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**The relative modernity of Milton's "Of Education"**

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Middle Tennessee State University, 1993

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The Relative Modernity of Milton's Of Education

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The Relative Modernity of Milton's Of Education

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Abstract

The Relative Modernity of Milton's Of Education

Ernest Sirluck's essay on Milton's Of Education, in volume two of the Yale University Complete Prose Works of John Milton (1959), concludes that Of Education has virtually nothing "significant" in common with the educational works of John Amos Comenius, the Moravian pedagogical innovator, and that the Comenian disciple in England, Samuel Hartlib, who had originally solicited Milton's essay, refused to publish it due to Milton's "slighting" reference to the works of Comenius. Sirluck asserts that Of Education is thoroughly humanistic and not at all modern, except for some slight influence from Francis Bacon, and therefore future scholars should conduct their research where the essay's "true affiliation" lies: in the humanistic educational practices and documents of the Renaissance.

Although such humanistic research may very well shed some light on Of Education, not to see the modern elements of Milton's tractate is to fail to understand it fully. Written during the thick of the English Civil War, Milton's essay was just as revolutionary as was to be Oliver Cromwell's new commonwealth. With great emphasis on scientific (though not experimental) knowledge, Of Education justifies every one of its ideas by its potential

Halsey Ewing Werlein

usefulness to the state: the projected students were to end up being thoroughly "productive" citizens in both war and peace.

Although Milton's practical Puritanical bent was not as pronounced as that of Comenius, and the poet did not take his educational ideas to the extremes the Moravian did, Milton's Of Education was a link between the humanism of his own education and more modern educational systems. Thus, there was no reason for friction between Hartlib and Milton, and though Milton did happen to publish his essay himself, it was not the result of any falling out between them.



## Table of Contents

Chapter	Page
I. Introduction to the Problem.....	1
II. Survey of Relevant Criticism.....	6
III. The Humanistic Side of <u>On Education</u> .....	19
IV. Modernistic Aspects of <u>On Education</u> .....	89
V. Conclusion.....	140
Works Cited.....	147

## Chapter I: Introduction to the Problem

There is a strong tendency for readers of Milton's Of Education to regard it as the last great English Renaissance expression of educational ideas and ideals and to miss its more modern aspects. Most discussions of the tractate since Ernest Sirluck's landmark essay on it in the Yale Complete Prose Works of John Milton (cited below as CPW) have accepted Sirluck's conclusion that it is a purely humanistic treatise and that any resemblance to more modern educational ideas is almost totally coincidental (2: 184-216). For instance, a standard student text, Seventeenth Century Prose and Poetry, edited by Alexander M. Witherspoon and Frank J. Warnke (latest edition: 1982), states that the "tradition [of Christian humanism] informs the tract On Education" (387). Although it is easy to understand how one might arrive at such a conclusion in the light of the very large element of Renaissance humanism in Milton's essay, I do not believe that this interpretation lends itself to a complete understanding of Milton's intent in Of Education.

Although the poet was given as great a Renaissance education as was available in the time of his youth in London, his humanism was severely modified by the Puritanism he was exposed to from his earliest years, and his educational tractate was at least as influenced by this as it was by Saint Paul's School and the humanistic educational tradition. And one cannot study Puritanism without rapidly

becoming aware of its emphasis on the practicality and usefulness of all our endeavors, including our educational ones. Indeed, it was this emphasis that caused Milton's educational tractate to be considered not a modern one, but a transitional one between humanistic and modern systems of education. And not to understand this is to miss at least half of the true meaning of his essay Of Education.

But before going further, I would like to specify the special senses in which "humanism" and "modernism" will be used in this dissertation. In Early Tudor Poetry, John M. Berdan defines humanism as "a revival of interest in classical life and in classical literature" (230). Of course humanism went further than simple "interest in classical life and in classical literature"; humanists also wanted to emulate classical civilization, including its cultivation of the "liberal arts." Charles T. Harrison, in "The Idea of a Christian University," defines "liberal" as "free," or, more accurately, "for freedom." The word derives from Greek and Roman use, which recognized that one type of training was appropriate for the children of slaves and another type for "liberi," or the children who were born to freedom. (73)

William Harrison Woodward, in his Vittorino da Feltre and Other Humanist Educators, quotes Vittorino as further defining liberal studies as those

by which we attain and practice virtue and wisdom; that education which calls forth, trains and develops those highest gifts of body and of mind which ennoble men, and which are rightly judged to rank next in dignity to virtue only. (102)

And how might one attain this highest development of mind and body? The body is to be developed through appropriate exercise, but for the mind to reach its fullest potential, it must be exposed to the greatest productions of the human spirit throughout the ages. As Douglas Bush described Of Education in his book, John Milton, A Sketch of his Life and Writings, "its dynamic spirit is (to borrow Whitehead's phrase) the habitual vision of greatness" (92-93). Thus, the definition of humanistic education which will be used in this dissertation is the exposure to greatness of students who have in them the seeds of greatness, thus actualizing that potential for greatness.

Conversely, I define modernism in education as training in what is perceived as being useful in terms of making a living for oneself in "the real world." Charles Harrison's essay well defines this as "an instrumental education--an education devoted to the cultivation of mechanical and professional skills, education which has its gaze rigidly fixed on the economic imperatives of our society" (73). Harrison further defines this as education to "simple slavery" (75).

Of course it is inconceivable that such an advocate of liberty as John Milton could consciously promulgate an educational system which tended toward mental slavery, nor do I contend this. I do maintain, however, that he was greatly influenced by Puritanism, Bacon, and the Baconian educational reformers and that their reforms have led to the modern-day emphasis on the vocational side of education at the expense of the liberal arts. Milton was neither a pure educational humanist nor in the vein of the Moravian modern educational reformer John Amos Comenius, but he was rather an unwitting link between humanistic and modern education.

To make my case for this thesis, this study is divided into five parts:

Chapter I: Introduction. A statement of the problem of Milton's relative modernism in Of Education, and a discussion of how this study will go about proving my thesis that the essay is just as modern as it is humanistic.

Chapter II: A survey of the criticism relevant to this problem. This will begin with the publications of the essay itself by the poet and will continue to the present day.

Chapter III: A study of the essay considered as a humanistic educational document. Here it will be seen that there is indeed a strong classical and humanistic background to Milton's educational

ideas.

Chapter IV: A study of the modern aspects of Milton's Of Education. Here it will be seen that the essay is in many respects new and revolutionary, and that it is not without "significant similarities" with the ideas of John Amos Comenius, Sirluck's statements notwithstanding.

Chapter V: Conclusion. Although the prevailing view today is that Sirluck was right to assert that there are no significant differences between Milton's Of Education and the educational ideas of John Amos Comenius, Milton's essay clearly has a great many modern elements, some of which coincide remarkably with those of the Moravian reformer. Also, Sirluck's assertion that Hartlib took umbrage at Milton's slighting reference to Comenius's works and therefore refused to publish Milton's essay is seen to be in error. Finally, an evaluation of Milton's essay and its potential value to education today is made: it is indeed a remarkable document and when certain modifications are made, its message is highly significant and relevant today.

## Chapter II: Survey of Relevant Criticism

From the date of its first publication in early June of 1644, Milton's Of Education has been enshrouded in a minor mystery: why it was evidently published by Milton himself even though toward the beginning of the essay the poet states that he is giving it to the educational reformer Samuel Hartlib, to whom it is addressed, "to dispose of" (CPW 2: 366). This mystery is further heightened by the fact that the eight-page pamphlet had no title page, no date, and no publisher's and author's names. Although the mystery of its publication might seem to be a minor point, it has lent itself to some apparently unwarranted conclusions which have had a bearing on the question of the relative modernity of the essay, and therefore it will be treated in some detail in the course of this study.

In his "Preface" to Milton's Of Education in the Yale Complete Prose Works of John Milton, Donald C. Dorian points out that "there is little evidence that Milton's writing on education exerted any influence on contemporary writers or practices within his own lifetime" (2: 359). Dorian does, however, go on to point out in a footnote that the English Comenian John Hall of Durham told Samuel Hartlib in a letter (1646) that Milton's was "an excellent discourse of education" (2: 359). William R. Parker, in Milton's Contemporary Reputation, also mentions a derogatory reference, in 1670, to "those occasional Writers, that

missing preferment in the University, can presently write you their new ways of Education" (110).

For whatever reason, Milton decided to republish his essay in 1673, twenty-nine years after its original publication, in his Poems, & c. upon Several Occasions. By Mr. John Milton. Both English and Latin, & c. Composed at several times. With a small Tractate of Education to Mr. Hartlib. The fact that he chose to republish this essay a full generation after he originally penned it and with no substantial changes apparently means that he still agreed with its pedagogical conclusions, critical statements to the contrary notwithstanding. Also, the fact that he chose to again include the introductory letter-style address to Hartlib in the 1673 edition indicates that there was no misunderstanding or falling out with him (as many have claimed) after the first publication of the essay.

However, well before Milton's final publication of his essay, the Restoration of Charles II to the English throne in 1660 had sounded the death-knell for educational reform in England, at least for the time being. Consequently, very little was written about Of Education for more than one hundred years after its second and final publication by the poet. Finally, in 1779, Samuel Johnson reviewed Milton's essay, quite unfavorably, in his Lives of the Poets (1: 123-24). Johnson's criticism of Milton's educational scheme was that it was not humanistic enough, but rather emphasized



scientific studies at the expense of the liberal arts (1: 123-24).

Milton was vehemently defended more than a century later, in 1881, by his thorough and prolific biographer, David Masson, who stated that Johnson had been guilty of an "egregious misrepresentation" of the poet's pedagogical ideas (Life of John Milton 3: 251). Indeed, Masson maintained that "Milton included all that Johnson wanted to have included, and more largely and systematically than Johnson would have dared to dream of, and for the same reasons" (3: 252).

Masson also wrote thirty-eight pages exploring the question of how much Samuel Hartlib and John Amos Comenius may have influenced Milton's educational ideas (3: 193-231). Although his conclusions as to this influence were in fact rather modestly balanced with his conclusions as to the humanistic influences on Milton (3: 232-33), the mere fact of his spending so much effort in exploring the modernistic backgrounds of the essay led Ernest Sirluck to attribute to Masson the idea that Milton's pedagogical theories were purely Comenian (CPW 2: 185). This attribution appears to be yet another "egregious misrepresentation."

In the early nineteenth-hundreds, three educational historians, John William Adamson, Foster Watson, and Frank Pierrepont Graves, followed Masson in exploring the modernistic aspects of Milton's pedagogical ideas. Adamson,

in Pioneers of Modern Education in the Seventeenth Century, 1905, points out the new scientific, Baconian slant of Milton's essay, although he also admits a major and obvious difference: for Milton, scientific knowledge is to be gleaned out of books rather than from direct observation and Baconian-scientific experimentation (126).

Joan Simon, in her useful foreword to the 1971 edition of Adamson's book, notes that Foster Watson, in English Grammar Schools to 1660 (1908), went beyond Adamson "in pointing to the significance of Puritan influence" on schools of that era (xv). Finally, Graves, in Great Educators of Three Centuries, discusses Milton's "opposition to . . . formal humanism":

Milton is to be classed among those "innovators" who were endeavoring to introduce a broader humanism in the place of the narrow "Ciceronianism" into which the educational product of the Renaissance had hardened. Instead of the restriction to words and set forms, they advocated a study of the ideas, or "real things," of which the words were the symbols. This emphasis upon the content of the classics, which has usually been known as "humanistic" realism, is especially noticeable in Milton. With it often went the study of social and physical phenomena, in order to throw light upon the meaning of the passages

under consideration. There seems also to have been an attempt to adapt education to actual living in a real world and to prepare young people for the concrete duties of life, and it was usually suggested that the breadth of view necessary for this could be obtained best through travel under the care of a tutor or by residence in a foreign school. This latter tendency, which appears to some extent in Milton's Tractate, may be called "social" realism. However, while one element or the other may seem to be more prominent in a certain treatise, these two phases of education are largely bound up in each other, and both tendencies are evident in most reformers of the times. They seem to be but two sides of the same thing and to constitute together a natural bridge from the humanism of the later Renaissance to the "sense realism" of the seventeenth century.

