685, James II, the brother of Charles II, came into power making plans of empowering Catholicism in the country, while his daughter Mary, a Protestant, and her husband William of Orange, who was Dutch, invaded London with the help of James II's opponents at the court – an event known as the “Glorious Revolution” or the “Revolution of 1688” which “ended the Roman Catholic threat once and for all” in 1688 (Semenza, 2005, p. ix).

After this brief summary of the developments and conflicts in England throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> century, I want to focus on the world of scientific developments of the era, specifically the era during and after the English Civil War since it seems to be the period which was the most influential one in Milton's life. According to Hill, years between 1640 and 1660 in England comprised an “era of free discussion and free speculation” in which “Baconian science came into its own” (2002, p. 178). Baconian scientists, who were advocates of “method of observation, collection, and analysis of facts,” (p. 181) gained place in the Oxford University instead of the purged Royalists, and they made the university a centre of attraction for great minds of following decades and centuries such as Locke, Boyle and Wren (pp. 178-9). Puritanism's dedication for “religious *experience*” was somewhat closer to the “experimental spirit” of scientists in comparison with the explicit dogmatism of Roman Catholicism; therefore, Puritanism, as a political movement and religious stance which advocates free discussion and tolerance, contributed to the proliferation of science within this period (p. 179). Ideas such as education for all regardless of social class and education in the vernacular language rather than Greek and Latin emerged and found application while schools were being established along the lines of the new political philosophy (p. 180). Scientific developments were not confined to England as we see in the collapse of Ptolemaic geocentric conception of the universe and rise of a Copernican heliocentric conception in Europe even though it was still in a process of development and acceptance (p. 178).

These points show that the historical background, on which Milton grew up and became one of the most influential intellectual figures of the era, was marked by religious conflict between Protestantism/Puritanism and Roman Catholicism, political conflict between Parliamentarianism and Royalism, the rise of Baconian conception of science, and the emergence of a new social class, the merchant class, as a political force into the scene of history. While overlapping of these developments clearly point to a historical trend, it is beyond the scope of this study to deliberate on the causal relationships between any of them.

In the context of Milton and his understanding of patriotism, political developments between 1640 and 1660 are significant as well as religious conflict within Christianity and the scientific developments of the century. As we will also see in his biography, Milton's ideas on religion, knowledge, and politics including his understanding of patriotism are all related with the historical trends of the era – namely Protestantism, science at its early and developing form, and the emergence of English Republican politics.

## **2.2. Milton as a Political Figure**

Understanding John Milton's ideas and his life requires us to go deeper into his family background as well as his education and political and literary encounters with the important personalities of his time. We should begin with the poet's family to be able to imagine what kind of a childhood John Milton might have had before becoming an influential figure of his era. Delving into the poet's family life is also important to understand the personal history of religious conflicts and class affiliations for the poet.

John Milton was born on Friday, December 9, 1608, in Bread Street, London, into a bourgeois family which would be called “professional middle class” today (Bradford, 2001, p. 4; Flannagan, 2002, p. 1; Campbell and Corns, 2008, p. 7). We should note that the Milton house was close to the Blackfriars Theatre and

John Milton Sr. was a shareholder or a trustee in the Shakespearean enterprise (Flannagan, 2002, p. 1; Lewalski, 2003b, p. 41). The fact that John Milton Sr. was somehow interested in theatre and musicals and had connections to an important theatre of the time may account for both the poet's early introduction to the world of poems and plays and his introduction to the scene of publishers (Lewalski, 2003b, p. 41). Thus, the poet's father, John Milton Sr. was an influential figure for John Milton.

Richard Milton, who was the poet's grandfather, was a devout Roman Catholic living in Oxfordshire who was an intolerant man towards other religious affiliations of the time. According to one claim, he expelled his son John, the poet's father, from his house for reading an English Bible (Flannagan, 2002, p. 2). In fact, John Milton Sr. adopted Protestantism as a young man and Richard Milton disinherited his son for this reason. Having lost his father's financial support, John Milton Sr. left Oxfordshire and moved to London in around 1583 and became an apprentice to come to be a scrivener. It is not clear how John Milton Sr. became an apprentice without a financial support from his father since apprenticeships at the time required a payment around £100 for entry. Through various possibilities, such as an unknown benefactor who was a friend or his connections to this family other than Richard Milton, John Milton Sr. was admitted to the "Company of Scriveners on 27 February 1600" (Campbell and Corns, 2008, pp. 7-8).

As Bradford indicates, "Scriveners combined the functions of contract lawyer, accountant, financial adviser, money lender and debt collector" and they assisted guilds as well as "middle ranking professional classes" of the era (2001, p. 3). To this, Flannagan adds that a scrivener was "a professional draftsman and a combination of lawyer, moneylender before banks came into existence, and real-estate agent" (2002, p. 1). From these accounts, we understand that John Milton Sr. had a very influential occupation which made it possible for him to get well connected with the wealthy people of his time. Moreover, we understand that the poet's father was among the members of a rising class, the bourgeoisie, of the era. In fact, John Milton Sr. prospered via his occupation and accumulated enough

money for his family so that they could afford a retirement in a time in which “Probably about 10 to 15 per cent of London businessmen actually managed to retire” (Campbell and Corns, 2008, p. 9).

Another important characteristic of John Milton Sr., which was probably a big influence on the poet, was that he was also a composer as well as a scrivener. It is known that Milton senior wrote twenty compositions (Campbell and Corns, 2008, p. 9). There are also documents which suggest that there was a link between Shakespeare and the Miltons through Thomas Morley who published some of the compositions of Milton senior (pp. 12-13). According to Campbell and Corns, the Milton house was a very musical as well as a theatrical one, through John Milton Sr.’s passion for music and connection to the Blackfriars Playhouse, and this was a clear influence on young Milton since the poet “learned to sing in consorts and to play the organ and bass viol, and to rejoice in the pleasure of participating in music made purely for the benefit of the players” in this house (p. 11).

While we have all these details about John Milton Sr., there are few details known about the poet’s mother, Sara Jeffrey, except that she was the daughter of a merchant tailor from London. In addition, there are some remarks by Milton and his pupil and friend Skinner on Sara Jeffrey’s acts of charity virtuousness, which helped his husband to become such a successful man in his profession (Lewalski, 2003b, pp. 3-4). As Lewalski states:

These laconic phrases are not entirely formulaic: they praise a woman who fulfilled the duties prescribed for the bourgeois Protestant wife – helpmeet to her husband and dispenser of a prosperous family’s charity. (Lewalski, 2003b, p. 4)

These points strengthen the idea that Milton was a product of a typical bourgeois Protestant family of 17<sup>th</sup> century England. As also typical for this kind of family, John Milton Sr. was dedicated in his quest to raise his son, John Milton,

with a good education so that opportunities which were denied to him would be available for his son with wide arms (Bradford, 2001, p. 4).

John Milton Sr.'s motivation to raise an educated child began with the hiring of a private tutor, named Thomas Young who was graduated from St. Andrews University, for the young John Milton. Flannagan proposes that young John Milton was such a child prodigy that his father "even paid a maidservant to be sure that tapers were lit during late nights when the child John wanted to read" (2002, p. 5).

After two years of education with Thomas Young, the young Milton was admitted to the St. Paul's School, a reputable educational institution next to the Cathedral. Five years later, he obtained the status of "lesser pensioner" at Christ's College, Cambridge, which meant that "his father was wealthy enough to pay for modest privileges and accommodation in college" (Bradford, 2001, p. 4). As mentioned by Flannagan, while the poet seemed to be the favourite of his father, he was not the only distinguished member of the family: "Christopher Milton, the poet's brother, did lead a distinguished life as a Cambridge-educated lawyer and later a Member of Parliament for Reading" (Flannagan, 2002, p. 5).

St Paul's School was providing a great opportunity for learning Latin and Greek and possibly Hebrew and also learning important authors such as "Ovid, Cicero, Vergil, and Julius Caesar" (Flannagan, 2002, p. 6). In addition, John Milton might have been influenced by Alexander Gil, "the son of the headmaster of the same name at St. Paul's School and himself a teacher there," as well as by his private tutor Thomas Young for the poet's own political ideas (p. 6). As Bradford underlined, most important figures in St. Paul's School, including the high master, belonged to the more radical faction within the Church of England (2001, p. 7).

In stark contrast with the poet's life in St. Paul's School, Christ's College in Cambridge offered less to John Milton in terms of intellectual satisfaction (Bradford, 2001, p. 9). While the preference of Christ's College by the Milton family was probably for the school's leaning towards radical Protestantism,

experience of young John showed that the college provided only indoctrination in a curriculum which did not change for centuries. In that sense, St. Paul's School probably provided an atmosphere which was even more challenging for John Milton intellectually and admission to Christ's College was a move in the reverse direction. Moreover, young John did not make any friends at the college and did not have many influences on his future in terms of religion and politics (p. 9). One possible influence on Milton in Christ's College was Joseph Mead (or Joseph Mede), who was a tutor at the college during Milton's education and whose "revisionist millenarian calculations" are argued to influence Milton as well as Isaac Newton (Rumrich, 1998, p. 88).

However, we should not think that Milton's years in Christ's College was an intellectual waste. While Milton may not have found a lively intellectual atmosphere where free thinking and debate is encouraged, he was educated in various topics including "logic, rhetoric, ethics, metaphysics, and theology". Especially, students were taught rhetoric to a great extent (Lewalski, 2003, p. 20).

Another important point regarding the Christ's Church was that the college represented a conflict within the Protestantism rather than the conflict between Protestantism and Catholicism. While Milton was still a "Calvinist predestinarian" in his Cambridge years, his tutor William Chappell was said to "have 'Arminianized' many of his students" – which might be one of the reasons why Milton went against him and sent back to his house temporarily in 1627 (Flannagan, 2002, p. 7; Lewalski, 2003b, p. 21).

Milton's childhood days were marked by art, religion, and politics. In terms of religion and politics, we have seen the conflict between his father's Protestantism and his grandfather's rigid Roman Catholicism. Having brought up without any influence by his grandfather, Milton became a protestant under the influence of his father and his educators. In terms of art, we again see the influence of his father during the years of childhood at the Milton house in which music and theatre was a

natural part of life. Thus, when contemplating on Milton's sense of patriotism to his homeland, we cannot leave his Protestantism or passion for literature aside.

After graduating from Christ's College, young John Milton had a bright future ahead of him as a highly educated man from reputable schools. It was expected that John Milton would go into the church, one of the most respectable paths that a man with his academic success may choose; however, instead of a career in ministry, John Milton chose a "self-indulgent" lifestyle in which he was engaged in seven years of "reading, thinking, writing and travelling" (Bradford, 2001, p. 13). These were years of "self-education," in which Milton read Greek and Latin writers as well as followed the developments in mathematics and music by visiting the town occasionally (p. 13).

According to Lewalski, Milton tried to determine for what he came to this world which was also a very painful experience because he did not have a profession, an independent household or reputation for a gentleman with his degree of previous achievements (2003b, pp.53-54). Part of this lack of reputation was intentional:

Yet he refused to present himself in the public arena: his epitaph for Shakespeare (1632) and his masque (1637) were published anonymously, and *Lycidas* (1638) bore only his initials. For *Lycidas* such anonymity might have seemed prudent, given the poem's vehement attack on the Laudian church. (Lewalski, 2003b, p. 54)

In this period, Milton started to produce his most influential and important works such as *Lycidas* and *Comus*. As early as his work, *Lycidas*, we find that politics of the era was somehow influential on Milton and maybe this was one of the reasons why he could not feel ready for any occupation that he would have been so suitable with his education. Laudian church, in a "co-dictatorship" with the King Charles I, was against the radical Protestantism of which John Milton was an adherent (Bradford, 2001, p. 15). *Lycidas* was written as a part of a commemorative



piece after one of the contemporaries of Milton from Cambridge, Edward King who was also a poet, died at the sea (p. 15). Before the death of Edward King and writing of *Lycidas*, John Milton had already lost his mother on 3 April 1637 and attended the funeral of his patroness the Countess of Derby as well as lived through deaths of William Sound, a teacher of young Milton from St. Paul's School, and Ben Jonson who was again an important poet of his time (p. 15).