(2-3)

Graves' position that Milton's Of Education is a "bridge" between humanism and realism appears to be a far better balanced one than Sirluck's contention that it is humanistic almost to the exclusion of any modernistic tendencies (CPW 2: 184-216).

Oliver M. Ainsworth's 1928 doctoral dissertation, Milton on Education: The Tractate Of Education, With

Supplementary Extracts from Other Writings of Milton, begins with a forty-seven-page "Introduction" which stresses the humanistic background of Milton's essay and de-emphasizes its modernistic aspects (1-47). He argues that "in substance, Milton's Tractate generally agrees with the humanistic theory of education that grew up in Western Europe during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, under the impulse of the Revival of Learning" (8). Ainsworth supports his assertion with a summary of Renaissance educational theory and practice from Vittorino da Feltre to Saint Paul's School, and his research is convincing as far as it goes. However, he largely ignores the modernistic innovations which differentiate Milton's essay from the educational theory and practice which preceded it.

Two years later, in 1930, E. M. W. Tillyard, in Milton, appeared to echo Ainsworth's new emphasis on the humanistic aspects of Milton's essay:

The whole tone of On Education is serene and hopeful. It is too, perhaps more than any other prose writing of Milton, a document of the Renaissance. . . . The charms of learning are described in the tones of Sidney, and the ideal of manhood is the many-sided one of the Renaissance.

(152-54)

Although T. W. Baldwin's pivotal William Shakspeare's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke, 1944, does not specifically

cover Milton's education, it is a virtual gold mine of information on English Renaissance educational theory and practice, and therefore it is most useful in understanding the humanistic background of On Education. Certainly it must have given great impetus to subsequent analysts of Milton's essay in persuading them that the dominant influence on it was humanistic rather than modern. It is especially strong in discussing the great influence of Milton's own St. Paul's School and its founders upon subsequent English Renaissance educational practice (1: 75-133).

Four years after the appearance of Baldwin's volumes, Donald Lemen Clark published John Milton at St. Paul's School, 1948, and although it appears to paint too idealized a portrait of St. Paul's, it no doubt also gave much momentum to the idea that Milton's essay was almost entirely a humanistic, rather than a modern, document. Indeed, Clark's conclusion is that the ideal academy which Milton envisioned in Of Education "was in many respects like St. Paul's School. . . . Its goals were the traditional goals of the humanistic grammar school" (250). This sentiment was echoed by Douglas Bush in John Milton, 1964, when he said that "Milton was . . . [in the ideal academy of his essay Of Education] carrying on the spirit and lengthening the curriculum of St. Paul's School" (93).

Harris Francis Fletcher's monumental study, The

Intellectual Development of John Milton, 1956, largely echoes Clark's humanistic emphasis in explaining Milton's essay:

The plan, execution, and outcome of Milton's education were all part of the chain of ideas about the upbringing of youth that began with the Greeks and for Milton terminated in 1644 with his own tractate-letter, Of Education. This letter, concerned with the education of leaders, has been much misunderstood, principally because so much knowledge of the long line of educational ideas that preceded it is required. (73)

Although Fletcher is correct in saying that some knowledge of the history of classical and Renaissance education is essential if one is to understand Milton's educational ideas, to concentrate exclusively on these is to miss much of the point of Of Education.

The tendency to overstress the humanistic background of Milton's essay found its definitive expression in Ernest Sirluck's Introduction to Of Education in the Yale Complete Prose Works of John Milton (2: 184-216). Although I will discuss Sirluck's treatment of Masson in greater detail below, suffice it to say that he gives short shrift to any assertion that there may be any direct traceable influence at all on Milton's educational thought from Comenius and the English Comenians. He also states that the only meaningful

areas for research on the sources of Milton's educational ideas are humanistic (2: 212-16). Sirluck even goes so far as to suggest, apparently without anything approaching sufficient warrant, that Hartlib essentially rejected Milton's "gift" of his essay and forced him to publish it himself if he wanted it to be propagated (2: 206-12). Even Sirluck's fellow editor of Milton's essay in the Yale Complete Prose Works, Donald Dorian, feels that he went much too far in this assertion (2: 357).

With at least two significant exceptions, subsequent treatment of Milton's essay has tended to accept Sirluck's "findings" more or less at face value. An example of this is seen in Malcolm G. Parks's unpublished doctoral dissertation at the University of Toronto in 1963, Milton and Seventeenth-Century Attitudes to Education. Parks simply sums up Sirluck's argument for a significant misunderstanding between Milton and Hartlib, and uncritically calls it "the most plausible and convincing explanation" (173). J. Max Patrick's "Foreword" to Of Education in his 1968 edition of The Prose of John Milton sums up with similar approval Sirluck's contention that Milton and Comenius were fundamentally, rather than superficially, opposed in their educational values and methods:

Up until a few years ago, most critics placed Milton in the Comenian camp, although they pointed

out certain minor differences between his and Comenius' ideas. In 1953 . . . Ernest Sirluck offered an impressive series of arguments showing that these differences are not superficial but fundamental. He admits that both Milton and Comenius taught that the end of education is religious and moral training; that the prevailing curricula were too prolix, difficult, and useless; that foreign languages are mere instruments; and that learning should progress from the sensible to the abstract. But Sirluck demonstrates how common these positions were in the Renaissance and how they are only "insignificant similarities." On the other hand, "the main matters"--Comenius' utilitarian and vocational purposes, his compulsory universal school attendance for both sexes, his use of compilations and no original works other than Scripture, his dislike of literature, and his ideal of pansophy or universal knowledge--comprised "an educational policy to which Milton was fundamentally opposed." (222-23)

I suspect that if Milton's and Comenius's ideas had been as "fundamentally opposed" as Sirluck and Patrick say, communication between Hartlib and Milton on the subject of education would have been totally impossible.

No doubt Sirluck's arguments would be tantalizing and



seductive even today were it not for the fact that they were effectively refuted in the 1970's by Charles Webster and Christopher Hill. Webster, in his 1970 "Introduction" to Samuel Hartlib and the Advancement of Learning, points out that the obvious contradictions between Milton's essay and the ideas of Comenius and the English Comenians are due to the fact that Milton's ideal academy was to educate the ruling class, whereas the others' ideas were concerned with the educations of lesser citizens (42-43). This dichotomy in educational plans was not only tolerated by Hartlib, but it was part of his total plan for furthering English education (Webster 42). Similarly, Christopher Hill, in his Milton and the English Revolution, points out that, far from having a falling out with Milton, Hartlib and the other English Comenians passed around copies of his essay among themselves and spoke approvingly of it in their letters to each other (148-49).

Although Webster and Hill should have succeeded in giving Sirluck's assertions the "quietus" they deserve, this regretfully has not happened. In his article on Of Education in the nine-volume Milton Encyclopedia, 1978-86, Roger H. Sundell states:

Ernest Sirluck argues convincingly (Yale Prose 2: 208-12) that Hartlib, in all probability, found Milton's opinions, as expressed in the tract, less compatible with his own Comenian notions of

universal state-supported, and heavily vocational education than he had anticipated. He failed to publish the tractate and thus Milton very likely arranged himself for its original publication.

Similarly, as late as 1992 William G. Riggs, in "Poetry and Method in Milton's Of Education," largely seconded Sirluck's conclusions. As Riggs put it,

What can be seen of Milton's relationship with Hartlib is peculiar (see Sirluck in CPW 2: 206-12). . . . Milton appears at times concerned to flatter his colleague's endeavors--which in the early 1640s consisted largely of the translation and publication of Comenian works. Yet in the tractate such works (in particular the Janua Linguarum Reserata and the Great Didactic) are slighted as typically modern and irrelevant. . . . Apologies have been made for Milton's behavior here . . . but it seems clear that he was less than enthusiastic about the literature Hartlib had no doubt urged on him. (450)

Although this was written in the fall of 1992, it takes no account of Hill's and Webster's contributions to this question in the 1970's and focuses only on Sirluck's 1959 introduction to Milton's essay.

Why have scholars failed to give due recognition and credence to Webster's and Hill's convincing refutations of

Sirluck's conclusions? I do not have an answer to this question, but I hope that my own efforts will make it obvious that to ignore the more modern aspects of Milton's Of Education is to fail to appreciate what Milton was attempting to do in writing it.

Chapter III: The Humanistic Side of On Education

It would be foolish to deny that there is a very large element of humanism in Milton's essay Of Education, and it is not my intention to do so. Indeed, approximately the first half of this study focuses on Milton's humanism as seen in Of Education, for as Fletcher put it, Milton's essay was

part of the [humanistic] development that can be traced, though not always in detail, from ancient Greece to seventeenth-century England. There were many changes in emphasis but no real breaks in the line between the ancient ideas and what we find in Milton's educational statements after maturity.

(1: 73)

It is interesting to note, however, that Milton himself never claimed to be advocating the re-creation of the best of the Renaissance schools. What he did claim to be attempting to re-create was the best of the ancient Greek schools--those of Pythagoras, Plato, Isocrates, Aristotle, "and such others" (CPW 2: 407). Conspicuously missing from this list are the usual array of Renaissance educators, especially those who contributed to the founding and running of St. Paul's School: Erasmus, John Colet, William Lily, Richard Mulcaster, and the Gills. These are among the Renaissance educators and educational theorists who have most often been named as Milton's great inspirations for his

pedagogical ideas. But in spite of Milton's failure to cite any Renaissance figures as his inspiration for some of his ideas, it is clear, because of the resemblances of his ideal academy with many other Renaissance academies, both theoretical and actual, that the humanistic influence on his own pedagogical ideas was very great indeed.

Douglas Bush states this eloquently when he describes Milton's tractate as

the last of the line of treatises on education written by European humanists since the early fifteenth century. Like his great predecessors, Erasmus, Bude, Vives, and others, Milton was adapting the classical program to the needs of a modern Christian country. The traditional object, "virtue and good letters," meant the education of the ruling class--understood in a broad sense--for the active and intelligent exercise of civic responsibility. (91)

Bush makes clear what must be obvious on reflection--that humanists resemble each other mostly because they all derive their inspiration from the classic civilizations of Greece and Rome. Thus, if one is to understand Milton's pedagogical humanism, one must begin with studying classical Athenian and Roman education, both theoretical and actual.

The Greek Milton cited first as an educational forerunner to him was Pythagoras. As Thomas Davidson tells

us in Aristotle and Ancient Educational Ideals, Pythagoras was born of Achaian stock on the Ionian island of Samos in the first quarter of the sixth century, B.C. (52-59). Due, perhaps, to the tyranny of Polycrates, Pythagoras left Samos to travel extensively to exotic Mediterranean ports and eventually settled in Croton, an Achaian colony in Italy (Davidson 53). No doubt inspired originally by the Ionian pre-Socratic philosophers, and himself a brilliant and dedicated student and teacher, he gathered "disciples" around him in great number and with them founded his "school," so tightly disciplined and controlled as to constitute a "state within a state" (Davidson 53-54). Unfortunately, this "school" became so politically powerful with its neighbors that bitter opposition to it became aroused and it was eventually destroyed militarily (Davidson 54). Although little is known today (as in Milton's day) of what the school actually taught, it was evidently made up of a tightly-knit group of philosophers who made something of a religion out of their scientific, theological, and ethical researches (Davidson 59). Why Milton should have found the little that he knew about Pythagoras' school and teaching so fascinating is a matter of conjecture, but surely he found Pythagoras to be a kindred spirit in his "high seriousness" and discipline applied to the learning process.

As Francesco Cordasco tells us in A Brief History of Education, Athenian education in the Age of Pericles (5th

century B.C.) was private except for the last four years, between the ages of sixteen and twenty, when the state prepared the youths for service to the city, mostly military (5). During the child's earliest years, up to the age of seven, the family provided the education (Cordasco 5). At seven, the Athenian boy attended the "music school," where he studied reading, writing, poetry, music, drama, history, oratory, and the sciences (Cordasco 5-6). After this he attended the palaestra (gymnastic school), before going on to the gymnasium and ephebic (or cadet) preparation for military service to the state (Cordasco 5-6). No doubt the Athenian ephebos emerged from his last four years of education "as it were out of a long war," as Milton so felicitously put it (CPW 2: 412).

As the fifth century B.C. drew to a close, a new class of educators appeared on the scene: the "sophists." These "new wave" pedagogues taught rhetoric and politics to ambitious youths who wished to become rulers of city-states through their ability and training. As Frank Thilly points out in his History of Philosophy, sophists such as Protagoras made extraordinary claims as to what their students would gain through association with them (55-56). For example, in his Protagoras, Plato quotes the sophist as saying that he makes his students better men from the very first day they are associated with him (1: 89-90). He goes on to boast that a student of his will learn what he wants

to learn: "prudence in affairs private as well as public; he will learn to order his own house in the best manner, and he will be able to speak and act for the best in the affairs of the state" (Plato 1: 90). The answer to such would-be "educators" should have been obvious: if you can really deliver on your extravagant promises, why are you teaching others rather than becoming rich and famous in your own right?

Isocrates (436-338 B.C.), an Athenian orator and educator whose "school" was an inspiration for Milton's "ideal academy," claimed, no doubt correctly, not to be a sophist, but, rather, a writer of orations who happened to teach oratorical skills to a couple of youths at a time as a sideline. As J. F. Dobson tells us in Ancient Education and Its Meaning to Us, Isocrates opened his "school" of rhetoric in Athens in 392 B.C. (81). Although he has always been considered one of the very greatest of the Athenian orators, he seldom actually delivered speeches, due to his weak voice (Dobson 81). Because of this, he concentrated on teaching others his oratorical skills and on writing speeches which were really essays in the form of orations (like Milton's Areopagitica, which, of course, he partially inspired) (Dobson 82). Isocrates's two speeches involving education are Against the Sophists, 390 B.C., in which he totally destroys that class of pseudo-educators, and On the Antidosis, where he defends his own educational practices



and ideals (Dobson 82-85). In these speeches Isocrates shows himself to be a precursor and perhaps an inspiration of both Cicero and Quintilian in his insistence on encyclopedic knowledge and moral goodness for an orator to be a success in his profession (Dobson 84-85).

Another acknowledged source for Milton's "ideal academy" is Plato (CPW 2: 407). Very likely Milton read of Plato's educational ideas in The Republic and The Laws. In these works, Plato divides the state's population into three groups: the philosopher/rulers, the guardians (soldiers), and the common people (artisans) (Dobson 60). There are four stages in Plato's scheme of education:

\*Elementary (music, literature, humane culture, and science. All classes and both sexes participate. Fairy tales are to be banned. Ages 10 to 16).

\*Ephebic (physical education. Ages 17 to 20).

\*Higher education in the sciences (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music, etc. Only for the more promising students. Ages 20 to 30).

\*"Post-graduate" education (philosophy/dialectic. Only for a highly select few. Ages 30 to 35).

(Dobson 60-64)

The select few who make it through the entire educational system are expected to then serve the state for fifteen years, after which they may retire to a life of pure

philosophy, unless their "retirement" is interrupted by new state exigencies (Dobson 62-63). Family life was to be almost non-existent, as marriages were to be strictly regulated by the state and no children were to be brought up by their own parents, but were to be raised, male and female alike, in military-style garrisons (Dobson 63-64). Although Milton may have found a few things to admire in such a system, it is somewhat bizarre that he would name Plato as one of the sources for his educational ideas (CPW 2: 407).

Aristotle, Plato's pupil, states in his Politics that education is too important not to be run by the state (2: 543). Unlike Plato, however, he does retain family life and gives greater consideration to individuals (Dobson 79). To Aristotle, the end of education is to facilitate the living of one's life in the best possible way: living "the life of the mind" (Dobson 79). Perhaps Aristotle's greatest contribution to pedagogy is his distinction between liberal and illiberal (mechanical/vocational) education (Dobson 79-80). As he put it, "there is a sort of education in which parents should train their sons, not as being useful or necessary, but because it is liberal or noble. . . . To be always seeking after the useful does not become free and exalted souls" (Aristotle 2: 543). Milton derived from Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics the concept of "proairesis," which enables people to "with some judgment contemplate upon moral good and evil" (Aristotle 2: 351; CPW 2: 396).

After Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.) conquered the known world, Greek culture and schools spread throughout the Hellenistic world, but were centered largely in Athens and Alexandria, Egypt (Cordasco 9). The Greek schools tended to be either rhetorical or philosophical. As the philosophical schools progressed, they added Stoicism and Epicureanism to the formerly dominant Platonism and Aristotelianism (Cordasco 9). The two first universities in history were founded in the Hellenistic period: The University of Athens, which flourished until it was shut down by Justinian in 529 A.D., and the University of Alexandria, which surpassed its Athenian counterpart in the early Christian era and which survived until the conquest of Egypt by the Muslims in 640 A.D. (Cordasco 9-10). After the Roman conquest of Greece in 146 B.C., the Greek system of education was largely appropriated by the Romans (Cordasco 10), and the Greek language even became for Roman education what Latin eventually became in Medieval and Renaissance education in Europe: a "universal language."

The Roman elementary schools were called ludi, from ludus (play or sport) (Cordasco 14). Roman youths attended the ludi between the ages of six or seven and twelve or thirteen (Wheelock 79). Once the boy had learned how to read reasonably well, he was advanced to one of two types of schools of the grammaticus: one teaching Greek and the other Latin (Cordasco 15). These schools included literature

(with science, elementary philosophy, poetry, oratory, history, math, and music) as well as grammar (Cordasco 15). Dancing was not taught, and gymnastics, if taught at all, was military (as in Milton's Of Education) (Cordasco 15).

Finally, at about the age of sixteen came the school of the rhetor, which was a carryover from the Greek Sophists' schools (Cordasco 15). Here, Roman youths became skilled in public speaking so that they could better serve the state as senators, military leaders, or somewhat lesser functionaries (Cordasco 15). Boys entered the school of the rhetor at about fifteen and remained as long as their interests dictated (Cordasco 15-16).

Although Milton's Of Education mentions Cicero (106-43 B.C.) as a rhetorician rather than an educator, it is clear that Cicero's De Oratore (55 B.C.) was one of his great educational inspirations (CPW 2: 402-03). This work, consisting of three dialogues set back in time by several decades and featuring some of the great orators of the Roman past, gives Cicero's opinions as to what an orator needs to learn in order to become great (Dobson 125). As Aubrey Gwynn states in Roman Education from Cicero to Quintilian, De Oratore is "a masterpiece which may not unfairly be called the orator's program of educational reform" (81). Cicero insists that the orator's education be thoroughly grounded in the artes liberales (Gwynn 82-92). He must have encyclopedic knowledge of these "liberal arts," to include

literature, philosophy, history, law, and rhetoric (Gwynn 92-112). The aim of all this study is the "cultured orator" (doctus orator), thoroughly grounded in the "humanities" (humanitas), a word which is used with almost alarming frequency throughout the De Oratore (Gwynn 112-22). Thus, Cicero can with some just claims be said to be the founder, at least etymologically, of Renaissance "humanism."

Cicero was extremely influential upon the greatest of Roman educators and educational theorists, Quintilian (c. A.D. 35-c. 95), born in Calagurris, in Spain, but domiciled in Rome for most of his life. As Luella Cole tells us in her History of Education, he became the first public professor of Latin rhetoric and was the tutor of the emperor Galba's adopted sons, an appointment which brought with it the much-coveted rank of consul (43-44). Late in his life he summed up his oratorical and educational principles in his great classic, Institutio Oratoria, in twelve books. Quintilian's most significant contribution to oratory and education was his insistence that to be a good orator one must first be a morally good man:

The orator whom we are educating is the perfect orator, who can only be a good man: and therefore we demand of him, not merely an excellent power of speech, but all the moral virtues as well. Nor am I prepared to admit (as some have held) that the science of a righteous and honorable life should

be left to the philosophers: for the man who is a true citizen, fit for the administration of private and public business, and capable of guiding cities by his counsels, establishing them by his laws and reforming them by his judgments, is none other than the orator. (Quintilian 24)

This ideal of the ethical orator in the service of the state is prominent in Milton's Of Education (CPW 2: 406).

After Quintilian, the decline of Roman civilization and the ascendancy of Christianity caused education in the Roman Empire to change dramatically in terms of its goals and emphases (Cordasco 18). The classical insistence on education in the liberal arts for the purpose of maximum self development became de-emphasized in the Medieval world. Literacy itself became a monopoly of monks and other clergymen. Although the Medieval era was no doubt not as "dark" as some have maintained, it is difficult to deny that the Renaissance represented a resurgence of classical culture and civilization in the modern world.

In many respects, the earliest true Renaissance academy, that of Vittorino da Feltre (1373-1446), was also the best. Vittorino was born at Feltre, at the bottom of the Italian Alps, not too far from Venice (Woodward, Vittorino 1). At eighteen, he left his home town to attend the University of Padua, second in stature among Italian schools at the time only to the University of Florence

(Woodward, Vittorino 2). Vittorino stayed at the University of Padua for twenty years, until he received his doctorate, supporting himself in the meantime by tutoring his fellow students (Woodward, Vittorino 6). Becoming famous due to his brilliance and teaching ability in math, Latin, and Greek (a language attainment extremely rare in those days), he eventually in 1423 received a call from Gianfrancesco Gonzaga of Mantua to establish a school on the palace grounds for the ducal children and others (Woodward, Vittorino 23-24).

Here at Mantua, Vittorino established "the first great school of the Renaissance" (Woodward, Vittorino 24). A large house with spacious grounds and pleasant prospects had been provided for him, called La Gioiosa, "the pleasure house" (Woodward, Vittorino 31). Vittorino, perhaps somewhat Puritanically, changed the name of it to La Giocosa, "the pleasant house," and got to work (Woodward, Vittorino 32). Physically, Milton's projected academy, with its "spacious house and ground about it," bears an uncanny resemblance to that of Vittorino's academy (CPW 2: 379). In La Giocosa, Vittorino's own life became almost totally involved in the educational lives of his students:

Vittorino definitely held himself the father of his scholars. It was with him no formal claim. His school entirely absorbed him. He watched the youngest with affection and hope, the elders with

pride and confidence. Himself moving always amid the larger things of life, the power that went forth from him insensibly raised the tone of thought and motive in those around him. His singleness of purpose was quickly felt, and a word or even a glance of disapproval was, with the keenly sensitive Italian youth, often sufficient to bring tears of shame and repentance to the eyes of a culprit. Living a common life with his scholars in meals, in games, in excursions, always sharing their interests and pleasures, his control over the sixty or seventy boys under his charge was such that harsh punishments were not needed. Naturally quick-tempered, he had schooled himself to a self-control which never gave way except in face of irreverence or looseness. Corporal punishment was very seldom resorted to, and then only after deliberation, and as the alternative to expulsion. For ill-prepared work the penalty imposed was the compulsory re-learning of the task after school hours. But it was part of Vittorino's purpose to attract rather than to drive, and to respect the dignity and the freedom of his boys. (Woodward, Vittorino 34)

It was just such a schoolmaster that Milton had in mind for his ideal academy when he wrote Of Education:



He who hath the Art, and proper eloquence . . .  
 what with mild and effectual persuasions, and with  
 the intimation of some fear, if need be, but  
 chiefly by his own example, might in a short space  
 gain them [his students] to an incredible  
 diligence and courage: infusing into their young  
 breasts such an ingenuous and noble ardor, as  
 would not fail to make many of them renowned and  
 matchless men. (CPW 2: 385)

Indeed, if Milton had been told during his stay in Italy of  
 Vittorino's academy, he may very well have been remembering  
 it when he described his own ideal academy and schoolmaster.