In a time where the religious tension between Catholicism and Calvinism – a branch of Protestantism – evolved into a military conflict, Milton began his journey to Italy, Europe, until he came back to London in 1639. Both his indecisiveness regarding different career paths and his feeling of a need to end this uncertainty through a visit to Europe, where he may have hoped to find an answer to his questions, must have been influential on his following years in which he laid the foundations of a modern sense of patriotism.

It is interesting to see that Milton's travel arrangements reflect his readings and education: he began the travel to Europe to discover the Roman and Greek civilizations of which he read throughout his life. He first went from London to Paris where he met Hugo Grotius, a poet as well as a legal historian (Flannagan, 2002, p. 17). Hugo Grotius was an interesting figure in terms of Protestant thought since he was defending formation of a "Pan-Protestant league" composed of "England, Denmark, Holland and Sweden" (Bradford, 2001, p. 16).

Then he went from Nice to Italy, to cities of Genoa, Livorno, Pisa, and Florence. In Florence, Milton met Galileo who was in an advanced age. It is an interesting fact that Milton's closest friend Charles Diodati had Italian and Swiss family members who were in touch with Galileo (Flannagan, 2002, p. 17). During his visit in Italy, hosts of Milton were Roman Catholics while they knew Protestantism of Milton, such as Giovanni Manso, one of the most prominent Italian poets of his time, (Bradford, 2001, p. 16) who remarked that "Milton would have been an angel" if he had not been a Protestant (Flannagan, 2002, p. 19).

From Italy, the centre of Roman Catholicism, Milton went to Geneva which was the “hub of radical Protestantism.” In Geneva, he spent time with Giovanni Diodati who was the uncle of his closest friend Charles Diodati. Upon receiving the news of Charles Diodati’s death and the increasing signs of a civil war in England as the conflict between Charles I and the parliament as well as the conflict between Scots and the King over religious matters escalate, Milton decided to return to his country (Bradford, 2001, p. 17).

Milton returned back to England around July or August 1639 and found his country divided and polarized into mainly two political camps: on the one hand, there were Puritans and Parliamentarians who were representing the rising middle classes and the idea of social contract in place of absolute monarchies, and on the other hand, there were Royalists who were identified with the landed aristocracy, the absolute monarchy and Anglicanism (Lewalski, 2003b, p. 120).

Milton’s experience in this politically polarized London was immense. While he certainly witnessed many of the events such as Royalists’ attempts to take the city from Parliamentarians while so-called Royalist conspirators were hanged in their own houses, he did not participate in them (Bradford, 2001, p. 18). Instead, Milton set up a private academy for the young, beginning with Edward Phillips who was his nephew and later his biographer. Milton experienced this model of education in Florence while he also wanted to be more independent financially since he was still receiving income from his father’s investments (p. 18). In addition, John Milton began to move away from poetry and literature towards more political and theological writings, towards prose works and tracts (p. 19). In other words, it was the political and religious conditions of England and London that forced Milton to delve deeper into the scene of political writings which eventually led to the formation of a Miltonian understanding of individuality, liberty, country, and patriotism.

The departure of Charles I from the city was also an important turning point in terms of pamphleteering, which was one of the foundations of modern

journalism, though it was even popular during the reign of the King (Bradford, 2001, p. 19). Milton became one of the most productive pamphleteers of the era. Even though Milton was on the side of Parliamentarians, he was not a superficial polemicist for their cause (p. 19).

In *Of Reformation* (1641), Milton sided with the Puritans in the conflict between the so-called High Church and the Puritans/Presbyterians (Bradford, 2001, p. 19). Milton published *The Reason of Church Government* in 1642, in which he promotes himself as an authority figure who may offer help to his country in such a time of political and religious crisis as well as comparing prose writing to poetry (p. 20). Another pamphlet of Milton was *Of Education* in 1644. In the pamphlet, Milton was suggesting a vision of society based on unity and “a collective sense of identity and duty” (p. 21) – which shows important signs for his understanding of patriotism.

Another pamphlet, called *Areopagitica* (1644) is significant to understand what kind of England Milton was envisioning beyond the religious and political conflicts of the civil war (Bradford, 2001, p. 21). In this pamphlet, Milton was promoting the ideas of “religious freedom” and “free speech” against an authoritarian Presbyterianism, though he was still defending the Parliamentary and Cromwellian cause (p. 22). This pamphlet was interestingly ignored by the Parliament, which possibly led to the creation of the short poem *On the New Forcers of Conscience Under the Long Parliament* by Milton in which Parliament is likened to “the notorious Catholic Council of Trent and closes with the statement that, ‘New *Presbyter* is but old *Priest* writ large’” (p. 22).

In 1649, Milton wrote *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, which was a pamphlet written during the trial of Charles I and its main claim was that monarchy is a contract and when one party – the King – of the contract cannot satisfy the duties stated in the contract, he must be accounted for by the other party – the subjects of the King (Bradford, 2001, p. 27). A month later, Milton “was appointed Secretary of Foreign Tongues to the newly organised Council of State, the

republican cabinet” (p. 28). Even though he had “no executive function in the Council,” his talents as a linguist and a rhetorician was important for the Council especially in terms of dealing with the other states of Europe which were shocked in the face of the execution of Charles I (p. 28). In 1651, an ironic duty was given to Milton in addition to his previous duties and he became the Chief Censor (p. 31).

In 1660, General George Monck, the governor of Scotland for five years, went south and took control of the “directionless bureaucracy of government” in which “Richard Cromwell had already been forced to resign by Monck’s London-based military colleagues.” A month later, Charles II became the new king and the monarchy was restored (Bradford, 2001, p. 35). Milton had to hide while many members of the old Council were tried and executed. In August 1660, the Parliament ordered the burning of Milton’s all printed works. Eventually, he got arrested in October. With the efforts of his Royalist brother Christopher and Andrew Marvell who became a “Pro-Restorationist” even though earlier he had taken Milton’s position in the Cromwellian Council, Milton was released from prison. This event marked the end of Milton’s career as a pamphleteer, while he returned back to writing pamphlets later in his life (p. 35).

In 1667, *Paradise Lost*, Milton’s masterpiece, was published. In this work, Milton provided a “modern” update of “Genesis,” “the original story of mankind,” with all the experience he had throughout his life in terms of poetry, religion, rhetoric, and poetry (Bradford, 2001, p. 38). Clearly, Milton lived a productive life in terms of both politics and art and helped to forge a new sense of patriotism based on civic duties that go beyond factionalism. Many of his ideas were so beyond his era that even the Cromwellian Parliament chose to ignore his ideas on free speech and religious liberties.

## Chapter 3

### Patriotism and Milton's Political Thought

#### 3.1. The Concept of Patriotism

Patriotism, a seemingly straightforward concept, is actually a very complex one which has provoked great and extensive debates in various disciplines. There are also various concepts which are closely related to patriotism such as nationalism, democracy, secularism, liberty, equality, rights, constitution as well as concepts in literature such as poetry, novel, pamphlets and prose. In the current historical era, which is frequently characterized as postmodern (Lyotard, 1984, p. 3), radicalized modern (Giddens, 1996, p. 150), late modern (as cited in Loyal, 2003, p. 118) and liquid modern (Bauman, 2006, p. 12), concepts such as “patriotism,” “nationalism,” “community,” “ethnicity,” and “culture” are continuously negotiated and redefined. This study is concerned with understanding of patriotism which is found in Milton, an English poet in 17<sup>th</sup> century Britain; therefore, these modern and late modern concepts such as “nationalism” and “ethnicity” are not applicable. In the absence of national states and an international world order, it seems more relevant to study patriotism rather than nationalism. However, it is still important to note the contemporary literature on patriotism and nationalism to determine whether Milton anticipated any of these schools of thought.

A simple definition of patriotism suggests that patriotism is the “love of one’s country” (Kateb, 2006, p. 7). While this simple definition of the concept may prove useful in a very general sense, anyone who consider themselves having feelings of love towards their country may be thought as patriots while this actually

does not say much about what they really defend and what they understand from “love” or “country.” For Kateb, patriotism is both an abstraction, in the sense that it refers to a “country” which is mostly based on “social ties that are largely invisible or impersonal” (pp. 7-8) and an ideal which “idealizes an entity—the country—that people feel is them or theirs” (9). This “idealization” aspect of patriotism is especially important in the context of literature, since patriotic or nationalist literature often employs concrete examples to promote their patriotism as we see in Yeats, a nationalist Irish poet who explicitly noted the death tolls and consequences of oppression under English rule in some of his literary works such as his poems “Easter 1916,” “To Ireland in the Coming Times,” and “The Irish Airman Foresees his Death” (McClinton-Temple, 2011, p. 73). This is understandable since patriotic literature tries to emphasize unity of identity and the sacrifices given to reach this unity rather than its heterogeneity. In addition, the idea that the country belongs to the people who share a certain identity is a powerful thought which continues to be central also in terms of democratic politics which is understood to be self-rule of self-determination a people has over its future or destiny (Helbing, 2013).

In this respect, we encounter two important questions about the concept of patriotism. First, what are the constituents of patriotism? This is also a practical question regarding literary criticism and literary analysis, since we need certain elements of a literary theme so that specific works, such as the ones we are going to analyse in this study, can be investigated on the basis of these elements. And second, how should we understand the concept of “country,” which is the basis of patriotism, for instance its sociological characteristics and its literary reflections as ideals which are often politicized by patriotic authors? In this study, we will ask these questions to the texts produced by Milton in order to understand his understanding of patriotism. In this section, however, we should elaborate on various elements of patriotism so that we will know what to look for while analysing Milton.

First, patriotism and its modern and late modern relative, nationalism, necessarily put people into categories, one is either belong to a country or not

(McClinton-Temple, 2011, p. 71). Second, patriotism utilizes elements such as “national folklore, symbols, heroes, sports, music, religion, and the idea that there is a national identity or character” (p. 71). Moreover, patriotic and nationalist elements, according to Smith, include “a physical homeland, either current or ancient; a high degree of autonomy among the citizens, hostile surroundings, memories of glory or defeat in battle, special customs, historical records, common languages and scripts” and “sacred centers or places” (as cited in McClinton-Temple, 2011, p. 71). To this, we should add the civic or political dimension which was evident in the French Revolution in 1789 as a means to abolish monarchy and unite people with the goal of creating a new country in terms of a new political system (p. 72). This political dimension is important in the context of Milton since his understanding of patriotism specifically in his prose take the form of a political character. This form of patriotism is best expressed by Viroli whose concept of “patriotism of liberty” suggests that “patriotism is not love of country as one’s own country, but rather a love of country because the country is the place of free republican institutions” (as cited in Kateb, 2006, p. 10).

Recent studies by Smith suggests that religion, especially Reformation in Europe, has been also deeply influential in terms of the creation of secular republics which was formed in 18<sup>th</sup> century and onwards; hence, religion is also an important component of political change to the extent that it became subject of a challenge against the dogmatic religious authorities of the day (Smith, 2008, p. 119).

### **3.2. Patriotism and Nationalism: Pre-modern vs. Modern Conceptions**

Understanding pre-modern and modern conceptions of patriotism and nationalism is important in order to understand the role of Milton, whose ideas including the ones on divorce anticipate many common applications of contemporary societies, in the evolution of patriotic and nationalist thinking. This analysis of the concept of “patriotism” will also allow us to analyse Milton’s work through a more contemporary lens which will add to the depth and relevance of the study.

As Bauman states, contemporary discussions include an almost antagonistic relationship between patriotism and nationalism as a result of nationalism being thought to be responsible for various negative historical events including wars and massacres (2006, pp. 173-4). These discussions tend to present patriotism as a positive feeling of love towards one's country as a political unit without hostility towards minorities and foreigners, while nationalism is portrayed as an aggressive and exclusive ideology which tends towards xenophobia and racism. However, Bauman reminds us that this distinction is mostly rhetorical and lacks much theoretical elaboration since it is hard to show clear differences between two concepts (pp. 174-5). To the extent that this study is concerned, this contemporary discussion is not relevant because 17<sup>th</sup> century was marked mostly by religious debate and national identities and patriotism related to national identities were just arising through these religious debates; so, theoretical framework of this study does not assume any antagonistic relationship between patriotism and nationalism. Rather, the study suggests the existence of continuity between patriotism of Milton and modern idea of nation. The concept of "nationalism" will be used only to refer to the modern understanding of national identity in this study. While Milton points the way toward a modern understanding of nationalism, it is open to debate whether we can use this concept to characterize his thought.

While there are various conceptions of patriotism and nationalism in contemporary theory, we will mainly focus on pre-modern (which might become anti-modern in certain instances) and modern conceptions. Therefore, we will focus on the modernist approach to patriotism on the one hand and approaches that focus on pre-modern features of communities and peoples on the other. As Smith writes, modernist school of thought argues that nations and nationalism were developed only after the industrial revolution which created the necessary conditions for a large-scale society of mass producers and consumers (2008, p. 3). According to this approach, before modern society, there were only religious, regional, local and linguistic communities in which elites did not feel any need to spread their culture of literacy to the food producers they ruled over, while the industrial society allowed the existence of a "nationalist intelligentsia," with their attractive qualities



such as access to education and professions, which in turn formed communities who were attracted to these new elites into nations (pp. 3-4).

According to modernism, even though when such communities reached beyond local and regional borders, such as Christendom, they were unable to form nations. For example, Anderson says that Papacy, as a bilingual community literate in both vernacular languages and Latin, was a religious community which assumed the role of mediator between common people and divine truth of the Bible; thus, it created a hierarchical relationship between itself and the societies it argued to govern (1991, pp. 15-6) and thus, failed to create a state of homogeneity and unity among its subjects. Anderson shows the role of print-capitalism and aspirations of print-capitalists for more profits as one of the factors of increased publications in the vernacular language, beginning with early 16<sup>th</sup> century, rather than in Latin which catered to only a small minority (pp. 37-8).

Modernist approach to nationalism is often associated with English, French and American nationalisms. In these examples, we see that voluntary and political membership to a state is emphasized along with a sense of social and cultural solidarity. In its modern, secular, political version, nationalism is “conceived as a willed political union of fellow-feeling and culturally similar ‘citizens’” (Smith, 1998, p. 172). Smith gives English national sentiment as an early example of this form of nationalism by saying that this sentiment “came to see the English as a ‘peculiar people’ engaged in a long struggle for freedom, first from Catholic Spain and then from Catholic France” as a result of “the many editions of the Bible, but even more the compulsory weekly church services” which “brought an English Protestantism to almost everyone” (p. 172). Smith even quotes Milton’s *Areopagitica* as an example for this national sentiment – which we will refer to in the analysis chapter.

Pre-modern conceptions of patriotism, in contrast with modernism, argue that nations and nationalism are natural phenomena which are not results of industrial revolution and print-capitalism (Smith, 1998, p. 146). According to this

approach, national identity is determined at birth rather than through social and political institutions such as education and republicanism. Both biological and cultural varieties of pre-modern conception exist while former argues for the importance of a racial conception of ancestry while the latter focuses on kinship groups and early socialization within the family and religious communities (p. 151).

Pre-modern conception is related to German romanticism and its organic nationalism. As Smith states:

Organic nationalism holds that the world consists of natural nations, and has always done so; that nations are the bedrock of history and the chief actors in the historical drama; that nations and their characters are organisms that can be easily ascertained by their cultural differentiae; that the members of nations may, and frequently have, lost their national self-consciousness along with their independence; and that the duty of nationalists is to restore that self-consciousness and independence to the 'reawakened' organic nation. (Smith, 1998, p. 146)

Therefore, German version of nationalism, or organic nationalism does not find political characteristics central for the concept of nation. They believe in the existence of a natural or organic core for every nation. According to organic nationalists, this organic core, which can be biological/racial or cultural depending on the situation, of the nation must be preserved so that the nation can continue to exist. This contrast between English and German versions of nationalism is especially important when studying Milton, because it shows that Milton belongs to a tradition of national sentiment which stresses freedom and politics rather than a tradition which emphasizes a natural and unchanging core for each nation.

Modern and pre-modern conceptions are two contrasting examples of understanding patriotism. However, there are alternative approaches which try to blend these approaches to come up with a synthesis. Smith's alternative to modern and pre-modern approaches to nationalism argues for the importance of ethnic

communities within the formation process of nations and nationalism. Smith's approach focuses on "myths, memories, values, traditions and symbols" in which "shared memories" such as "memories of liberation, migration, the golden age (or ages), of victories and defeats, of heroes and saints and sages" have an important place (Smith, 1998, p. 191). Smith emphasizes continuity between pre-modern communities and modern nations while it distances itself from pre-modern conceptions that focus on race by focusing on "cultural affinities" such as "myth of descent, shared historical memories and ethnic symbolism" instead of "physical kinship ties" (p. 192).

In conclusion, while main theories of nationalism and patriotism are modern and pre-modern conceptions, there are discussions of continuity in the literature. This point is important for us because it seems that Milton stands at the crossroads between pre-modern conception of the community and the modern political nation. In other words, Milton's works stand in-between the older world of ethnic and religious communities and the new era based on modern nations, democracies and republics. Thus, understanding if Milton's works are relevant for debates of continuity between pre-modern and modern periods might become a significant contribution to the literature. This makes studying patriotism in Milton especially important for both literature and nationalism studies.

### **3.3. Political Thoughts of John Milton**

John Milton is an important figure of English reformation and "Puritan Revolution" as an intellectual and thinker whose works go beyond the limits of literature and arts and his move towards political pamphleteering has been both praised and criticized (Worden, 2007, p. 4). Evaluation of Milton's choice on moral or literary grounds is beyond the scope of this study, yet in this chapter we will explore and discuss some of the political ideas of John Milton. A detailed analysis of Milton's universe of ideas is necessary for an elaborate analysis of his works.

Milton is thought to be a classical republican thinker as well as a pious Protestant, which is found as somewhat contradictory due to his support and defence of divorce, his sympathetic stance towards polygamy, his love of music, pagan classics and theatre, and his advocacy of “complete separation of church and state” (Rahe, 2004, pp. 243-4). In order to understand how Milton managed to build his political thoughts on a combination of classical republicanism and Protestantism, we should focus on the details of his understanding of republicanism which differs a great deal from the modern concept of “republicanism” which directly reminds us concepts such as democracy, popular sovereignty and populism. In the case of Milton, however, the question of republicanism and its justifications are more about the figure of “tyrant” and his capacities (or lack of capacities) as a legitimate ruler (Hawkes, 2001, p. 143) and this does not necessarily mean that Milton is a populist or a democrat in the modern sense of these concepts.

What is the foundation of Milton’s republicanism? Milton’s republicanism, according to Rahe, is based on the idea that people are born free and all rulers must be accountable to the people because they are the source of that power belonging to the ruler in the first place (2004, p. 250). However, Milton’s understanding of republicanism is also influenced to some degree by the “principle of differential moral and political rationality” which was the basis of Ancient Greek and Roman practices (p. 251). This principle assigns different types of rationality to different groups of people such as those who are wise enough to rule and those are only able to follow orders and commands. According to Rahe, Milton was not against the “kingship *per se*” (p. 256) and his main concern was to assign “the best and wisest of men” to the role of governor or ruler (p. 257). In other words, Milton was a strict adherent of meritocracy and his republicanism is a form of meritocratic republicanism, which we will analyse in his tract *The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth*. Rahe gives the example of Milton’s suggestion after the death of Oliver Cromwell to form a “Grand or General Council” which consists of “‘ablest men’ elected for life to ‘sit perpetual’” instead of forming governments via continuous parliamentary elections (p. 259).

Milton's understanding of republicanism, with its strict acceptance of meritocracy to the point of exclusion of democracy, is heavily influenced by Aristotle's idea of "final cause" (Hawkes, 2001, p. 141) and the distinction between master and slave mentality (p. 145). According to this Aristotelian idea of final cause, everything has an end including humans and while the end of a slave is to pursue orders and not to pursue his or her own wishes and needs, a free person has his or her own aims and aspirations (p. 146). Therefore, the relationship between a father and his son or a husband and his wife is qualitatively different from the relationship between master and slave. When one confuses these different types or modes of authority, tyranny emerges as a result (p. 145). In other words, when a father uses his son as a slave, he becomes a tyrant. Same is also true for husband who uses her wife or a ruler who uses his people as slaves. Moreover, slavery and "servility" is associated with body while freedom is associated with the mind of the intellect in Aristotelian thought which influenced Milton (p. 146). There are parallels between Aristotle's distinction of body and mind and Luther's distinction between flesh and spirit which is based on Paul the Apostle's Biblical texts (p. 149).

In his *Commentary on Galatians* Martin Luther deduces his doctrine of justification by faith alone from this Pauline division between the flesh and the spirit. Luther identifies works with the flesh and faith with the spirit: "the flesh or old man must be coupled with the law and works: the spirit or new man must be joined with the promise of God and his mercy." (as cited in Hawkes, 2001, p. 149)

Following this logic, Milton's fierce opposition to tyranny which is based on the idea that people should not be treated as slaves by a monarch is able to co-exist with the idea that not all people has the mentality of free men and some men are more susceptible to a rule by tyrants; therefore, meritocracy must be prioritized over populist forms of government. In fact, when the period of Interregnum comes closer to its ends, Milton believes that "English people's desire to recall the king" is "clear evidence of their degeneracy" in which they show "the national defects of servility and political ineptitude" (Lewalski, 2003b, p. 358).

The idea of national servility or slavery, therefore, is a central point of Milton's approach to politics which is termed by Hawkes as "politics of character" (2001, p. 150). It was the characters and their moral features which determined their political leanings and characteristics. Similarly, Lewalski writes about the "linkage of inner slavery and national slavery" and the linkage of "idolatry and servility" in Milton's political thinking (2003b, p. 504).

Despite the fact that Milton cannot be categorized as a democrat and populist in the modern sense of these concepts, he is nevertheless a fierce classical republican, an early liberal thinker (McCready, 2001; Lewalski, 2003b, pp. 180, 543), a reformer of the national culture, (Lewalski, 2003b, p. 151) a prominent opponent of tyranny and tyrannical rule by monarchs, and a staunch proponent of meritocracy. His idea that idolatry and defects in individual character, specifically the defect of being predisposed to servility and slavery, leads to tyranny and national slavery in the end is also central to his understanding of patriotism and national identity as this study will show in the following analyses of Milton's prose works.

The point on the link between Milton's Protestantism and republicanism is also an important one in the context of contemporary discussions on patriotism and national identities, especially the discussion between pre-modern and modern conceptions of patriotism and nationalism. Therefore, understanding how Milton actually binds his arguments in favour of Protestantism with republicanism is important on the transformation of English identity from a mere religious or ethnic identity to a republican and modern identity in which ideas and notions such as free speech, liberty of religion, principle of self-government, opposition to tyranny hold central place beyond religious and ethnic convictions.

## Chapter 4

### Analysis of Milton's Prose Works

Historical setting of the era and the biography of Milton provides us with an idea about possible influences and sources of motivation for the poet, yet it will be an exhaustive analysis of his works which will be the main method in this study in order to come up with conclusions on Milton's understanding of patriotism. With this aim in mind, I will mainly discuss his prose works, i.e. his prose tracts on various issues including religion, education, free speech and politics. We will only briefly discuss his literary works such as *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes* in the discussion part of the chapter. The prose works which will be analysed include *Of Reformation*, *The Reason of Church-Government Urged against Prelaty*, *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, *Of Education*, *Areopagitica*, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, *Eikonoklastes*, *A Defence of the People of England*, *The Ready and Easy Way* but are not limited with them. Including various prose works of Milton into the analysis will allow us to investigate many discourses employed by the author so that we will be able to compare his thoughts on different issues to see whether they form a coherent line of thought in terms of patriotism or not.

#### 4.1. Prose Works on Religion

In this section, Milton's approach to and ideas on religion will be analysed with a special emphasis on his "antiprelatical tracts". Since these tracts form a unity in terms of the ideas defended, they will be presented and analysed together to show

their relevance in Milton's patriotism. First five prose works of Milton are the antiprelatical tracts which are: *Of Reformation* (1641), *Of Prelatical Episcopacy* (1641), *Animadversions* (1641), *The Reason of Church-Government Urged against Prelaty* (1642) and *Apology for Smectymnuus* (1642) (Lewalski, 2003b, p. 121). To these, we can add *Of True Religion* (1673) and *De Doctrina Christiana* (1823) in which religious ideas of the author were developed later in his life.

Main aim of the antiprelatical tracts is to persuade "moderate Puritans and especially members of parliament" to pass laws which will "eradicate" bishops from "both civil and ecclesiastical offices" in a "root and branch" manner "along with their 'popish' liturgy, canons, courts, privileges, property, and wealth" (Lewalski, 2003b, pp. 121-2). Main effort of these tracts was to reform "what now is called the Church of England" (Flannagan, 2002, p. 60).