Woodward further develops his portrait of Vittorino and  
 his academy as follows:

The aim of Vittorino, the aim of the true  
 humanist educator, was to secure the harmonious  
 development of mind, body, and character. As  
 compared with the other great schoolmaster of the  
 time, Guarino da Verona, we may say that whilst  
 Guarino, the better Greek scholar and more  
 laborious reader, bent his efforts rather to  
 turning out clever and eloquent scholars,  
 Vittorino aimed at sending forth young men who  
 should "serve God in church and state," in  
 whatever position they might be called upon to  
 occupy. (Woodward, Vittorino 37)

It is certainly not difficult to see similarities with Milton's ideal academy here, which was to be dedicated to producing effective leaders for the church and state (CPW 2: 377-79)

While Vittorino did not neglect the trivium (grammar, logic, and rhetoric) or the quadrivium (mathematics, geometry, astronomy, and music), his emphasis was on the reading of the Greek and Roman classics in their original languages (Woodward, Vittorino 37-38). The development of the student's memory was not neglected: "Whole orations of Cicero or Demosthenes, books of Livy and Sallust, besides large portions of Virgil and Homer, were recited with accuracy and taste by boys or girls of less than fourteen years of age" (Woodward, Vittorino 40). Milton also reflects this practice of Vittorino in suggesting that his students learn great orations by heart in order to infuse into them the spirit of greatness of the original writers, which if they were not only read; but some of them got by memory, and solemnly pronounc't with right accent, and grace, as might be taught, would endue them even with the spirit, and vigor of Demosthenes or Cicero, Euripides, or Sophocles. (CPW 2: 401)

Also, as in Milton's ideal academy, in La Giocosa, the vernacular was not used in conversation, teaching, or reading (Woodward, Vittorino 42).

Vittorino's academy really took the place of the universities, unless a student needed to do specialized work in a field such as medicine or law:

Whilst the curriculum of Vittorino covered the range of subjects constituting the Arts course as recognized in a University which, like Padua, was influenced by Humanist sympathies, the thoroughness and breadth of classical reading were probably far in advance of the standard usual for the degree of Master or Doctor. Scholars anxious for the University status might indeed proceed from Mantua to Pavia, Bologna, or Ferrara; and this step was indispensable in the case of those who entered upon Theology, Law or Medicine. . . . We must however remember that in the Italian Revival the imprimatur of the University was generally of less importance to a student of Letters, even if he proposed to become a public Teacher, than the distinction of having been the pupil of a noted Humanist, who might be in the service of a Prince, or Municipality, in a city where no Studium existed. Hence it was possible for a school like that of Mantua to obtain a repute and an influence in the world of scholarship, which, so far as Letters were concerned, rendered its pupils largely independent

of the University degree. (Woodward, Vittorino 61-62)

This passage is too similar to a passage in Of Education for it to be coincidental:

This place should be at once both School and University, not needing a remove to any other house of Scholarship, except it be some peculiar College of Law, or Physic, where they mean to be practitioners; but as for those general studies which take up all our time from Lilly to the commencing, as they term it, Master of Art, it should be absolute. (CPW 2: 380)

When one sees two such passages as these, it almost leads one to the conclusion that Milton must have been thinking of La Giocosa when he was writing Of Education. I do not believe, however, that such a conclusion is inevitable, given the strong possibility of pure coincidence here, due to the similarity of humanistic thinking throughout Europe during the Renaissance.

Another area where similarities are easily accounted for is that of physical exercise, especially when it involves preparation for possible wartime exertions and contests. Milton, with one eye on the English Revolution going on around him, allows for broadsword practice and wrestling (CPW 2: 409), whereas many of Vittorino's students were destined to be Condottiere princes:

The important place which games and bodily exercises occupy in Vittorino's scheme of education is readily accounted for. For Vittorino was in one sense a continuator of the Court training which had held its place beside the municipal or ecclesiastical schools of the Middle Age. He was, we remember, preceptor in the first place to the family of a Condottiere prince; and a not inconsiderable proportion of his pupils were, like Frederic of Urbino, called to follow a career of arms. On the other hand Vittorino was a Humanist, and therefore derives part at least of his educational ideal from the example of Greece and Rome. The two influences combined to establish the training of the body as an integral element of a complete discipline. Indeed the highest level of Humanist culture was only attained when the full personality had received a cultivation duly proportioned to the three sides of human nature. So that it is not enough to say that Vittorino attached importance to the outdoor life as a means to brisk intellectual activity. No doubt this was in his mind. He always paid serious attention to the health of the scholars. . . . If we turn to three typical treatises upon education due to the Renaissance, those of

Vergerius, of Castiglione, and of Milton, we see that each lays special stress upon the practice of martial exercises: each of them presents that union of the Courtly with the Humanist ideal. . . . (Woodward, Vittorino 65)

Thus it is clear that if Milton's essay had not been similar to Vittorino's practices in the area of physical development, it would have been surprising indeed.

Another similarity between Vittorino and Milton in educational ideas is the emphasis on religious training for students. Milton insisted on readings (in the original Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Chaldee, and Syrian, naturally) in the Bible, the Church fathers, and Church history every Sunday (CPW 2: 399-400), whereas

Reverence, piety and religious observance formed the dominant note of Vittorino's personal life. The dignity of human life was with him based upon its relation to the Divine. Hence the transparent sincerity of his religious teaching; the insistence upon attendance at the ordinances of the Church; the inculcation of forgiveness and humility. He himself accompanied the boys to Mass; he set the example of regular Confession. Part of the religious instruction he himself took every day. Apart from the light that is thus thrown upon his personality, what is of chief

interest in this aspect of Vittorino is its relation to his Humanism. This was with him no nominal reconciliation between the new and the old. Christianity and Humanism were the two coordinate factors necessary to the development of complete manhood. (Woodward, Vittorino 67)

However, in spite of the obvious similarities, there are some significant differences here: although Milton obviously wants to explore the Biblical and ecclesiastical texts and records, he makes no explicit reference to attendance at any formal church for his projected students, nor was he himself a churchgoer during the greater part of his life. There are, of course, other differences as well. The two most obvious dissimilarities are the heavy emphasis on usefulness and the heavy dose of scientific readings in Milton's essay as compared to Vittorino's school. And these two differences must cause La Giocosa to be classified as a pure Renaissance school, but Milton's projected academy as a transitional one pointing toward more modern educational practices and ideas.

Besides the influence of later Italian academies which he no doubt saw during his Italian tour (Masson 1: 824), Milton's Of Education was surely also somewhat influenced by his own education, which was perhaps the best Renaissance education available to English youths of his time: that of St. Paul's School of London. To get some idea of the pre-

eminence of this school in Renaissance England, one must read about its refounding as a humanistic institution in the early sixteenth century and its subsequent influence on English Renaissance education during the sixteenth and earlier seventeenth centuries. Baldwin in Shakspeare's Small Latine & Lesse Greek (1: 75-133) and Clark in John Milton at St. Paul's School, do an excellent job of communicating St. Paul's pivotal influence on the English grammar schools of the Renaissance.

As J. H. Lupton tells us in his Life of John Colet, D.D., the initial impulse for the refounding of St. Paul's School had come from Dr. Colet (1467?-1519), Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, in about 1509 (162). Colet had been inspired to do this by the Dutch humanist, Desiderius Erasmus (?1466-1536), who visited England and met Colet in 1498 (Lupton 95). Erasmus took an interest in the refounding of St. Paul's School only second to that of Colet and wrote his letter De Ratione Studii to pass on to the school his ideas as to the bases upon which it should be founded (Woodward, Desiderius Erasmus Concerning the Aim and Method of Education 161-78). In this letter Erasmus specified that St. Paul's should be a humanistic institution which would concentrate primarily on Greek and Roman literary classics, somewhat to the neglect of the natural sciences. Indeed he even appeared to ridicule the study of science in his Praise of Folly:



How sweetly they rave when they build themselves innumerable worlds, when they measure the sun, moon, stars, and spheres as though with a tape to an inch, when they explain the cause of thunder, the winds, eclipses, and other inexplicable phenomena, never hesitating, as though they were the private secretaries of creative Nature or had descended from the council of the gods to us, while in the meantime Nature magnificently laughs at them and at their conjectures. (qtd. in Smith 121)

It was not so much that Erasmus was totally uninterested in scientific subjects, but rather that he simply wanted scientific knowledge to be relegated to its normal humanistic position: background knowledge to aid in the understanding of classic works of literature. As Woodward put it in Studies in Education During the Age of the Renaissance,

On the question of the place of natural and mathematical studies in education, Erasmus has the usual limitations of the humanist. He is indeed desirous of a wide range of information upon nature and geography, but the sources he commends are "sound authors"; from them the orator, i.e. "the educated man," will have at his command for public speaking or for conversation "all that

varied mass of material which the curiosity of antiquity has handed down to us. To such belongs, first the natural history of birds, quadrupeds, wild animals, serpents, insects, fishes: this will be chiefly derived from ancient writers, with additions from our own observations. Next we shall prize the accounts of singular adventures handed down to us by trustworthy authorities, such as the story of Arion and the dolphin, of the dragon who rescued his deliverer from danger of the lion, who returned kindness for kindness, and others which Pliny vouches for. There is also, in the third place, a vast body of facts concerning geographical phenomena, some of which are extraordinary, and these are of peculiar value to the scholar; though even the usual occurrences of nature are not to be passed over. These again are partly drawn from antiquity, partly are within our own experience. I refer to rivers, springs, oceans, mountains, precious stones, trees, plants, flowers: concerning all of which comparisons should be derived and stored away in memory for prompt use in description or argument" (Erasmii, Opera i.389). The result of such knowledge of plants or animals, even if gained at first-hand, cannot be called a scientific apprehension of

facts; it is shown chiefly in increased Latin vocabulary and a better understanding of classical allusions to nature. . . . As to arithmetic, music and astronomy, a slight modicum of information suffices. In truth no subject which does not directly appeal to the human side of existence had much interest for Erasmus. (123-24)

Such an attitude toward the study of nature very likely was the cause of the relative neglect of science in English Renaissance academies, a deficiency which Milton attempted to correct in Of Education.

Colet was more than willing to follow Erasmus's lead in emphasizing the reading of "good authors" and even somewhat neglecting grammar at St. Paul's School:

Let [the student] above all busily learn and read good Latin authors of chosen poets and orators . . . desiring no other rules but their examples. For in the beginning, men spoke not Latin because such rules were made, but . . . because men spoke such Latin . . . the rules were made. . . . Wherefore . . . after the parts of speech [are] sufficiently known in your schools, read and expound plainly . . . good authors. . . . For reading of good books . . . more availeth shortly to get the true eloquent speech than all the traditions, rules, and precepts of masters.

(qtd. in Lupton 291-92)

Sirluck suggests that "when this is compared with what Milton wrote (CPW 2: 372-75) the correspondence is seen to be so close as to suggest direct borrowing" (CPW 2: 205). Although this is very likely overstated, the best of the humanists agreed that reading the greatest works ever written is the heart and soul of Renaissance education.