He saw the great evil of the church in its episcopal hierarchy, its rule by bishops. Bishops were appointed through the power of the king, for a lifetime tenure. They were wealthy men – always men, and never women – who often lived in palaces. Matters of the spirit were neglected. Ceremony and vestments were all that mattered in church, style was more important than substance, ministry to the people was ignored. The bishop or archbishop represented temporal power because he could designate which of the graduates of Oxford or Cambridge might receive benefices or church livings. (Flannagan, 2002, pp. 60-61)

This shows that Milton's disappointment with the system of "assigned bishops," or the episcopal polity of the church, is not only religious but also political and in a sense economic. In terms of religion, Milton is concerned with the lack of spirituality while he also finds problems with the relationship between church government and centres of power. They were not only gaining power for themselves through their assignment and tenure by the king, they were also determining the future generations through their financial powers via the church.



Instead of assignment by the king for life, Milton suggests elections to determine bishops by the whole members of a church:

First therefore, if those that overaffect antiquity will follow the square thereof, their bishops must be elected by the hands of the whole church. The ancientest of the extant fathers, Ignatius, writing to the Philadelphians, saith, "that it belongs to them as to the church of God to choose a bishop." (Milton, 1641/1847b, p. 7)

In this way, Milton seems to support a "Presbyterian version of church government" against the Episcopal church government which is a hierarchical form of government that is supported by Roman Catholics (Lewalski, 2003b, p. 122). However, Milton differs from other supporters of Presbyterianism in that "He does not load his texts with biblical citations" and instead he "appeals continually and often explicitly to the 'spirit' of the gospel" which involved, according to Milton, "the wholly spiritual, humble, and egalitarian ministry instituted by Christ" (p. 122). In this sense, Milton was closer to the Independents rather than Presbyterians (p. 122). This point is important because it shows that Milton's Protestantism is leaning towards the defence of an egalitarian, republican form of government which is not limited to the realm of religion.

In *The Reason of Church-Government Urged against Prelaty*, Milton states that the church was invaded by "tyranny" – the tyranny of the prelaty via their "church-tyranny" which, for Milton, does not even deserve to be called a "church-government" (Milton, 1641/1847c, p. 72). This clear focus on the "tyrannical" aspect of the Episcopal church government indicates the political nature of Milton's criticism of the church and bishops.

One can hear, in the association between "tyranny" and "Church," a lifelong and constant resistance in Milton's personality and in his public career to unjust authority, whether it was in the home (a drunken husband or unfaithful wife), in the state (a tyrannical king), or in the church (prelates

commanding parishioners to come to church or bow to the image of the cross). (Flannagan, 2002, p. 62)

Milton's reaction to "unjust authority" dominates his thinking not only in religious issues but also in political and national issues. Milton's way of labelling Rome is noteworthy in one of his antiprelatical tracts:

Trust this man, readers, if you please, whose divinity would reconcile England with Rome, and his philosophy make friends nature with the chaos, *sine pondere habentia pondus*. (Milton, 1641/1847a, p. 92)

Smith, in *Milton and the Index*, notes that according to Milton, "Chaos ... is where Rome and England meet" (2004, p. 114). Equation of England with nature and something that has weight while equating Rome with chaos and something devoid of weight and substance (*sine pondere habentia pondus* means those which have weight and those which does not) shows that Milton's religious stance against Episcopal church government (or church-tyranny as he puts it) is an issue of patriotism as well. By opposing the hierarchical form of church government of the Episcopal variety, Milton manages to uphold the independence of England against Rome and the English Parliament against the monarchy at the same time. If we follow Lewalski's remarks on the uneasiness of Milton with the Presbyterian form of church government, we can see that Milton was indeed defending a form of republican patriotism through his defence of Puritanism. This does not necessarily mean that his religious convictions and ideas are not sincere. In fact, it means that it is through his religious convictions that Milton managed to come up with a patriotic political outcome for England and the English Parliament. Through Protestantism and Puritanism, Milton manages to accomplish the transformation from a pre-political notion to a political one – i.e. from the religious anti-Episcopalianism to a parliamentary, republican patriotism.

Milton's stance regarding religion goes beyond the limits of religion towards a separation between the sacred and the worldly – which is the basic idea of modern day secularism. We see this best in his understanding of idolatry.

For Milton, and for his God, the only objects worthy of reverence on earth are human beings themselves, as bearers of God's image. The great evil of idolatry is that it invites humans to offer implicit faith and special devotion to some person, institution, or object that is not God, thereby debasing and enslaving themselves along with their societies. Only by worshipping a God who is transcendent, and rejecting all such material embodiments of the sacred, Milton supposes, can humans attain and preserve their proper freedom and dignity. (Lewalski, 2003a, p. 215)

This shows that for Milton, idolatry goes beyond believing in pagan Gods or controversial and rejected aspects of Roman Catholicism as most Puritans understand the term. Milton's conception of idolatry points to a separation of those entities which are deemed sacred and those entities which are created by human beings for worldly purposes. In other words, Milton's understanding of religion and idolatry paves the way for a modern conception of identity. By equating idolatry with attributing sacred characteristics to worldly figures such as a person or an institution, Milton also creates a ground for his political opposition to what he perceived to be tyranny, i.e. the English monarchy.

#### **4.2. Prose Works on Divorce**

In the section on Milton's political thoughts, we discussed the influence of Aristotle on Milton's thinking especially through the concepts such as final cause of things and the distinction between master and slave mentalities. We see these influences clearly in Milton's prose works on divorce, in which he defended the right of divorce. More specifically, Milton aims at a reform of divorce laws so that it will become legal in the eyes of both religion and state (Flannagan, 2002, p. 66).

Following passage from *Tetrachordon* is important in terms of an elaborate definition of matrimony in Aristotelian concepts:

First therefore, the material cause of matrimony is man and woman; the author and efficient, God and their consent; the internal Form and soul of this relation, is conjugal love arising from a mutual fitness to the final causes of wedlock, help and society in religious, civil, and domestic conversation, which includes as an inferior end the fulfilling of natural desire, and specifical increase. (Milton, 1645/1847, p. 300)

Milton's focus on "conversation" (Hawkes, 2001, p. 147) or "comfort" (McCready, 2001, p. 78) as the final cause, or the purpose, of the matrimony instead of procreation is completely in line with his conviction of the distinction between carnality and spirituality:

Anglicans, according to Milton, reveal their carnality through their belief that the proper end of marriage is procreation, which leads them to allow divorce on grounds of adultery or non-consummation but not of psychological incompatibility. (Hawkes, 2001, p. 147)

The most important argument of Milton regarding divorce is that marriage is not a union of the flesh through carnal desire but a spiritual or psychological union which aims at conversation and comfort. Satisfaction of bodily desires is a part of marriage, yet not its final cause, it is one of the inferior, secondary aspects of marriage which becomes meaningful only through spiritual compatibility. Milton uses the concept of "servile copulation" to describe such sexual relationships which are devoid of spiritual compatibility (Milton, 1643/1847, p. 208; Flanagan, 2002, p. 67).

In *Tetrachordon*, Milton addresses the parliament which, according to Milton, has an end to "depress the tyranny of error and ill custom" (1645/1847, p. 283). Prohibition of divorce is thus not a religious law but an error and ill custom for Milton. Moreover, Milton states that those who expect, such as himself,

“glorious changes and renovations both in church and state” from the Parliament of England are the ones “who prays that the fate of England may tarry for no other deliverers” (1645/1847, p. 287). Thus, for Milton, his views on divorce are not confined to the domestic realm or only to the relationships between men and women. In fact, Milton’s views on divorce were directly connected to his inclinations on the fate and destiny of England as a whole. At this point, we can see that Milton’s approach to divorce cannot be separated from his republican patriotism. Milton is convinced that the destiny of England is liberty and republicanism; thus, only those who encourage the Parliament in this direction through reform are the real patriots of their country. Milton’s idea that “inner slavery” is linked to “national slavery” (Lewalski, 2003b, p. 504) is the crucial point for the link between his views of divorce and his patriotism: the hidden idea is that “servile copulation” may reinforce national slavery in the long run through creating generations of Englishmen with a slavish mentality.

On the other hand, Milton’s arguments for divorce are first and foremost within a religious context, while the outcome or the targeted outcome goes beyond the realm of religion and domestic life.

Our Saviour came to preach repentance and remission: seeing therefore those, who put away their wives without any just cause, were not touched with conscience of the sin, through misunderstanding of the law, he recalled them to a right interpretation, and taught, that the woman in the beginning was so joined to the man, that there should be a perpetual union both in body and spirit: where this is not, the matrimony is already broke, before there be yet any divorce made, or second marriage. (Milton, 1644/1847b, p. 272)

While Milton’s republican patriotism is clear in his attempts at change and reform through the Parliament of England, his stance, his argumentation, his way of looking at politics and the destiny of England are clearly not purely secular in the contemporary meaning of the concept. This shows that Milton stands at the very link between pre-modern and modern conceptualizations of patriotism, national

identity, and national destiny. Milton continues to fight with the “tyranny” wherever and whenever he confronts it through an amalgamation of both religious and civil convictions, which is why it is difficult to classify Milton either as a religious commentator or a republican reformer in distinct terms. Milton is both a religious commentator and a republican reformer; however, this is also not enough to classify Milton. It is Milton’s patriotism, his conviction about the destiny of England as a country, which gives direction to his writings: ending tyranny in its all shapes and appearances so that England can thrive.

### **4.3. Prose Works on Education and Free Speech**

Milton’s ideas on education and educational reform are exhaustively deliberated in his prose work called *Of Education* which was first published in 1644. In *Of Education*, which addresses well-known reformer Samuel Hartlib who “was involved with projects for educational reform at all levels, as well as libraries, foundations for the poor, scientific discoveries and inventions, and schemes for promoting Protestant unity” (Lewalski, 2003b, p. 172), Milton is mainly concerned with “pre-college and college education in England” (Flannagan, 2002, p. 64). Milton’s understanding of education included a strong focus on practice due to his “strong dislike for useless learning” (p. 65). Thus, his guidelines for education included “agricultural land use, shepherding, hunting, and fishing” (p. 65). Moreover, Milton thought that language instruction should be accompanied by readings of history and literature so that education is supported by pleasure and enjoyment, e.g. through classical comedies (pp. 64-5).

Milton’s educational scheme included what modern educators would call “service-learning,” or at least it included a component of practical field work, if not public service. Though Milton’s students never built houses for the poor that we know of, they at least conducted some of their research in the real world where real people raised bees or practiced military formations in preparation for war. (Flannagan, 2002, p. 66)

Milton's emphasis on practice and enjoyment as important aspects of education shows his departure from "customary education" prevalent in his time, which he termed as "the Scholastick grosnesse of barbarous ages" (Riverside 981, as cited in Flannagan, 2002, p. 64). This emphasis on practice and useful education has its roots in the Baconian understanding of science through which more abstract ideas and notions are derived from "sensible things" rather than vice versa (Lewalski, 2003b, p. 174). Thus, Milton's understanding of education anticipates and predicts modern conception of education in which learning is supported by practice via laboratories, experiments and out of class activities.

Religion is an important part of Milton's ideal school, as he reserves Sundays for "reading Scripture and studying theology" yet he does not mention going to church (Flannagan, 2002, pp. 65-6). However, Milton's focus on religion has critical overtones towards earlier and customary religious educational practices: "The end then of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright..." (1644/1847a, p. 159). In religion, too, Milton emphasizes learning more sensible subjects first before moving on to learning difficult abstractions such as "the knowledge of God and things invisible" (p. 159). Moreover, Milton's educational scheme is oriented towards raising generations which are capable of working for the advancement of their country: "I call therefore a complete and generous education, that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war" (p. 160). Therefore, Milton "proclaims both a religious and civic humanist purpose for education" (Lewalski, 2003b, p. 174). However, we should keep in mind that schools proposed by Milton are mostly designed for the education of upper class students "for future leadership roles" on the basis of "humanist principles," which overlaps with his idea of an "aristocratic republic" instead of a monarchy (p. 180).

We find similar points in Milton's *Areopagitica*, also published in 1644, which focuses on "continuous unrestricted reading, writing, and disputation to exercise mature citizens in making the free choices through which they will grow in

knowledge and virtue, learn to value liberty, and act to secure it in the state” (Lewalski, 2003b, p. 180). Milton’s emphasis on mature citizens who has the capacity to choose freely is a recurrent theme in his prose which corresponds to his opposition to national servility. His two enemies are, again, “tyranny” and “superstition” (Milton, 1644/2008, p. 8).

For this is not the liberty which we can hope, that no grievance ever should arise in the Commonwealth - that let no man in this world expect; but when complaints are freely heard, deeply considered and speedily reformed, then is the utmost bound of civil liberty attained that wise men look for. (Milton, 1644/2008, p. 8).

Milton’s main position in this work is to oppose licensing based on “pre-publication censorship of books” and to defend a system which requires only “the name of the publisher and/or author;” thus, “guaranteeing copyright” (Lewalski, 2003b, p. 190). Only after then those books, which were found “mischievous and libellous” can be prosecuted (Milton, 1644/2008, p. 60). Any prosecution and censorship that takes place before publication, then, is to prevent “birth” provided by “the brain” (p. 18). This analogy of books as something given birth by the brain is important, since Milton likens pre-publication censorship to a death sentence given to an individual before his coming into existence, which produces a logical inconsistency.

In *Areopagitica*, Milton adopts and embraces “the chaos of the sects” and their “still undiscovered shape of truth” (Rumrich, 1996, p. 52). However, he was not keen on “complete religious toleration” due to his concerns on Roman Catholicism which was, according to his perspective, denying “the free exercise of choice that Milton sees as the cornerstone of all religion and ethics” (Lewalski, 2003b, p. 191).

Yet if all cannot be of one mind - as who looks they should be? - this doubtless is more wholesome, more prudent, and more Christian, that many



be tolerated, rather than all compelled. I mean not tolerated popery, and open superstition, which, as it extirpates all religions and civil supremacies, so itself should be extirpate... (Milton, 1644/2008, p. 57)

In other words, Milton's toleration towards religious publications does not include those which do not accept the same degree of toleration for other sects and religions. Moreover, Milton feels that such religious positions must be annihilated, let alone giving them freedom and tolerance. As we stated in several places, Milton's main cause is against tyranny and superstition; hence, Milton defends prevalence of freedoms when they serve to raise free and mature citizens while he defends no freedom for what he perceives to be sources for national servility and tyranny.

#### **4.4. Prose Works on Politics**

In *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, Milton defended the right to hold a guilty king accountable as well as judging and executing him as a result, which is clearly seen in the full title of the work: *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates: proving, That it is Lawfull, and hath been held so through all Ages, for any, who have the Power, to call to account a Tyrant, or wicked king, and after due conviction, to depose, and put him to death; if the ordinary magistrate have neglected, or deny'd to doe it. And that they, who of late so much blame Depositing, are the Men that did it themselves* (Milton, 1649/1847b, p. 374). According to Lewalski, with this tract, Milton attempts to unite "parliamentarians, army officers, and Levellers" on a republican "common cause" (2003b, pp. 225-6). The tract was written and published after the execution of King Charles I in 1649 via a decree of the parliament (Flannagan, 2002, p. 69). Thus, the parliament needed to emphasize the idea that Charles I was not a martyr but a guilty king whose execution was necessary and just (p. 69). This is where Milton came into the picture with *The Tenure*.

Milton attempted to break or erase the icon of Charles the martyr by labeling him a tyrant and a wicked king – not at all a servant of his people as he

should have been – who deserved to be deposed and put to death. (Flannagan, 2002, p. 69)

Milton took great risk with his work on the execution of Charles I since this made him a “representative” of the Interregnum government of Cromwell which was perceived by those who want to protect kings in Europe as a military oligarchy rather than a legitimate republic (Flannagan, 2002, pp. 69-70). Even his blindness after 1651 was attributed by his opponents to his defence of the execution (p. 70). Main question of these debates and attacks was “whether or not a king might be deposed by the will of the people” (p. 71) and England was under attack as a country which became an example of regicide (p. 70).

Though he was completely blind after 1651, Milton forced himself to continue the dirty business of defending his country and himself against the mudslinging attacks of scholars hired by European governments to discredit England for what it had done to its king. (Flannagan, 2002, p. 70)

For Milton, defending his country and defending the republican path it has taken with the Cromwellian government became one and the same thing. Thus, his patriotism and his republicanism were inseparable from each other. The tract follows and elaborates on new concepts for the era, e.g. “popular sovereignty” and a contract-based government (Lewalski, 2003b, p. 230). In the tract, a king which became a tyrant is equated with “slavery to custom and unruly passions,” so that followers of that king became “bad men” vis-à-vis “good men” who are free of this slavery and who “can properly love liberty” (p. 230). Such bad men, for Milton, were those who surrendered to a “double tyranny”: “custom from without, and blind affections within...” (1649/1847b, p. 374).

These points by Milton shows his understanding of republicanism as the political opposite of national servility in which individuals become slaves in the sense of being “subject to someone else’s power” instead of free citizens (Lewalski,

2003b, p. 231). As Milton puts it, “all men naturally were born free...born to command, and not to obey...” (1649/1847b, p. 377).

It being thus manifest, that the power of kings and magistrates is nothing else but what is only derivative, transferred, and committed to them in trust from the people to the common good of them all, in whom the power yet remains fundamentally, and cannot be taken from them, without a violation of their natural birthright... (Milton, 1649/1847b, p. 378)

Then, Milton continues with a reference to Aristototele who defined a king as “him who governs to the good and profit of his people, and not for his own ends” (1649/1847b, p. 378). Conversely, those who deviate from this definition and include their private ends and profits into their governing are not just kings but tyrants.

A strong argument developed by Milton concerns the relationship between the power of kings and the God. Milton elaborates on the idea that “kings are accountable to none but God,” (1649/1847b, p. 378) which is the basic argument for any theological monarchy. To this, Milton replies by arguing that such a position undermines all kinds of agreement made between the King and his people:

For if they may refuse to give account; then all covenants made with them at coronation, all oaths, are in vain, and mere mockeries; all laws which they swear to keep, made to no purpose: for if the king fear not God, (as how many of them do not!) we hold then our lives and estates by the tenure of his mere grace and mercy, as from a god, not a mortal magistrate; a position that none but court-parasites or men besotted would maintain! (Milton, 1649/1847b, pp. 378-9)

This argument of Milton is especially important because of his strict distinction between the field of God on one hand and the field of kings and peoples on the other. Argument that kings should answer only to the God leads to a situation in which kings are indistinguishable from God in practice. If the king does not

answer to the people regarding the agreements they made, then it would be as if there was no agreement at all. Then, Milton, following Aristotle's footsteps, agrees with the following statement: "monarchy unaccountable, is the worst sort of tyranny, and least of all to be endured by freeborn men" (Aristotle, as cited in Milton, 1649/1847b, p. 379). This conclusion of Milton was clearly showing that his approach towards his country and politics was fused in a republican understanding against the tyranny of unaccountable kings. This strong separation between God and kings is important in terms of the transition from a pre-modern conception of patriotism to a modern, republican one.

In *Eikonoklastes*, Milton continued his task to undermine the idea that Charles I was a martyr. *Eikonoklastes* was written as an answer to a book called *Eikon Basilike* which was attributed to Charles I himself. *Eikon Basilike* was portraying Charles I as a martyr, as "second Christ in his sufferings and in his gestures of forgiving his enemies" who "begs God to forgive the English people" (Lewalski, 2003b, p. 265). The fact that the king was now dead was increasing the rhetorical influence of the book, and this was making Milton's task a difficult one, which was to break the icon of the king as the title of the tract, iconoclast, suggests. In this tract, Milton offered alternative explanations to the ones uttered in *Eikon Basilike*. For example, while *Eikon Basilike* suggests that the king "willingly convoked the Long Parliament" while Milton shows "he always hated parliaments and called this one only to fund his Scots war" (p. 267). This way, Milton was also teaching his audience to read as free citizens who are able to detect propaganda and not as slaves who are open to manipulation through emotions (267).

Milton also requires his readers to choose between two versions of the state. Charles's model produces tyranny and servility: the king wields supreme power, controlling the army, governing the church, calling and dismissing parliament, and retaining a negative voice over legislation. In Milton's republican model parliament, as the people's representative, is supreme in all these areas, and it was the king's persistent refusal to recognize this fact that caused the civil war and the regicide. Milton's argument presumes, with

classical notions of monarchy as slavery in the background, that a nascent republicanism was implied by England's very nature as a free people. (Lewalski, 2003b, p. 267)

Thus, we find that Milton has a strong assumption about the nature of English people as a free nation which necessarily involves a sincere commitment to the parliament rather than a tyrannical king. Milton argues that the King called the Long Parliament only to "to fund his Scots war" and not to found an institution through which the people of England can be represented (Lewalski, 2003b, p. 267).

Those nearest to this king, and most his favourites, were courtiers and prelates; men whose chief study was to find out which way the king inclined, and to imitate him exactly: how these men stood affected to parliaments cannot be forgotten. No man but may remember, it was their continual exercise to dispute and preach against them; and in their common discourse nothing was more frequent, than that "they hoped the king should now have no need of parliaments any more." And this was but the copy, which his parasites had industriously taken from his own words and actions, who never called a parliament but to supply his necessities; and having supplied those, as suddenly and ignominiously dissolved it, without redressing any one grievance of the people. (Milton, 1649/1847a, p. 446)

Milton reminds the reader about the words and behaviour of the courtiers and prelates who were close to the King to undermine the claims in favour of the King in *Eikon Basilike* about him being the one who called the parliament in the first place. According to Milton, on the other hand, parliament was a necessary evil for Charles I whose main political idea was to achieve a Kingdom which no longer needs parliaments and representatives to function. For Milton, calling the parliament was a "national bribe" on Charles I's behalf and he never wanted to have a parliament with its true purpose which is "the redress of grievances" (1649/1847a, p. 447). In *Eikonoklastes*, we learn more about Milton's ideas on how a free nation operates:

...but law in a free nation hath been ever public reason, the enacted reason of a parliament; which he denying to enact, denies to govern us by that which ought to be our law; interposing his own private reason, which to us is no law. (Milton, 1649/1847a, p. 449)

Milton's words here resemble the idea of modern rule of law, which is one of the foundations of modern democratic nation-states. Freedom of a nation is equated with the idea of a parliament which is responsible to govern the people according to the public reason, which is nothing other than the law. Hence, ruling the people or the nation according to the private reason of a King is, for Milton, equal to lawlessness for the nation. Here we again see republican patriotism of Milton for whom the liberty of nation is expressed through a parliamentary body which both enacts laws and rule by them. The important point here is that if this condition, enacting laws and ruling by laws via parliament, is not met, then a nation is not free. In this sense, the concept of "parliament" resembles the mind of a nation as the idea of "public reason" suggests. A king, on the other hand, does not correspond to the public reason because he reserves his ability to not to obey the public reason; hence, it is a private reason above the public reason. This is the republican logic which we find in Milton's prose works.

Patriotism of Milton comes to fore when he explains the relationship between the "Irish army of papists" raised by the Earl of Strafford and Charles I (Milton, 1649/1847a, p. 453). According to Milton, Charles I did not disband the Irish army of papists, to keep them "still in arms to his own purposes" while disbandment was "requested by both houses" (p. 454) "first for reasons best known to himself, next under pretence of lending them to the Spaniard; and so kept them undisbanded till very near the month wherein that rebellion broke forth" (p. 485). Here, Milton accuses Charles I to engage in conspiracies with "the Irish army of papists, with the French to land at Portsmouth, and his tampering both with the English and Scots army to come up against the parliament," which, according to Milton, corresponds to "treason against the commonwealth" (p. 457).