Colet's insistence that "St. Paul's pigeons" (as the students became known) should read the early church fathers as well as the pagan classics must have been met with something less than enthusiasm on the parts of both Erasmus and Milton:

As touching in this school what shall be taught of the Masters and learned of the scholars it passes my wit to devise and determine in particular but . . . I would they were taught in . . . good literature both Latin and Greek, and good authors such as have the very Roman eloquence joined with wisdom specially Christian authors that wrote their wisdom with clean and chaste Latin either in verse or in prose. . . . I will the Children learn first the catechism in English and after the [Latin] accident that I made or some other if any be better to the purpose . . . and then Institutum Christiani homines [sic] which that learned Erasmus made at my request and the book called

Copia of the same Erasmus And then other authors Christian as Lactancius Prudentius and Proba and Sedulius and Juvencus and Baptista Mantuanus and such other as shall be taught convenient and most to purpose unto the true Latin speech all barbary all corruption all Latin adulterate which ignorant blind follies brought into this world and with the same hath stained and poisoned the old Latin speech and the very Roman tongue which in the time of Tully and Sallust and Virgil and Terence was used, which also Saint Jerome and Saint Ambrose and Saint Augustine and many holy doctors learned in their times. I say that filthiness and all such abuse which the later blind world brought in which more rather may be called blotterature than literature I utterly banish and exclude out of this school and charge the Masters that they teach always what is the best and instruct the children in Greek and Reading Latin in Reading unto them such authors that hath with wisdom joined the pure chaste eloquence. (qtd. in Lupton 279-80)

Although it is difficult to know whether Saint Paul's ever actually taught the above-mentioned church fathers, they are certainly conspicuous by their absence in Clark's "Conjectured Curriculum of St. Paul's School, 1618-1625" (Clark 121). Perhaps this absence is due to the fact that

Colet gave the ownership of the school to the Mercer's Company, rather than allowing it to be run by the Church (Clark 36-37).

Although Colet wanted the reading of great authors emphasized at the expense of grammatical studies, it was recognized that at least some grammar had to be learned before this reading could be done. Consequently, the first headmaster of St. Paul's, William Lily (c. 1468-1522), wrote a simplified grammar text for the use of his students. This grammar became the standard grammar text in England for many centuries, and it was cited by Milton in Of Education as still suitable in his day: "First they should begin with the chief and necessary rules of some good Grammar, either that now used, or any better" (CPW 2: 382). Watson objects, however, in his The English Grammar Schools to 1660, that it actually tended to defeat its purpose:

Lily's Grammar . . . tended to perpetuate the Medieval notion that grammar was a study, separated from the reading of authors, in a sense, independent of them. In this respect the authorized Grammar helped to determine the method of teaching Latin. It tended to discourage, if not to render impractical, the method of teaching the Latin grammar concurrently with the reading of authors.

It is around this question in its simplest

form, grammar versus classical authors, that the fiercest disputes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in connection with Lily's Grammar, took place. . . . The later grammarian had come to regard his function in the narrow limitation of the knowledge of a text-book from which rules were to be learned, however meager the child's experience in the reading of authors. (261)

We will see that it is this basic problem which will cause both the degeneration of English classical education in the sixteenth century and Milton's rebellion against emphasis on grammar at the expense of reading great literature.

At any rate, for better or worse (and mostly for the better), St. Paul's School became the universally imitated prototype of the Renaissance academy in England. Malcolm Parks describes the typical English Renaissance grammar schools as follows:

The most striking characteristic of . . . humanistic . . . education was its heavy emphasis on the Trivium (Grammar, Rhetoric, and Logic) and its consequent neglect of the Quadrivium (Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, and Astronomy). That is, it was concerned almost entirely with language and literature; it was a literary education. Beginning with an intensive study of Latin grammar, it led the student, by means of

imitation and emulation of the classical writers, through a strenuous program of translation and composition. (2)

Their work in Lily's grammar was first reinforced by various books of Latin sentences and a vocabulary list (Nomenclatura) (Parks 2-3). Different grammar schools had various numbers of grades (forms)--anywhere from six to eight of them. Generally, the first half of these forms (the lower school) was dedicated to learning Latin grammar and reading Latin authors, whereas the upper school (the top half of the forms) was concerned with reviewing and continuing Latin but also adding Greek (and sometimes even Hebrew) grammar and authors (Parks 3-4). Religious training and Bible reading were also emphasized throughout the curriculum (Parks 4-5). Writing practice in Latin began with the simplest exercises in the lower forms and progressed to complicated orations and declamations in the upper ones, greatly utilizing logic and rhetorical devices (Parks 6-7). Fridays were dedicated to reviews of what students had learned during the first four days of the week (Clark 110-13). The school day began close to dawn and must have continued until nearly dusk, and, at least in theory, very little time was wasted (Clark 110). Unfortunately, the English grammar schools came to emphasize grammar and composition as the decades passed, and Milton was vehemently critical of what the grammar schools had become by the time



he attended St. Paul's School.

Toward the beginning of the sixteenth century in England, humanistic education was so firmly ensconced that it appeared to be almost invulnerable to criticism. Thomas Elyot (c. 1490-1546) was early exposed to humanism through the teaching of Thomas Linacre (1460-1524), "the best Greek scholar in London" (Woodward, Studies 268). Elyot used his training to become a successful public servant, and in 1530, after enjoying the patronage of Wolsey and Thomas Cromwell, he was knighted by King Henry VIII (Woodward, Studies 269). The next year, 1531, he published his manual for humanistic training for public service careers, The Book of the Governor, dedicated to the king (Woodward, Studies 269). In this work, "Elyot interpreted Erasmus for England," but with a strong practical, even somewhat utilitarian, bent (Woodward, Studies 275).

The Book of the Governor insisted that youths be removed from the influence of women and placed under a morally upright tutor at the age of seven (Woodward, Studies 275-76). They were then to commence their studies of Greek, and Latin, and great authors in both:

"I would have him learn Greek and Latin authors both at one time; or else begin with Greek. . . . And if a child do begin therein at seven years of age he may continually learn Greek authors three years, and in the meantime use the Latin tongue as

a familiar language: which in a nobleman's son may well come to pass, having none other persons to serve him or keeping him company but such as can speak Latin elegantly. And what doubt is there that so may he as soon speak good Latin as he may do pure French?" Not being himself a teacher he [Elyot] offers no advice as to choice of a Greek grammar, but "always I would advise him not to detain the child too long in that tedious labors either in Greek or Latin grammar. For a gentle wit is therewith soon fatigued. Grammar being but an introduction to the understanding of authors, if it be made too long or exquisite (i.e. elaborate) to the learner it in a manner mortifies his courage. And by that time he comes to the most sweet and pleasant reading of old authors the sparks of fervent desire of learning is extinct with the burden of grammar." (qtd. in Woodward, Studies 280)

This passage is obviously much like similar statements by Erasmus, Colet, and Milton, all of whom favored minimizing grammatical studies and maximizing readings in the great classical authors of Greece and Rome (Woodward, Desiderius Erasmus 163-64; Lupton 279-80; CPW 2: 382-85, 400-01).

The authors Elyot recommends are extensive and entirely humanistic; among them are Aesop, Homer, Virgil, Lucian,

Aristophanes, Ovid, Cicero, Quintilian, Livy, Xenophon, Caesar, Aristotle, and Plato (Woodward, Studies 281-91). This reading is to be counterbalanced by a rather strenuous program of physical development, to include wrestling, running, swimming, hunting, hawking, equitation "with or without exercises of battle-axe or lance," archery, and dancing (Woodward, Studies 291-93). As the result of all these mental and physical endeavors, Elyot anticipates the return of all the classical virtues to England's noble-hearted national servants (Woodward, Studies 293-94).

Although the Italian Baldassare Castiglione's (1478-1529) Il libro del cortegiano was published in 1528, thus pre-dating Elyot's Book of the Governor by three years and greatly influencing it even in its title, Castiglione's book did not exert its greatest influence in England until it was translated into English and published by Sir Thomas Hoby, in 1561, as The Courtier. After a life of service in various northern Italian courts, Castiglione summed up in his book the humanistic education and attitudes that led to success in his chosen vocation of "courtier." Il cortegiano reports imaginary (perhaps) conversations of nineteen men and four ladies, all of them real persons, in the ducal court of Urbino in 1507 (Wilkins 226-27). The subject of the conversation on the evening of March 8th was "to fashion in words a perfect courtier, setting forth all the conditions and particular qualities requisite for a man deserving of

this name, everyone being allowed to contradict anything thought to be inappropriate" (qtd. in Wilkins 227). In the course of this conversation it is concluded that the courtier should possess

noble birth, intelligence, good looks, "a certain grace," goodness, and integrity. The proper profession of the courtier is that of arms: the perfect courtier must therefore have courage without boastfulness; he must be expert in the use of weapons, in horsemanship, and in all kinds of knightly exercise; though not easily provoked, he should be ready for the duel if his honor is clearly involved; and he should be good at many kinds of manly sport--hunting, swimming, jumping, running, and playing ball. Whatever he does he should do with grace--grace that must be so complete as to seem perfectly natural, even nonchalant, and must be utterly without affectation. . . . The perfect courtier should be graceful even in his choice and use of words, both in speaking and in writing. . . . The perfect courtier, moreover, should have a good knowledge of literature, music, and painting. . . . [He] should be well versed in Latin and in Greek, his knowledge embracing poets, orators, and historians. (qtd. in Wilkins 227-28)

Castiglione then goes on to tell how a courtier should love (platonically) (Wilkins 229-30). Obviously most of this is far too "courtly" for the more realistic Milton, but it was highly significant in the Renaissance revolution in education and must have influenced the poet at least in spirit. It had an overwhelming influence on the education and attitudes of many English poets much looked up to by Milton, including Edmund Spenser.

Another Renaissance educational tractate which may have exerted an influence on Milton's Of Education is Roger Ascham's (c. 1515-1568) The Schoolmaster (1570). After being privately tutored, Ascham went to Cambridge, where he became a professor of Greek at the age of twenty-five (Cole 256). At thirty he gained the favor of Henry VIII--and a royal pension--for writing Toxophilus, a treatise on the militarily important sport of archery (Cole 256). Also as a result of this royal awareness of him, he was named tutor to Princess Elizabeth in 1548 (Cole 256). Ascham's later positions included being the royal secretary of both Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth (Cole 257-58).

Ascham's The Schoolmaster, published posthumously in 1570, ran the gamut of Renaissance educational ideas: "the relation between teacher and pupil, the nature of children, the selection of those who can best become scholars, the teaching of grammar, the development of morals, the value of exercise, and the characteristics of good discipline" (Cole

261). Ascham recommends the development of pleasant relations between master and student, with no resort to corporal punishment (Cole 261). He preferred the "hard-witted" over the "quick-witted" students, as the former tended to have more ability to retain what they learned and had better attitudes (Cole 262). The Schoolmaster enumerates seven desirable traits in a student: a good appearance, a good memory, love of learning, willingness to take pains, desire to learn from others, an urge to ask questions, and love of praise (Cole 263). Ascham recommends that the students relieve themselves of the pressures of study through various physical and musical exercises:

Therefore to ride comely, to run fair at the tilt or ring; to play at all weapons, to shoot fair in bow, or surely in gun; to vault lustily, to run, to leap, to wrestle, to swim, to dance comely, to sing, and play on instruments cunningly; to hawk, to hunt; to play at tennis, and all pastimes generally, which be joined with labor, used in open place, and on the day-light, containing either some fit exercise for war, or some pleasant pastime for peace, be not only comely and decent, but also very necessary for a courtly gentleman to use. (qtd. in Cole 264)

Ascham's emphasis on physical development to complement intellectual aggrandizement comes as no surprise to the

student of Renaissance education.

Similarly, Ascham insists on moral training. Like most moralists, he derives much of his inspiration from observing the immorality and bad breeding around him:

Innocence is gone, bashfulness is vanished . . .  
reverence is neglected, duties be confounded; and  
to be short, disobedience doth overflow the banks  
of good order almost in every place, almost in  
every degree of man.