...to show there wanted not evil counsel within himself sufficient to begin a war upon his subjects, though no way by them provoked, he sends an agent with letters to the king of Denmark, requiring aid against the parliament: and that aid was coming, when Divine Providence, to divert them, sent a sudden torrent of Swedes into the bowels of Denmark. He then endeavours to bring up both armies, first the English, with whom 8000 Irish papists, raised by Strafford, and a French army were to join; then the Scots at Newcastle, whom he thought to have encouraged by telling them what money and horse he was to have from Denmark. I mention not the Irish conspiracy till due place. These and many other were his counsels toward a civil war. (Milton, 1649/1847a, p. 485)

Milton's accusations of Charles I give us hints about his understanding of patriotism. Milton accuses Charles I on the grounds that he tried to attract foreign aid against English parliament both inside and outside: inside through Irish and English papists as well as Scots who were promised wealth and outside through Denmark and France. A royalist understanding of patriotism would not probably label these acts as treason, since they are conducted to defend and sustain the power of the king of England. A royalist conception of patriotism may have equated the private interests of a king with those of the people. However, for Milton, a republican for whom English people must voice and solve their problems through their parliament, these supposed acts were more than enough to announce Charles I as a traitor to his country. Hence, anchor for Milton's political logic of patriotism continues to be the equivalence between the parliament and the law of English people:

Yet now he brings his own conditional rights to contest and be preferred before the people's good; and yet unless it be in order to their good, he hath no rights at all; reigning by the laws of the land, not by his own; which laws are in the hands of parliament to change or abrogate as they shall see best for the commonwealth, even to the taking away of kingship itself, when it grows too masterful and burdensome. For every commonwealth is in general

defined, a society sufficient of itself, in all things conducive to well-being and commodious life. (Milton, 1649/1847a, p. 489)

Another important point here is the definition of a commonwealth given by Milton. A commonwealth is defined as a sufficient unity based on common laws and resources. Words above suggest that a commonwealth does not necessarily mean abolishment of a kingdom; however, a commonwealth may decide to such abolishment by enacting a law via its parliament if it becomes a burden on the nation. For Milton, execution of Charles I is justified on these grounds.

Same approach by Milton continues in his *A Defence of the People of England In Answer to Salmasius' Defence of the King* (1651). According to Lewalski, this was a difficult challenge for Milton because it was coming from a “reformed Protestant with a distinguished international reputation as Latinist and scholar” (2003b, p. 271). Salmasius’ tract defends the idea that monarchy is superior to other forms of government and that this superiority of monarchy is supported both by the scripture and the history of English people. This is a strong attack on Milton’s ideals and his sense of patriotism because Salmasius directly strikes to the core idea of Milton’s political thought: the parliament. In his response, Milton defends the idea of parliament against monarchy while he also does not avoid personal attacks on Salmasius including the fact that he is foreigner scholar.

But now it is apparent, that you have undertaken the defence of this royal cause, not so much out of your own inclination, as partly because you were hired, and that at a good round price too, considering how things are with him that set you on work; and partly, it is like, out of expectation of some greater reward hereafter; to publish a scandalous libel against the English, who are injurious to none of their neighbours, and meddle with their own matters only. If there were no such thing as that in the case, is it credible, that any man should be so impudent or so mad, as though he be a stranger, and at a great distance from us, yet of his own accord to intermeddle with



our affairs, and side with a party? What the devil is it to you, what the English do amongst themselves? (Milton, 1651/1847, p. 93)

Milton's argument above is especially important in that he emphasizes two points against Salmasius: First, Salmasius interferes with English politics and sides with one of the parties while this is an exclusive political arena for English people and second, English people are free to conduct their own politics as long as they do not interfere with politics of other peoples. These points show that Milton's patriotism resemble the current state of affairs in global politics in which sovereign nation-states exist on the basis of international law. Thus, these words correspond to more than personal attacks on Salmasius but a deeper conflict in terms of values of both scholars. For Milton, England became a sovereign nation with the abolishment of Charles I's Kingdom while Salmasius attempts to save the idea of Kingship itself. In other words, Milton's patriotism is not only about defending the interests of a people against other peoples, but it's about being sovereign and respecting other sovereign nations.

Which passage I could wish all men would seriously consider: for hence it appears by the testimony of God himself; first, that all nations are at liberty to erect what form of government they will amongst themselves, and to change it when and into what they will. This God affirms in express terms concerning the Hebrew nation; and it does not appear but that other nations are, as to this respect, in the same condition. Another remark that this place yields us, is, that a commonwealth is a more perfect form of government than a monarchy, and more suitable to the condition of mankind, and in the opinion of God himself better for his own people; for himself appointed it, and could hardly be prevailed withal a great while after, and at their own importunate desire, to let them change it into a monarchy. (Milton, 1651/1847, p. 22)

The argument that Milton's patriotism resembles modern democratic ideals does not mean that he did not make use of Biblical and religious convictions to

support his main political ideas. Milton's appeal to religion and Biblical history to prove that monarchy is not the first choice of God for peoples and nations in the world is apparent. Milton counteracts Salmasius' defence of monarchy by arguing that commonwealth or republic is, for God, is the most suitable form of government. He also present "Christ as a 'Liberator'" and brings forward "a version of liberation theology as he urges his followers to win political freedom and live by republican principles" (Lewalski, 2003b, p. 274) by reading "1 Corinthians 7:21–5:" "If you can become free, then use your freedom. You are bought for a price; be not the slaves of men" (as cited in Lewalski, 2003b, p. 274). While such religious argumentation might be found at odds with republican ideals for modern readers, these arguments were found radical at the time. According to Worden, language of *A Defence of the People of England* must have been uncomfortable even for the moderates (2007, p. 199). In addition to the ideological atmosphere of the era, we can think that Milton used the shared symbols of his culture, such as religious and Biblical myths and stories, to maintain a universal political order as we have seen that shared myths and symbols form an important bridge for people becoming nations in Smith's thought (1998, p. 191).

It is also important to note that Milton envisions a world in which kings are no more perceived to be rightful and nations are free by stating that "the right of kings seems to be tottering" (Milton, 1651/1847, p. 26). As stated by Worden, Milton promises "future happiness" to the English people "when in 1649 they 'reject a king ... wherein we have the honour to precede other nations, who are labouring to be our followers'" (as cited in Worden, 2007, p. 201). Moreover, for Milton, the struggle against tyranny belongs not only one people but to "the universal race of men, against the enemies of man's freedom" (as cited in Worden, 2007, p. 201). This brings out another important characteristic of Milton's patriotism: universalism. Universalism of Milton has room for national politics and national sovereignty as we saw in his support for non-interference between nations. His universalism is not based on physical power of one nation may have over another but it comes from the idea that freedom is the most appropriate form of living for peoples and all nations will find it eventually following England. Milton's

patriotism and universalism go hand-in-hand. Privilege of England is not one of power, but one of propriety, i.e. being proper to the nature of mankind. England is privileged not because it has the most power, but it is the first to attain freedom. England is the example which will be followed by other countries in Europe and this is why, for Milton, scholars like Salmasius attacks the English parliament so fiercely: to defend the kings all over Europe or in other words to prevent the rise of Europe of free nations.

In *A Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes* (1659), which is seemingly a religious tract, Milton moves away from the question of kingship and focuses on refining his political thoughts on boundaries between religion and politics. Main argument of Milton in this tract is that religion, or Christianity, is about the “inward man and his actions” and because of that civil authorities should not use force in religious matters (1659/1847, p. 135).

Christ hath a government of his own, sufficient of itself to all his ends and purposes in governing his church; but much different from that of the civil magistrate; and the difference in this very thing principally consists, that it governs not by outward force; and that for two reasons. First, Because it deals only with the inward man and his actions, which are all spiritual, and to outward force not liable. 2dly, To show us the divine excellence of his spiritual kingdom, able, without worldly force, to subdue all the powers and kingdoms of this world, which are upheld by outward force only. (Milton, 1659/1847, p. 135)

Again, we find a religious argument supporting a republican principle, which seems to be foundation of modern day secularism, which is also one of the tenets of modern democracy. In the tract, Milton attempts to show the main difference between “the government of Christ” and “worldly,” i.e. secular governments. Milton himself uses the concept of “civil magistrate” (1659/1847, p. 135). This tract of Milton is important in showing that although argumentation and reasoning of Milton and his understanding of politics and patriotism is deeply

influenced by religion; Milton's anchor is a secular and republican patriotism in all these debates. This does not necessarily mean that Milton's arguments based on religion are only instrumental. The very distinction Milton makes between an individual and his inner spiritual world makes it possible for him to be a secular republican patriot on one hand while a devout Christian on the other. Milton's conception of a secular government is a government which does not introduce force into religious matters other than providing a suitable political environment in which people can live their religions however they like while he "finds a basis in natural reason and civic danger to allow some restrictions on Roman Catholics, idolaters, and blasphemers" (Lewalski, 2003b, p. 362). According to Bennett, there are also parallels between Milton's ideas and contemporary liberationist theology which "follow what they see as biblical authority, sometimes in conflict with civil and ecclesiastical authority" with the aim of "social change" (1998, p. 221). Moreover, Bradford suggests that Milton's critique of Salmasius presents a "blend of nationalism and ideological commitment that we usually associate with twentieth-century political discourse" (2001, p. 29). Bradford continues as follows: "in Milton's presentation the Cromwellian regime is licensed by scripture, it involves collective responsibility and not the adoration of a debauched figurehead, and the wise, courageous people of England will monitor its implementation" (pp. 29-30). In Milton's political rhetoric, we find many elements that we also find today: nationalism, democracy, and an appeal to religious justification mixed with a dose of secularism, which is moderate for contemporary standards but a big step for Milton's epoch.

In 1660, Milton published *The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth* while "the Army was bringing the exiled monarchy back from France" (Bennett, 1998, p. 222). This was a risky and courageous move for Milton, which shows his deep commitment for his cause of building England as a free nation against tyranny. This tract, *Ready and Easy Way*, repeated the arguments on the superiority of republic over monarchy and argued that "the imminent reinstatement of a monarch" would be "disastrous for the state of the nation" (Bradford, 2001, p. 35). In this tract, Milton sees the strong possibility that the

monarchy will be restored under Charles II, and tries to come up with ways to protect the republic. Milton proposes the idea of a perpetual “Grand or General Council of the Nation” which is composed of “chief gentlemen out of every county” who has the awareness of the “danger and confusion of readmitting kingship in this land” (1847a, p. 173). According to Campbell and Corns, Milton was feeling the pressure of restoration and he was afraid of the outcome of an election which may pave the way for a reinstated monarchy:

Milton builds an argument for a perpetual grand council, as he prefers to term the unicameral parliament he proposes should be constituted once the new recruited members have arrived, in curiously evasive and duplicitous terms. His real reasons were probably as simple as those of the members of the Purged Parliament. Sooner or later, an election would return a membership with the potential to reinstate monarchy: no matter what oaths were administered, what restrictions put in place on the franchise or the right to stand, the risk remained of such subversion. (Campbell and Corns, 2008, p. 296).

Thus, Milton’s turn to the formation of a perpetual grand council for English people seems more like a practical and pragmatic shift rather than a theoretical one; however, we also know that he is inclined toward an aristocratic republic as we saw in his ideas about education and meritocracy. Whether Milton was theoretically sincere and insistent on his idea of a perpetual grand council or not is beyond the scope of this analysis; however, it is evident that Milton is ready to do whatever it takes to protect and preserve the English commonwealth, including creating a perpetual council to the detriment of elections and representation.

The advice of Milton for the creation of grand council also involves “devolution of most governmental authorities to regional assemblies made up of leading gentry,” (Campbell and Corns, 2008, p. 297) as we also saw in his emphasis on chief gentlemen from every county of England. This move again seems more like a political and pragmatic shift, while it also shows that Milton is eager to create

a patriotic class base for the republic against the possibility of restoration. Creation of a class whose interests are mixed with those of the government is yet another characteristic of modern politics of nationalism and democracy. Therefore, we find that Milton's patriotism is a bridge between pre-modern, community-based form of identity and modern national identity and politics not only in his ideas and theory but also in his political tactics.

Milton's ideas on the concept of republic and sovereignty are repeated in *Ready and Easy Way*:

For the ground and basis of every just and free government, (since men have smarted so oft for committing all to one person,) is a general council of ablest men, chosen by the people to consult of public affairs from time to time for the common good. In this grand council must the sovereignty, not transferred, but delegated only, and as it were deposited, reside... (Milton, 1660/1847, p. 181)

However, as we stated, Milton plays with the word "to choose" and claims that this does not necessarily mean one government after another through elections and it is better to have a perpetual council of well-chosen men:

And, although it may seem strange at first hearing, by reason that men's minds are prepossessed with the notion of successive parliaments, I affirm, that the grand or general council, being well chosen, should be perpetual: for so their business is or may be, and oftentimes urgent; the opportunity of affairs gained or lost in a moment. The day of council cannot be set as the day of a festival; but must be ready always to prevent or answer all occasions. By this continuance they will become every way skilfullest, best provided of intelligence from abroad, best acquainted with the people at home, and the people with them. The ship of the commonwealth is always under sail; they sit at the stern, and if they steer well, what need is there to change them, it being rather dangerous? (Milton, 1660/1847, p. 181)

We again find that Milton's republicanism is grounded on a strong commitment to meritocracy, to the idea of appointing the best possible people to positions of authority and government. Whether the recommendation of a perpetual council was a pragmatic move or not, we see that meritocracy is an important theme for Milton.