This last summer I was in a gentleman's  
house, where a young child, somewhat past four  
years old, could in no wise manage his tongue to  
say a little short grace; and yet he could roundly  
rap out so many ugly oaths, and those of the  
newest fashion, as some good man of fourscore year  
old hath never heard named before. And that which  
was most detestable of all, his father and mother  
would laugh at it. I much doubt what comfort  
another day this child shall bring unto them.

(qtd. in Cole 264)

It appears that the more things change, the more they are  
the same!

Perhaps Ascham's most memorable contribution to the art  
of learning languages is his doctrine of double translation.  
To utilize this method, one might translate a passage of  
Cicero into good English and then deposit the translation

somewhere out of sight. Then, after a day or two, one would retrieve it and retranslate it back into Latin. A comparison of this new Latin text with the original one of Cicero's would highlight one's stylistic as well as grammatical shortcomings (Cole 265). Although Ascham was perhaps too much of a Ciceronian stylist for Milton to be entirely comfortable with him, The Schoolmaster was certainly a great contribution to English Renaissance educational theory and must have been at least somewhat influential upon him, through St. Paul's school if not directly.

Richard Mulcaster (c.1530-1611) was not a very influential educational theorist during his own lifetime, due to his rather dull style of writing and the fact that he was ideologically somewhat ahead of his time, but he has since gained more recognition as a practical and sensible writer on education (Cole 265-66). About fifteen years younger than Roger Ascham, Mulcaster attended Eton, studied one year at Cambridge, but took his degree from Oxford in four languages: Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and Arabic (Cole 266). He then went on to the Merchant-Taylors' School in London, where he was the director and taught languages (to Edmund Spenser and others) from dawn to dusk for twenty years (Cole 266). He then became the headmaster of St. Paul's School for twelve years, resigning in 1607, one year before John Milton's birth (Cole 266-67).



Mulcaster wrote two books on education: Positions (1581), dedicated to Queen Elizabeth, and The First Part of the Elementary (1582). In these two works, he suggested three relatively revolutionary ideas: education should be state-sponsored, universal (to include young ladies), and in English (Cole 269-73). Although these ideas appear at first to be far from the positions of Milton (except, perhaps, for the education of women), they are actually not really that remote from those of the poet.

There has been much speculation in recent decades that Milton's own education at St. Paul's School was the major inspiration for his essay Of Education. Although Clark's John Milton at St. Paul's School (1948) is the source of much of this speculation, some of Milton's own writings have apparently fueled it as well. In his Latin poem, "Ad Patrem," for instance, he gratefully acknowledges his father's providing him with the means of learning Latin, Greek, French, Italian, Hebrew, and science (77-89). Also, in his Apology for Smectymnuus, he tells of his good fortune in being sent as a youth to places where he could study orators, historians, and elegiac poets:

I had my time Readers, as others have, who have good learning bestowed upon them, to be sent to those places, where the opinion was it [a good education] might be soonest attained: and as the manner is, was not unstudied in those authors

which are most commended; whereof some were grave Orators and Historians, whose matter me thought I loved indeed . . . others were the smooth Elegiac Poets . . . whom both for the pleasing sound of their numerous writing, which in imitation I found most easy, and most agreeable to nature's part in me, and for their matter which what it is, there be few who know not, I was so allured to read, that no recreation came to me better welcome.

(Works of John Milton 3: 302)

Although it is tempting to interpret the above passages as being in praise of St. Paul's School, several things should be remembered before we do so: Milton never praises St. Paul's or any of his teachers by name in Of Education, tutors were employed for him both before and during his formal education, the poet studied far in excess of any school's requirements, and Milton's essay speaks in a highly forceful way of the abuses of grammar schools perpetuated in the schools of the day, indicating personal experience on Milton's part rather than disinterested observation. As he puts it in Of Education,

Hence appear the many mistakes which have made learning generally so displeasing and so unsuccessful; first we do amiss to spend seven or eight years merely in scraping together so much miserable Latin, and Greek, as might be learnt

otherwise easily and delightfully in one year. And that which casts our proficiency therein so much behind, is our time lost partly in too oft idle vacancies given both to schools and Universities, partly in a preposterous exaction, forcing the empty wits of children to compose Themes, verses, and Orations, which are the acts of ripest judgment and the final work of a head filled by long reading, and observing, with elegant maxims, and copious invention. These are not matters to be wrung from poor striplings, like blood out of the nose, or the plucking of untimely fruit: besides the ill habit which they get out of wretched barbarizing against the Latin and Greek idiom, with their untutored Anglicisms, odious to be read, yet not to be avoided without a well continued and judicious conversing among pure Authors digested, which they scarce taste. (CPW 370-73)

Who can doubt that this emotional presentation of the faults of seventeenth-century Renaissance academies is the result of Milton's own at least partly adverse experiences at St. Paul's School? And yet most critics subsequent to Clark have tended to endorse his conclusion that Milton was thinking quite favorably of St. Paul's School when he wrote Of Education (Clark 250). For instance, Marjorie Nicolson,

in her Reader's Guide to John Milton (1963), makes the following statement:

I suspect that Milton would agree that the important formative years of his education were those at St. Paul's rather than the period he spent at the University. Like Bacon and many another writer of the seventeenth century, Milton was disillusioned at Cambridge. It is interesting to see that in the one work in which he dealt professionally with the subject of education, his tractate On Education, written in 1644, much of the theory and practice he condemns had its counterpart at Cambridge, while the kind of academy he envisions is based in large part on St. Paul's School. (12)

Malcolm Parks, also in 1963, echoed Clark's conclusions, even though he admits that Clark's "conjectures" are only an "assumption":

Of Education expressly criticizes the schools, but nowhere does Milton find fault with his own school, St. Paul's. The obvious assumption (and, until we know more about the St. Paul's of Milton's youth than the conjectures of D. L. Clark can tell us, it can be only an assumption) is that St. Paul's was one of the few grammar-schools which still adhered to the more liberal humanism

of its founders, Erasmus and Colet. That would mean, in effect, that the Terence, Ovid, Caesar, Justin, Sallust, Virgil, Cicero, Martial, Horace, Homer, Euripides, Isocrates, and other authors of D. L. Clark's conjectured curriculum were actually read, and read extensively and for their content, by the boys of St. Paul's; it would also mean that, even when the curricula of grammar schools such as those Milton condemns show no significant departures from that of St. Paul's, in actual practice only bits and pieces of the listed authors were digested, and then mainly to illustrate the all-important grammatical rules. Curricular window-dressing may have covered many sins of omission. Otherwise it is hard to account for Milton's accusation that schoolboys of his time barely tasted "pure Authors." (163)

However, in the light of Milton's own highly emotional rejection of grammar school practices of his day, reflecting his own antipathy to what he experienced at St. Paul's School, it appears that Clark and Parks are "protesting too much" in "conjecturing" and "assuming" that St. Paul's was an exception to the degeneration of the English Renaissance grammar school during the time of Milton's youth.

Graves, in his Student's History of Education, describes this progressive degeneration as follows:

The humanism of the "grammar" schools in England . . . soon became narrow and formal. The purpose of humanistic education came to be not so much a real training in literature as a practical command of Latin as a means of communication in all lands and ages. Accordingly, the training became one of dictionaries, grammars, and phrase-books.

Expressions and selections were culled from authors and treasured in notebooks, and the methods became largely memoriter and passive. The formalism into which the schools of England had thus fallen by the seventeenth century is depicted in Brinsley's Ludus literarius: or the Grammar School, a work intended to ridicule and reform these conditions. It indicates that the training in Latin was devoted to drill in inflecting, parsing, and construing a fixed set of texts. Lily's Grammar was memorized by the pupils, and references to it were glibly repeated, with little understanding of their meaning. All conversation was based upon some phrase-book, like the Colloquies of Corderius, and a Latin theme had to be ground out each week. (119)

Many of these abuses coincide with those Milton criticizes with great emotional vehemence in Of Education, and consequently the conclusion seems difficult to escape that he suffered directly under these abuses at St. Paul's.

One cause of the degeneration of Renaissance education was the Ciceronianism which seemed to be fairly irrepressible as long as humanism governed English education. Bacon blasted it as the "first distemper of learning" in his Advancement of Learning (1605):

Then did Sturmius [Johannes Sturm of Germany] spend such infinite and curious pains upon Cicero the Orator, and Hermogenes the Rhetorician, besides his own books of Periods and Imitation, and the like. Then did Car of Cambridge and Ascham with their lectures and writings almost deify Cicero and Demosthenes, and allure all young men that were studious unto that delicate and polished kind of learning. Then did Erasmus take occasion to make the scoffing echo, "Decem annos consumpsi in legendo Cicerone" [I spent ten years reading Cicero]; and the echo answered in Greek One, Asine [You're an ass]. Then grew the learning of the schoolmen to be utterly despised as barbarous. In sum, the whole inclination and bent of those times was rather towards copy than weight.

Here therefore is the first distemper of learning, when men study words and not matter.

(12)

Although Milton does not follow Bacon in such a specific

denunciation of Ciceronianism, he clearly endorses it in his refusal to allow premature compositions in his projected academy and in his emphasis on the "solid things" rather than on mere linguistic competency (CPW 2: 371-73).

Parks points out yet another source of Renaissance pedagogical degeneration: Ramism, a modification of Aristotelian logic by the French protestant, Pierre de la Ramee (1515-1572), which had rhetorical ramifications as well (32-33). As detailed in Wilbur Samuel Howell's Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500-1700, the effect of Ramian method when applied to education was to emphasize rhetorical devices, as seen in excerpts from the classical authors rather than in their complete texts (138-45). As T. W. Baldwin put it in William Shakspeare's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke,

The sixteenth century had aimed by its simplification and digests to lead its pupils finally to the true classic originals, Cicero and Quintilian. But by the seventeenth century, these preliminary works had been so condensed and systematized that the classic originals were regarded as superfluous. So the seventeenth century took the modern rhetorical compends of Talaeus, Butler, Farnaby, etc., as better pedagogical works than the originals of Cicero and Quintilian. Ramus had won; the classics could be



improved upon both in their reasoning and in their practice. The Renaissance was fading fast. (2: 363)

And if such was the case in the seventeenth-century Renaissance academies in general, why should we "conjecture" and "assume" that St. Paul's was the lone hold-out against this tidal wave?

There is virtually unanimous agreement, however, with the perception that Milton was thinking of his experience at Cambridge when in Of Education he vehemently criticized the universities for their maintenance of the Medieval scholastic abstract studies:

And for the usual method of teaching Arts, I deem it to be an old error of universities not yet well recovered from the Scholastic grossness of barbarous ages, that instead of beginning with Arts most easy, and those be such as are most obvious to the sense, they present their young unmatriculated novices at first coming with the most intellectual abstractions of Logic & metaphysics. (CPW 2: 374-75)

Indeed, Milton was so critical of the universities that he excluded them altogether from his educational scheme for England's leaders and relegated Oxford and Cambridge to being mere trade schools for the study of medicine, law, and other such professions (CPW 2: 380). Milton's Of Education

was not suggesting evolution, but rather total revolution for English pedagogy. In scope, Milton's educational scheme followed Francis Bacon in taking "all knowledge for its province," it did not scruple to obliterate all "Scholastic grossness of barbarous ages" (CPW 2: 374), and its product was to be a "universal man" who was also useful to society.