One may ask whether advocating a perpetual council is at odds with the very idea of a republic. In the end, a perpetual council seems very close to the idea of a kingship only with more than one people. Milton is aware of this possible criticism and has different answers. First, Milton argues that while a king's death "causeth oftentimes many dangerous alterations," "the death now and then of a senator is not felt, the main body of them still continuing permanent in greatest and noblest commonwealths, and as it were eternal" (1660/1847, p. 182). In other words, Milton argues that a council is different from a king in that it can continue to function even this or that member of the council dies or remains out of active duty for some reason. Secondly, Milton claims that there are two forms of liberty which are "spiritual and civil liberty" and both can only be satisfied only under a free commonwealth rather than a kingship (1660/1847, p. 187). Milton refers to this spiritual liberty as the "liberty of conscience," which is engraved almost in every modern constitution and human rights documents today, and he defines it as the "liberty to serve God," "to save his soul, according to the best light which God hath planted in him" (p. 187). By the analogy of "best light planted by God," Milton suggests that individuals should be free to determine the relationship they will form with the God without any pressure from a worldly institution. A free commonwealth, as Milton suggests, is "confident of its own fair proceedings" so that it can allow such liberty of conscience unlike a kingship which is "full of fears" and "jealousies" (p. 188). Civil liberties, on the other hand, consist of "the civil rights and advancements of every person according to his merit" (p. 188). Thus, Milton distinguishes spirituality from worldliness yet he requires them both for a meaningful life. A civil life based on merits and a spiritual world based on individual liberty of conscience seems to be the ideal form of life for Milton and these are clearly reflected in his understanding of republican patriotism.

In the *Second Defence* or *Defensio Secunda*, published in 1654, Milton continued his work against forms of government he deems tyrannical while he also focused on his biography. According to Lewalski, *Second Defence* is different from Milton's other works in that his "representations of self and nation" are "thoroughly and complexly intertwined" (2003b, p. 307). Main points, or suggestions, made by Milton for Cromwell in the *Second Defence* are "church disestablishment and the enlargement of personal liberty" (p. 319) while Protector Cromwell failed to act on them and sometimes act counter to his suggestions as we see in "orders to regulate morals, censor the press, and settle the church establishment more firmly" (p. 332). Still, Milton stayed loyal to Cromwell due to his conviction that the Protector "would do more than most to protect religious liberty" (p. 332).

In the *Second Defence*, we see the idea of patriotism in Milton in an unveiled manner which shows us the pillars of his understanding of loving his country clearly.

For who is there, who does not identify the honour of his country with his own? And what can conduce more to the beauty or glory of one's country, than the recovery, not only of its civil but its religious liberty? And what nation or state ever obtained both, by more successful or more valorous exertion? ... Those Greeks and Romans, who are the objects of our admiration, employed hardly any other virtue in the extirpation of tyrants, than that love of liberty which made them prompt in seizing the sword, and gave them strength to use it. (Milton, 1847b, p. 478).

Milton equates his honour with the honour of his country and equates the honour of his country with the establishment of civil and religious liberties, which correspond to civil and spiritual rights or the liberty of conscience. In the passage, Milton makes an analogy between Greeks, Romans and English people of his time and argues that the admirable qualities of Greeks and Romans – "the love of liberty" – are now found in English people thanks to the Commonwealth and the Protectorate.



Another important point, which we also discussed earlier, is the difference between kings and tyrants. For Milton kings were not necessarily tyrants although they may become tyrants (Worden, 2007, p. 231). Milton uses a complex logic to show that kings are not necessarily tyrants yet it is in fact easy for kings to become tyrants if they adhere to the idea that they have the right to do anything they like to do or that they do not have to give account of their doings:

If I inveigh against tyrants, what is this to kings? Whom I am far from associating with tyrants. As much as an honest man differs from a rogue, SO much I contend that a king differs from a tyrant. Whence it is clear, that a tyrant is so far from being a king, that he is always in direct opposition to a king. ... But that right, which you concede to kings, the right of doing what they please, is not justice, but injustice, ruin and despair. By that envenomed present you yourselves destroy those, whom you extol as if they were above the reach of danger and oppression; and you quite obliterate the difference between a king and a tyrant, if you invest both with the same arbitrary power. (Milton, 1847b, pp. 481-2)

Milton clarifies his concepts step by step and shows us that the difference between a king and a tyrant is whether or not he has the right to do as he please in any matter. Thus, for Milton, a king is not necessarily a person who does as he pleases, and when this is the case, “the power must be ascribed, not to the king, but to the individual” (1847b, p. 482). On the other hand, Milton argues that tyrants are “the most abject of slaves, for they are the servants of those who are themselves in servitude” (p. 482). Thus, a tyrant in fact deprives himself from his liberty by depriving his subjects of their civil and spiritual rights. He serves a slave nation rather than a free nation and lowers himself too in the process from a king to a tyrant.

It is unclear whether the distinction between kings and tyrants is a rhetorical tool used by Milton to show the inconsistencies within the idea of kingship or is it a genuine theoretical analysis of two inter-related concepts. Milton’s classical

republicanism allows us to think that this is a genuine theoretical distinction which also happens to serve a rhetorical, pragmatic interest to show that the Protectorate, as well as Milton, is not against all the kings in Europe and in the world but only the tyrants. Since no king will accept such an epithet, Milton creates a ground for communication between English Commonwealth and various kingships in Europe at the time. At the same time, Milton establishes a powerful motive and justification for both regicide and the existence of Commonwealth.

For Milton, patriotism is directly related with a desire to wish for the expansion of liberty in one's country and we find this clearly in a statement in the *Second Defence*:

But since my enemies boast that this affliction is only a retribution for the transgressions of my pen, I again invoke the Almighty to witness, that I never, at any time, wrote any thing which I did not think agreeable to truth, to justice, and to piety. This was my persuasion then, and I feel the same persuasion now. Nor was I ever prompted to such exertions by the influence of ambition, by the lust of lucre or of praise; it was only by the conviction of duty and the feeling of patriotism, a disinterested passion for the extension of civil and religious liberty. (Milton, 1847b, p. 490)

For Milton, expanding civil and religious liberty, increasing civil and spiritual rights is equivalent to feelings of patriotism. In this sense, love of one's country is best expressed through his love of liberty in both civil and religious terms. While it is clear that Milton's patriotism resembles modern nationalism in that it has secular and republican implications, it is important to note that civil and religious liberties complement each other rather than oppose. However, even though civil liberties and religious/spiritual liberties support and reinforce each other for Milton, this becomes possible only through abolition of papal authorities which collect both civil and religious authority on themselves. Thus, Milton's patriotism defends religious liberties on a ground which separates spiritual matters from civil matters in terms of authority. It is the individual who is responsible for creating a

connection with God in the best possible manner and no worldly authority can dictate how religion must be exercised and lived.

#### **4.5. Discussion**

We have analysed Milton's prose works on various issues such as religion, education, free speech, divorce, and politics. Combined with biography of Milton, beginning with the quarrels between his grandfather and his father, our literary analysis suggests that Milton has been an influential figure for a republican form of English patriotism which has secular undertones as well as a wide defence of religious liberties but not religious worldly authorities. Milton's patriotism and his understanding of republicanism and his love of liberty does not present itself only in his prose works, but also in his literary works such as *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes*. In addition, Milton's politics is a debated issue also in the academic literature. In this section, we will discuss patriotism of Milton with references to works in the academic literature as well as his literary works. Instead of a detailed literary analysis of Milton's literary works, we will discuss his understanding of patriotism by comparing our points we have already gathered by analysing the author's prose works with those one can find in the academic literature and we will try to draw support from his literary works as well.

Our analysis of Milton's prose works on politics, education, free speech, divorce and religion suggests that Milton's ideas, his politics and his patriotism stands in-between a pre-modern period of identity, which is based on local identities and affinities which are open to intervention by mostly unquestioned and obeyed religious authorities which also assume political power, and a modern period of national identity, which is characterized by a politically defined group of people endowed with rights and liberties which cannot be taken away at will by any individual. Milton's patriotism judges different nations on the basis of their level of servility versus their level of liberty. Milton characterizes kings who act as they please as tyrants rather than legitimate rulers and upholds the idea of a universal law with which everyone is judged in an equal manner. By this way, Milton opens the way for a modern understanding of national state and national democratic politics.

On the other hand, we find that Milton has certain aristocratic political tendencies as we have seen in his idea of a perpetual grand council rather than sequential and periodic elections. While this might have been a pragmatic and rhetorical move by Milton as an intellectual who tries to defend the gains of the Free Commonwealth against the possibility of a restoration, it clearly represents a theoretical problem for his republicanism. While Milton's aim has not been to replace one tyrant with a group of tyrants, his suggestion of a perpetual council has certain authoritarian implications at least against his political enemies. In addition, Milton's understanding of religion seems to continue to dominate his understanding of politics as it is hard to differentiate his religious ideas from his civil stances, which is at odds with the contemporary understanding of secularism. Yet, his emphasis on the co-existence of civil and religious liberties echoes the soft or "libertarian" forms of secularism one can find today in contemporary politics. Therefore, while Milton was not a liberal as we would understand the term today, his ideas were important stepping stones towards a modern conception of national identity, national state and constitutional liberties enacted through a national parliament.

In this sense, this thesis suggests that Milton forms a bridge between pre-modern and modern conceptions of patriotism. Therefore, Milton's ideas predict modern concepts such as popular sovereignty and nationalism. As Yack suggests, "Milton does *not* view nationhood as nothing more than a container for popular sovereignty and civil liberties" (2001, p. 526). This is how Milton claims that English people are the chosen people through achievement which "distinguishes England *among* the different nations" (p. 526). English nation is distinguished not by virtue of their race, language, culture or symbols but by virtue of their proposal and character of overcoming one-man rule, kingship, and religious authorities, for example papacy and bishops, which are obstacles to civil and religious liberties.

We find political implications also in Milton's epic poem *Paradise Lost* and his closet drama *Samson Agonistes*. Both works were published after the Restoration and they deal with various problems Milton encountered throughout his life including his views on politics, education and gender relations. Issues of

“monarchy, tyranny, idolatry, rebellion, liberty, republicanism, separation of church and state” are prevalent in *Paradise Lost* and Milton sometimes uses confusing dialogues to make his points, e.g. “The Abdiel–Satan debates of Books 5 and 6 underscore the Miltonic principle that there can be no possible parallel between the monarchy proper to God as creator and any other king” (Lewalski, 2007, p. xxii).

These passages challenge readers to refuse contemporary royalist analogies between God and King Charles, or Satan and the Puritan rebels, and instead to understand that the appropriation by any monarch other than God of the imagery and accouterments of absolute kingship is idolatry. (Lewalski, 2007, p. xxii)

Thus, Milton’s narrative choices play with the expectations and stereotypes of the readers on the political challenges of 17<sup>th</sup> century. Milton uses strong imagery on heaven and hell, which also have certain political implications for English people. While hell is portrayed as a “damned society in the making, with royalist politics, perverted language, perverse rhetoric, political manipulation, and demagoguery,” heaven is presented “as a unique place, a celestial city combining courtly magnificence and the pleasures of pastoral nature” (Lewalski, 2003, p. 465). Heaven, contrary to expectation, is also a “place of process, not stasis, complexity not simplicity, and the continuous and active choice of good rather than the absence of evil” in which “Adam and Eve are expected to cultivate and control their burgeoning garden and their own sometimes wayward impulses and passions” (pp. 465-6). These passages tell us more about Milton’s understanding of duties that belong to individuals rather than a literal description of heaven. Milton’s classical republican ethics suggest that individuals must be able to control their passions to avoid inner or spiritual servility which may lead to national servility. We see this theme also in the Nimrod episode, where we find “an overt statement of republican principles,” in which Michael reminds Adam that “outward liberty depends on inner liberty” and “inner servitude...leads to deprivation of outward freedom by ‘violent Lords’” (p. 470). At this point, Lewalski warns us about a possible use of this reasoning for a justification of colonialist and imperialist policies:

Milton's central political insight, that inner slavery to passions and vices leads to political subjection by tyrannous lords, he applies quite generally, to English, Irish, Israelites, Asians, and any others it may describe. But it holds worrisome potential for imperialists to make selective application, arguing that subject peoples for their barbarism or vices deserve their enslavement. (Lewalski, 2003, p. 472)

*Paradise Lost* might be read both under a pessimistic and optimistic light depending on one's expectations and perspective on politics. On one hand, it might suggest to some that revolutions are futile and revolutionaries are doomed from the beginning. On the other hand, it might suggest the need to fight back and struggle against injustice even though the good are few and the bad forms the majority. In book XII, Milton (2007, p. 330) writes:

Still overcoming evil, and by small  
Accomplishing great things, by things deemed weak  
Subverting worldly strong, and worldly wise  
By simply meek; that suffering for Truth's sake  
Is fortitude to highest victory, (12.566-570)

In addition to the emphasis on truth and acting in favour of truth even though it may fail in the end, Book XII ends with a strong emphasis on the concept of "choice:"

Som natural tears they drop'd, but wip'd them soon;  
The World was all before them, where to choose  
Thir place of rest, and Providence thir guide:  
They hand in hand with wandring steps and slow,  
Through Eden took thir solitarie way. (12.645-649)

Ending of *Paradise Lost* is open to interpretation, yet in relation with the main argument of this thesis, that Milton represents a theoretical and historical bridge between pre-modern conception of identity and a modern political national

identity, this can be interpreted as the emergence of a new world with its new possibilities and new conflicts, a new era in which choice and political moves gain importance for each citizen instead of a world of all powerful monarchs and their conflicting laws. With the modern era, men and women become citizens rather than subjects and this brings more challenges than solutions now that each citizen has to make choices for themselves just like Adam and Eve.

In addition, Milton's post-Restoration literary works point to a process of evaluation regarding the defeat of the Free Commonwealth and reflects Milton's belief in the importance of well-educated leaders for the destiny of a nation (Mashkournia, 1995; Bugeja, 2008). In other words, Milton engaged in a "rethinking of England's collective identity" with these literary works (Bugeja, 2008, p. 158). If we think about the repressive atmosphere of the Restoration period on anti-royalist works and Milton's long-lasting passion to write the greatest epic work in English, we can understand why he chose to place political implications in his great literary works. According to Bugeja, "*Samson Agonistes* rewrites the founding myth of England's national identity—England as the new Israel or Elect nation—in order to present a complex and thoughtful reconsideration of the relationship between the individual and the nation" (p. 158) and the drama tells us that "The nation's liberty is anything but certain" and "the nation needs to find courage in Samson's final act," which is not an easy task as the history showed to Milton (p. 192). Still, Samson's act, which destroys both himself and his enemies, shows that he is a true leader whose "teaching" to his nation "is by his own example" (Mashkournia, 1995, p. 183). In other words, Samson is both a leader and a teacher who praises liberties against bondage and servitude and who is faithful enough to sacrifice himself for liberty. To this, we should add a potential expectation of Milton about the Free Commonwealth, which was defeated, yet marked the English history deeply. Milton might have thought optimistically that the Free Commonwealth was destroying its opponents while destroying itself, just like Samson. John Milton passed away in 1674 and could not see the Glorious Revolution of 1688; however, his anticipation on the future of England and the monarchy proved to be a successful prediction and insight.

Thus, Milton's post-Restoration works such as *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes* imply that a people or a nation is free to choose between liberty and bondage and choosing liberty requires determination and sacrifice. In this way, Milton shows his awareness about the fact that discourses of liberty must be supported by discourses of patriotism and sacrifice so that steps taken for a free people can last long. In addition, these works support Milton's belief of England as an elected nation. These points bring us to such discourses, or motifs, of patriotism in Milton's thought.

Ramage (1942) argues that there are three "motifs" in Milton's concerns with England and English people as a nation: First motif is Milton's conviction that English nation is chosen by God to lead the way for other nations towards liberty; second motif is the author's "faith" in England's "readiness and strength for the task" (p. 71), which is the spiritual strength of English nation for reformation; and third motif is "individual responsibility" of Milton as an author to help his country transcend the ills and wrongdoings of both "church and state" which are involved in "abuses and shortcomings" (p. 72). Ramage concludes that these three motifs manifest Milton's "real and ardent national feeling" (p. 73). While this thesis agrees with Ramage's conclusions, it also argues that Milton represents a historically progressive and revolutionary stance, even though his role is mainly a role of mediation, on the transformation to a modern era of nationalism and national identity. Milton's patriotism implies an understanding based on civil and religious liberties, universal values and secularism. Such a progressive and revolutionary stance is marked with both strengths and weaknesses for Milton. It is a strength because Milton predicts a lot of developments which is ahead of its time such as divorce rights, secularism, democracy, republicanism, national identity, an educational system based on empirical and practical results and so on. It might also be interpreted as a weakness in the sense that his works are overtly political and cannot escape political readings and interpretations which seems like a natural result for a revolutionary poet who challenges the accepted foundations of patriotism of his time for including greater rights and liberties for an educated mass of citizenry.



How does Milton achieve being a vehicle to a modern conception of patriotism national identity? The analysis provided in this thesis suggests that Milton turns away from traditional conceptions of identity in favour of a republican national identity in which a certain type of politics, a form of meritocratic republicanism, is understood to be central and indispensable. This turn in Milton is accomplished by the development of various “discourses of liberty” – which is an idea derived from Viroli’s concept of “patriotism of liberty” (as cited in Kateb, 2006, p. 10) – in different cultural and political dimensions, for example, education, book licensing, religion, government, art, and family including sexual and marital relationships. Milton’s positions in these different dimensions may not be coherent in terms of modern political thought when we think about his pious and religious interpretation of politics on one hand and his strict dualism of spirituality and worldliness on the other; however, his ideas and positions become coherent by pointing to a direction rather than becoming a perfect model for the future he fights for. As the thesis emphasizes, Milton predicts and hints at a modern future by becoming a leading thinker and putting forward progressive ideas for his time. With the help of Milton’s contributions, marriage becomes a spiritual companionship rather than a mere sexual bond, education becomes a practical tool to raise future leaders for the nation rather than creating obedient generations, politics becomes the art to draw the future of a people by the people rather than being property of one person, and art becomes a tool for progressive change rather than being mere amusement for the powerful people in a society. Milton’s contradictory arguments, in this sense, actually provide evidence for his mediatory role between the traditional society and the modern nation.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Conclusion**

Milton's place in the history of patriotism, specifically English patriotism, is a complex and important issue. This thesis aimed at showing that Milton's understanding of patriotism is actually clear in all of its complexity, for it points to a clear direction for the future of the society he lived in. Milton's patriotism is interwoven within his thought which encompasses a broad range of issues including politics, education, free speech, marital relationships, art, and religion. The main line of this patriotism is in favour of the creation of his country as a republican nation based on liberty against tyranny, servility and idolatry, which, the poet thought, were dangerous for the future of English people as a free nation. In this sense, Milton's patriotism anticipated and predicted many modern aspects of national identity such as national and popular sovereignty, secularism, republicanism, democracy, universal human rights and free speech.

Milton's overemphasis of the Protestant character of the change within English society and his understanding of politics based on the strict leadership of a group of men whose places are fixed appear as contradictions to the modern eye. However, this study argue that these contradictory positions show the "vehicular" or "mediatory" character of Milton's patriotism which actually aims to realize "the majesty of a free people" (Milton, 1660/1847, p. 179). According to Norbrook, Milton was also aware of this and "sometimes thought of himself as writing not for his time but for the future (1999, p. 18).

This thesis contributes to the literature on Milton's patriotism and his role on English nationalism by showing different discourses of liberty employed by the poet mainly in his prose works. It is suggested that Milton's different discourses of liberty used in terms of different cultural and political fields points at a direction, thus forms a coherent body of thought, which is the formation the English society as a republican nation which is free from what he perceived as a tyrannical monarchy and a political, cultural and spiritual dependence on Roman Catholicism.

In the academic literature, we find different and contradictory representations of Milton as a patriotic author. On the one hand, there are those who find a revolutionary form of nationalism in Milton with his focus on England as a society which is becoming a "sovereign nation" instead of a "sovereign realm," i.e. "political sovereignty passes from the 'king' to the 'people'" (Loewenstein & Stevens, 2008, p. 10). On the other hand, there are scholars who suggest that Milton's ideas were actually "illiberal" and "unrevolutionary" and he was never explicitly against all forms of monarchy (Walker, 2014). While it might be possible to draw both conclusions based on Milton's prose works, this thesis suggests that Milton should not be interpreted with a completely contemporary perspective. Such a contemporary perspective may steer us into wrong directions and we may end up exaggerating this or that feature of Milton's political thought. Instead, we should study Milton with a historical perspective especially when it comes to his ideas on patriotism and national identity. Main reason for this is that patriotism is not a fixed concept; it is still in a process of being shaped. In other words, patriotism and questions of nationality gain meaning as processes not as finished entities. Thus, Milton's stand on patriotism is a station on a long journey in the history of literature and politics. This argument of the thesis finds support in scholars such as Norbrook who argues that "Milton 'emerged in part as a vehicle for English nationalism'" (as cited in Loewenstein & Stevens, 2008, p. 7) and Stevens who argues that "Milton's nationalism" is "Janus-faced" in that it includes contradictory elements such as "self-realization and civil liberty" as well as "negative definition and exclusion" as we have seen in the thinker's thoughts on recognizing the liberty of Roman Catholics in England (2001, pp. 267-8). This thesis makes its main contribution to

this third option – which is the idea that Milton’s patriotism is a stopping point between pre-modern identities and modern nationality, that it has elements from both worlds and that its breaking points with the past, his discourses of liberty, must be recognized as well as his more traditional aspects such as his focus on religious values.

In the academic literature, Milton’s patriotism “seems to have fallen between the cracks” (Loewenstein & Stevens, 2008, p. 8). As Loewenstein and Stevens state, this might be due to scholars who were mostly interested in other aspects of Milton’s thought, such as his republicanism, or due to scholars’ unwillingness to delve into questions of nationalism which is a messy concept. Even in Norbrook, who acknowledges Milton’s role in the upcoming English nationalism, his patriotism is mainly taken for granted and is not investigated further. In this thesis, the concept of patriotism instead of nationalism is preferred as we have discussed in Chapter 3. Since nation-states and nationalism are part of history mainly since the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Hobsbawm, 1990), we preferred the concept of patriotism rather than nationalism not to be caught up in the contemporary debates of nationalism which might not be suitable for Milton’s era.

In Chapter 2, we have provided the historical background and the biography of Milton to show the historical continuities between the history of Europe and England, the poet’s life as a political figure and his understanding of patriotism. As we have discussed, both Europe and England were absorbed in a debate between Roman Catholicism and reformation movements in various countries. This conflict between Catholicism and Protestantism has been influential in Milton’s life beginning with the relationship between his father and his grandfather over whether English bible was suitable or not. Milton’s father, John Milton Sr., took even the chance of being ostracized by Richard Milton who was Milton Jr.’s grandfather. In addition to this, the fact that Milton was surrounded by arts and music, which would not be possible in a Catholic household, his education which made him able to read Latin and Greek works, and his journey to Europe which allowed him to meet some of the most influential figures of his era such as Galileo and to witness the roots of

modern science has been undeniably influential in his politics and his understanding of patriotism as a concept which is tied to the destiny of whole England and Europe. We have seen the traces of his own life in his prose works on education, free speech, divorce, religion and politics.

Milton developed what we have called various discourses of liberty as the core of his patriotism against, as he would put it, tyranny, servility and idolatry in order to reach the “majesty of a free people.” The analysis put forward in this thesis suggests that Milton’s patriotism anticipated the modern conception of national identity and nationalism in an era which was marked by religious conflicts. Milton’s ideas were not independent from the debates of his own time and took part in those debates as a poet and a thinker who was not a bystander but an active political actor. As a result, Milton developed a line of thought which was marked by a meritocratic, secular and progressive form of republicanism which has traces of aristocratic tendencies as well. In the end, Milton’s republican patriotism paved the way for later developments of national sovereignty, secularism, democracy, and individual civil liberties.

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