The students of Milton's projected academy were to be there between the ages of twelve and twenty-one, "less time than is now bestowed in pure trifling at grammar [as at St. Paul's?] and Sophistry [at Oxford and Cambridge]" (CPW 2: 379). Since no education can make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, the students of Milton's academy had to have the potential for filling the highest posts of leadership: "our noble and our gentle youth" (CPW 2: 406). This phrase has often been taken to mean that Milton's plan was meant only to apply to the children of English aristocrats, but there is a problem with this interpretation. Surely, in writing Of Education, Milton was delineating an educational program that he felt would have developed him to the greatest possible extent if he had been able to enjoy its benefits, and he would not have wanted to have young men such as himself excluded from such an education. But John Milton himself was not born an aristocrat, and in the English Revolution he aligned himself solidly with the "roundhead" (short-haired) Parliamentarian, Puritanical faction, and against the "cavalier" royalist faction. Consequently, it

does not seem likely that Milton was here referring to nobility of birth rather than a natural "aristocracy of talent." Also, the students whom Milton actually taught were not necessarily of noble birth, though young noble students were not excluded. In his Commonplace Book, Milton has the following entry under "Nobility":

From the spirit of God it must be derived, not from forefathers or man-made laws, as the high-born Roman martyr in Prudentius is of noble spirit: "Let it not be that the blood of my parents proves me noble, or the law of the Curia," &c; and then, "We first had our being from the mouth of God, our Father; whoever serves Him, he is truly noble." (CPW 1: 471-72)

I suspect that the students of Milton's projected academy would have greatly resembled, in terms of nobility, the students he actually taught in London from 1639 to 1647: all of these students possessed at least a certain degree of "natural nobility," with some belonging to the actual English aristocracy. I suspect also, though, that Milton would have vastly preferred that his ideal students should be closer in talent to himself than to the talents of the students he actually taught.

As to the head teacher in Milton's ideal academy, we have already seen that he had an ideal man in mind similar in many respects to the Italian Renaissance educator,

Vittorino da Feltre. It may very well be, however, that he was thinking more immediately of himself in this role than any other Renaissance figure. He was spoken of with some veneration by his two nephews who studied under him, John and Edward Phillips (Darbishire 24-25; 60-62). From their numerous scholarly publications, it seems that he did inspire them to achieve rather impressive erudition, perhaps with the help of "the intimation of some fear" (CPW 2: 385). John Aubrey informs us in his Minutes of the Life of Mr. John Milton that one of the reasons for Milton's first wife's leaving him was that she "often-times heard his Nephews cry, and beaten" (Darbishire 14). I should mention in passing that Milton's apparent willingness to resort to corporal punishment as a last resort (CPW 2: 385) was by no means shared by many Renaissance educators. Erasmus, for instance, was firmly in favor of "sparing the rod." In De Pueris Instituendis, he stated that "fear is of no real avail in education. . . . Love must be the first influence; followed and completed by a trustful and affectionate respect, which compels obedience far more surely than dread can do" (Woodward, Desiderius Erasmus 203). Erasmus states in De Pueris Instituendis, that the basic motivation for the student had to be the fact that learning in the humanities is so enjoyable:

Brightness, attractiveness, these make the only appeals to a boy in the field of learning. Is not

this why the ancients fabled the Muses to be comely maidens, given to the song and the dance, and companions to the Graces? It was their doctrine also that excellence in true learning was only to be attained by those who find pleasure in its pursuit; and for this cause the liberal arts were by them called "Humanitas." (Woodward, Desiderius Erasmus 214)

The masterpiece of understatement in the entire essay Of Education is Milton's warning about the unique qualifications necessary in the head teacher of his projected academy: "I believe that this is not a bow for every man to shoot in that counts himself a teacher; but will require sinews almost equal to those which Homer gave Ulysses . . ." (CPW 2: 415). Certainly Milton, Erasmus, and Vittorino da Feltre could have handled this assignment, but probably very few others throughout history could have done so. John Colet, in his Statutes of St. Paul's School, is much more realistic in his requirements for a high master for his school: "A man whole in body, honest, and virtuous, and learned in the good and clean Latin literature and also in Greek if such may be gotten . . ." (Lupton 272). Erasmus, however, in his De Pueris Instituendis was much more demanding in "charismatic" requirements for his teacher:

The first requisite in the Master is a gentle and

sympathetic manner, the second a knowledge of wise and attractive methods. Possessing these two important qualifications he will be able to win the pupil to find pleasure in his task. It is a hindrance to a boy's progress, which nothing will ever nullify, when the master succeeds in making his pupil hate learning before he is old enough to like it for its own sake. For a boy is often drawn to a subject first for his master's sake, and afterwards for its own. . . . (Woodward, Desiderius Erasmus 203)

This was the kind of teacher Milton advocated in Of Education: one who knew virtually everything worth knowing and who could inspire his students with a desire to become "renowned and matchless men" (CPW 2: 385).

We have already noted the similarities between Vittorino da Feltre's La Giocosa and Milton's projected school's physical plant: "a spacious house and ground about it fit for an academy and big enough to lodge a hundred and fifty persons, whereof twenty or thereabout may be attendants [teachers and/or tutors]" (CPW 2: 379-80). This is significantly different from St. Paul's School, a day school rather limited in its space. However, Milton may very well have been thinking not only of the obvious advantages of spacious grounds and house, but also of the large religious estates throughout England which Parliament

might have made available for such an educational project (Hill 148). Certainly, though, Milton was imagining the pleasantness of a great deal of room for the students, which would contribute to their "happy nurture" there (CPW 2: 377).

As for their dietary nurture, Milton stays within the Renaissance tradition of bland rather than epicurean foods, served on the premises:

For their diet there cannot be much to say, save only that it would be best in the same house; for much time else would be lost abroad, and many ill habits got; and that it should be plain, healthful, and moderate I suppose is out of controversy. (CPW 2: 414)

Perhaps the insistence on meals served on the premises was to avoid some of the "ill habits" St. Paul's students may have developed through having lunch away from the school in some of the more naughty by-ways of London.

As for the intellectual diet at Milton's projected academy, it had to begin with the lingua franca of the day: Latin. We have already noted that Milton objected strenuously to the "seven or eight years" that were spent in English Renaissance academies "scraping together so much miserable Latin, and Greek, as might be learnt otherwise easily and delightfully in one year" (CPW 2: 370-71). And why were these academies so singularly unsuccessful in their

teaching? Milton gives two reasons: There are too many vacations, and students are required to write various assignments in Latin before they are intellectually ready to do so (CPW 2: 370-72). The solution to these problems is obvious: drastically reduce the number of "too oft idle" vacation days and postpone composition until the day when the students' "well-filled" heads are ready for it-- solutions which Milton is quick to propose, if only by implication, in Of Education. It should be noted in passing that Erasmus himself was one of the original propounders of early composition--almost from the beginning of Latin studies--which Milton objected to so vehemently. Indeed, as Erasmus says in De Ratione Studii,

They are not to be commended who, in their anxiety to increase their store of truths, neglect the necessary art of expressing them. For ideas are only intelligible to us by means of the words which describe them. (Woodward, Desiderius Erasmus 162-63)

It is almost as though Erasmus had been anticipating Milton's objections to early composition when he wrote this passage.

The first step in Milton's language learning program was to learn the bare minimum of grammatical rules one needs in order to read reasonably simple texts. In recommending this approach, Milton was following in the footsteps of



Erasmus, who stated in De Ratione Studii:

I must make my conviction clear that, whilst a knowledge of the rules of accedence and syntax are most necessary to every student, still they should be as few, as simple, and as carefully framed as possible. I have no patience with the stupidity of the average teacher of grammar who wastes precious years in hammering rules into children's heads. For it is not by learning rules that we acquire the power of speaking a language, but by daily intercourse with those accustomed to express themselves with exactness and refinement, and by copious reading of the best authors. Upon this latter point we do well to choose such works as are not only sound models of style but are instructive by reason of their subject matter.

(Woodward, Desiderius Erasmus 163-64)

Milton echoes these sentiments closely in Of Education when he stipulates:

If after some preparatory grounds of speech by their certain forms [paradigms] got into memory, they were led to the praxis thereof in some short book lessoned thoroughly to them, they might forthwith proceed to learn the substance of good things, and arts in due order, which would bring the whole language quickly into their power. (CPW

2: 373-74)

Milton also adds an interesting item in passing; he insists that students be taught the Italianate pronunciation of Latin, rather than the hard Northern pronunciation which prevailed at the time in England:

Their [the students'] speech is to be fashioned to a distinct and clear pronunciation, as near as may be to the Italian, especially in the vowels. For we Englishmen being far northerly, do not open our mouths in the cold air, wide enough to grace a Southern tongue; but are observed by all other nations to speak exceeding close and inward: So that to smatter Latin with an English mouth, is as ill a hearing as law French. (CPW 2: 382-83)

No doubt Milton's "discovery" of the correct pronunciation of Latin was made during his trip to Italy (1638-39).

After getting a thorough grounding in the basics of Latin, achieved in a minimal amount of time, Milton's projected students were to proceed immediately into "some easy and delightful book of Education": Quintilian and Latin versions of Cebes, Plutarch, "and other Socratic discourses" (such as Plato's or Xenophon's dialogues?) (CPW 2: 383-84). After this, reading will continue (along with "lectures" by the teacher) from the least to the most difficult texts in Latin. In other words, Milton proposed to teach languages with a minimum of grammar and a maximum of reading of

worthwhile texts in the languages. In doing so, he was following the dicta of Erasmus in De Ratione Studii:

All knowledge falls into one of two divisions: the knowledge of "truths" and the knowledge of "words": and if the former is first in importance the latter is acquired first in order of time.

(Woodward, Desiderius Erasmus 162-63)

Milton says something similar to this in Of Education:

Seeing every nation affords not experience and tradition enough for all kinds of learning, therefore we are chiefly taught the languages of those people who have at any time been most industrious after wisdom; So that language is but the instrument conveying to us things useful to be known. And though a linguist should pride himself to have all the tongues that Babel cleft the world into, yet, if he have not studied the solid things in them as well as the words and lexicons, he were nothing so much to be esteemed a learned man, as any yeoman or tradesman competently wise in his mother dialect only. (CPW 2: 369-70)

Although this passage has modernistic as well as humanistic implications, it is clear that Milton is here putting the proper Erasman emphasis on content rather than "mere words."

Of course Milton goes far beyond Latin in his language-

learning program for his projected academy; he also includes Greek, Italian, Hebrew, Chaldee, and Syrian (CPW 2: 390; 2: 397; 2: 400). Presumably, the absence of German, Spanish, and French is due to the lack of "wisdom" expressed in these tongues. French is an especially interesting omission, as Milton did study it himself, visited France at some length, and taught French to his own students. Evidently, just before writing Of Education, Milton decided that the amount of "wisdom" in the French language did not adequately justify its study.

Milton wished to fulfill a double purpose in first having his students read Latin originals or translations of "easy and delightful" books of education: besides increasing their knowledge of Latin, they also were to become motivated to study classical literature diligently and thereby become great men:

Next, to make them expert in the most useful parts of grammar, and withal to season them and win them early to the love of virtue and true labor, ere any flattering seducement or vain principle seize them Wandering, some easy and delightful book of education would be read to them, whereof the Greeks have store; as Cebes, Plutarch, and other Socratic discourses. But in Latin we have none of classic authority extant, except the two or three first books of Quintilian, and some select pieces

elsewhere. (CPW 2: 383-84)

Since Edward Phillips only mentioned reading Plutarch's On the Education of Children among these writers and writings, and that evidently not among his first readings, one must assume that Milton's idea of motivational reading at the beginning must have been a fairly late idea of his (Darbishire 60-61). And although no other Renaissance educational theorist recommends beginning his classical reading program with motivational works such as these, all of these texts were read in the academies (Baldwin 1: 348; 1: 535; 1: 92). Thus, Milton's only innovation with them was to put them first in the reading program, where they naturally belong.

Fletcher provides us with much information about the Cebes whom Milton mentions; he was supposedly the Cebes who appears in Plato's Phaedo and Crito, a Theban Pythagorean philosopher, but actually he lived and wrote his Pinax some time in the first century A.D. (Fletcher 110-11). Although the Pinax (Latin: Tabula, or "pictus") develops the Platonic idea of pre-existence, it is predominantly imbued with the Stoicism of the Roman Empire (Fletcher 111). One of its primary ideas is that education consists of the formation of character (Fletcher 111). Its somewhat weak story line involves a man's asking what a great picture which mysteriously appears in the Temple of Saturn is all about (Fletcher 111). Another man answers that it represents the

life of man, and its message is that the most important thing in life is learning, and the purpose of learning is to gain the ability to survive the misfortunes of life (Fletcher 111).

On the Education of Children was written by the Greek philosopher Plutarch (c. A.D. 46-120), of Chaeronea in Boeotia. Enormously influential in Renaissance education, this essay had been translated into English by Thomas Elyot in 1535, but it was the Latin translation that was still standard in Milton's time (Fletcher 112). The essay is concerned with the education of the freeborn (the liberi), and its primary object is to instill "soundness of character" (Plutarch 101). Plutarch's first concern is good parentage: one should be exceedingly careful in choosing a mate with whom one is to have children (Plutarch 103). Education begins at birth, so one should only expose the child to good things, and his character should be developed through "inured habit" (Plutarch 104-05). The selection of his teachers is also of paramount importance: "The teachers we select for our children must live lives immune to scandal, be irreproachable in conduct, and conversant with respectable society" (Plutarch 106). Excessive muscle development is to be shunned; only learning is important: "anyone who prides himself on a robust physique must be informed that his attitude is mistaken. . . . Of all our qualities learning alone is immortal and divine" (Plutarch

108). The goal of education is to produce (Platonic) "philosopher-kings": "as perfect men I regard those who are able to mingle and fuse political capacity with philosophy" (Plutarch 112). Of course, physical exercise is not to be neglected, "for the sake both of graceful bearing and a sturdy body. A sound constitution in boyhood is the foundation for a vigorous old age" (Plutarch 113). Plutarch stipulates that

It is in warlike exercises that boys must be practiced; they must train in javelin throwing, in archery, and in hunting. . . . War does not tolerate a shade-grown physique; a sinewy soldier inured to warlike exercise thrusts aside phalanxes of puffed-out athletes. (113)

Milton also, of course, recommends "warlike exercises" for his projected students (CPW 2: 409). Plutarch asserts that children should be motivated not by corporal punishment, but rather by "admonition and reasoning . . . reproof and commendation must be employed alternately and variously" (113-14). He also recommends that work and leisure be alternated (114), just as Milton insists on periods of "unsweating" with music and relaxation for his students (CPW 2: 409-11). Plutarch's insistence on the importance of memory in education (115) is similar to Milton's suggestion that his projected students learn by heart whole speeches by great orators and passages from plays (CPW 2: 401).

Finally, Plutarch emphasizes the importance of raising children to always tell the truth (117). Although there is a lot more in Plutarch's On the Education of Children than these precepts, one cannot help but note many similarities to the spirit and letter of Milton's Of Education.

These books (as well as Quintilian and "other Socratic discourses") are to be "read to them" rather than be read by them (CPW 2: 384). Along with such readings to them will also go

such lectures and explanations upon every opportunity, as may lead and draw them in willing obedience, inflamed with the study [zeal] of learning, and the admiration of virtue; stirred up with high hopes of living to be brave men, and worthy patriots, dear to God, and famous to all ages. (CPW 2: 384-85)

And of what will these "lectures and explanations" consist? On this point, Erasmus, in De Ratione Studii is very enlightening:

In reading a classic let the Master avoid the practice . . . of taking it as the text for universal and irrelevant commentary. Respect the writer, and let it be your rule to rest content with explaining and illustrating his meaning. . . . You begin by offering an appreciation of the author, and state what is necessary concerning his



life and surroundings, his talent, and the characteristics of his style. You next consider . . . [his genre] as an example of a particular form of literature, and its interest for the student. . . . Now you proceed to treat briefly and clearly the argument . . . taking each situation in due course. Side by side with this you will handle the diction of the writer; noting any conspicuous elegance, or such peculiarities as archaism, novel usage, Graecisms; bringing out anything that is involved or obscure in phrases or sentence-forms; marking, where necessary, derivations and orthography, metaphors and other rhetorical artifices. Parallel passages should next be brought under notice, similarities and contrasts in treatment observed, and direct borrowings traced. . . . The last factor in the lesson consists in the moral applications which it suggests. . . .

It may be wise in some cases to open the reading of a fresh book by arousing interest in its broader significance. (Woodward, Desiderius Erasmus 173-74)

Erasmus then states that a discussion of the Second Eclogue of Virgil would include a lecture on the nature of friendship (Woodward, Desiderius Erasmus 174-75). No doubt

the "lectures and explanations" which Milton mentions were meant to be similar to the ones Erasmus described.

Milton's hoped-for results from all of these motivational endeavors would be

that they [the students] may despise and scorn all their childish, and ill taught qualities, to delight in manly, and liberal exercises . . . [and that they] might in a short space gain . . . an incredible diligence and courage: infusing into their young breasts such an ingenuous and noble ardor, as would not fail to make many of them renowned and matchless men. (CPW 2: 385)

Once Milton's projected students get past the elementary linguistic and motivational stages, their curriculum is scientific, moralistic, and humanistic. The scientific side of this curriculum is, of course, far beyond anything recommended by Erasmus.

The moralistic and religious side of Milton's Of Education is not nearly as important as the humanistic side, and the Bible and other religious and moralistic readings are largely relegated to evenings and Sundays. Milton stipulates that "after evening repast, until bed time their thoughts will be best taken up in the easy grounds of Religion, and the story of Scripture" (CPW 2: 387). He does, however, allow for some classical (not Christian) moralistic reading as part of the "main fare" of his

curriculum:

By this time, years and good general precepts will have furnished them more distinctly with that act of reason which in Ethics is called Proairesis: that they may with some judgment contemplate upon moral good and evil. Then will be required a special reinforcement of constant and sound indoctrinating to set them right and firm, instructing them more amply in the knowledge of virtue and the hatred of vice: while their young and pliant affections are led through all the moral works of Plato, Xenophon, Cicero, Plutarch, Laertius, and those Locrian remnants; but still to be reduced in their nightward studies wherewith they close the day's work, under the determinate sentence of David, or Solomon, or the Evangels and Apostolic scriptures. (CPW 2: 396-97)

Finally, towards the end of his education, the student is to add on the more advanced religious subjects, as well as Semitic languages and Old Testament readings in their original tongues:

Sundays also and every evening may be now understandingly spent in the highest matters of Theology, and Church History ancient and modern: and ere this time the Hebrew tongue at a set hour might have been gained, that the Scriptures may be

now read in their own original; whereto it would be no impossibility to add the Chaldean, and the Syrian dialect. (CPW 2: 399-400)

In thus emphasizing the religious and moral side of education, Milton was well within the bounds of "Christian humanism," as advocated by most Renaissance academies, including St. Paul's School.

The humanistic readings of Milton's projected academy are only to be done after the easier scientific readings have been completed and Greek has been added (CPW 2: 390) to the student's linguistic arsenal. And after adding on the Italian language "at any odd hour," the student would be led into "some choice comedies Greek, Latin, or Italian: Those tragedies also that treat of household matters, as Trachiniae, Alcestis and the like" (CPW 2: 397-98). After this would come "choice Histories, heroic poems, and Attic tragedies of stateliest, and most regal argument, with all the famous Political orations," which, as we have seen before, are to be memorized in part, to include selected speeches of "Demosthenes or Cicero, Euripides, or Sophocles" (CPW 2: 400-01).

As the very last step of the student's education, he is to learn those arts which will enable him to write masterpieces worthy of classical times:

Now lastly will be the time to read with them those organic arts which enable men to discourse

and write perspicuously, elegantly, and according to the fitted style of lofty, mean, or lowly. Logic therefore so much as is useful, is to be referred to this due place with all her well couched heads and Topics, until it be time to open her contracted palm into a graceful and ornate Rhetoric taught out of the rule of Plato, Aristotle, Phalereus, Cicero, Hermogenes, Longinus. To which Poetry would be made subsequent, or indeed rather precedent, as being less subtle and fine, but more simple, sensuous and passionate. I mean not here the prosody of a verse . . . but that sublime art which in Aristotle's poetics, in Horace, and the Italian commentaries of Castelvetro, Tasso, Mazzone, and others, teaches what the laws are of a true Epic poem, what of a Dramatic, what of a Lyric, what decorum is, which is the grand master piece to observe. This would make them soon perceive what despicable creatures our common rhymers and playwrights be, and show them, what Religious, what glorious and magnificent use might be made of Poetry both in divine and human things. From hence and not until now will be the right season of forming them to be able writers and composers in every excellent matter, when they shall be thus

fraught with an universal insight into things.

(CPW 2: 401-06)

It is clear, after reading of this program, that Masson is right in answering Samuel Johnson that the liberal arts side of Milton's curriculum in Of Education is as extensive as any humanistic educational theorist could possibly desire. And what would be the result of this humanistic and rhetorical education? Milton avers that whether the graduates of his academy were

to speak in Parliament or counsel, honor and attention would be waiting on their lips. There would then also appear in Pulpits other visages, other gestures, and stuff otherwise wrought than what we now sit under, oft times to as great a trial of our patience as any other that they preach to us ["the patience of Job?"] (CPW 2: 406)

And if "Lycidas" gives us any indication of how things were in the pulpits of Milton's day, English sermons were in great need of amelioration (113-31).

Milton does not fail to mention the importance of frequent and thorough reviews after demanding that so much studious ground be covered:

In which methodical course it is so supposed they must proceed by the steady pace of learning onward, as at convenient times for memories sake to retire back into the middle ward, and sometimes

into the rear of what they have been taught, until they have confirmed and solidly united the whole body of their perfected knowledge, like the last embattling of a Roman legion. (CPW 2: 406-07)

Such systematic reviewing is, of course, one of the standard practices of Renaissance education, as we see in the practices of Milton's own St. Paul's School, which formed an example to be followed by all English humanistic academies (Clark 109-13).

One almost unique feature of Milton's Of Education, even in the Renaissance, is the incidental teaching of "music appreciation":

The interim of unsweating themselves regularly [after exercise], and convenient rest before meat may both with profit and delight be taken up in recreating and composing their travailed spirits with the solemn and divine harmonies of music heard, or learned; either while the skillful Organist plies his grave and fancied descant, in lofty fugues, or the whole Symphony with artful and unimaginable touches adorn and grace the well studied cords of some choice composer; sometimes the Lute, or soft organ stop waiting on elegant voices either to Religious, martial, or civil ditties; which if wise men & prophets be not extremely out, have a great power over

dispositions and manners, to smooth and make them gentle from rustic harshness and distempered passions. The like also would not be inexpedient after meat to assist and cherish nature in her first concoction, and send their minds back to study in good tune and satisfaction. (CPW 2: 409-11)

As is well known, Milton grew up in a house full of music, and he himself was an accomplished organist. Aubrey tells us that he practiced what he preached (above) by making his nephews, the Phillips brothers, into "songsters" while they were under his tutelage (Darbishire 12). Even though few other Renaissance educational theorists and practitioners advocated music as a formal item of study, it is clear that it is much more "liberal" than "practical" (CPW 2: 409 n. 16).

One final humanistic activity recommended in Of Education is the "grand tour," which was traditionally enjoyed by well-to-do Englishmen (such as John Milton himself) upon the completion of their educations:

If they desire to see other countries at three or four and twenty years of age, not to learn principles, but to enlarge experience, and make wise observation, they will by that time be such as shall deserve the regard and honor of all men where they pass, and the society and friendship of



those in all places who are best and most eminent. And perhaps then other Nations will be glad to visit us for their breeding, or else to imitate us in their own Country. (CPW 2: 414)

Milton himself enjoyed such status as described above when he visited France and Italy in 1638-39. He also indulges himself in a passing criticism of Englishmen who go to France and learn things "better left unlearned": "Nor shall we then need the Monsieurs of Paris to take our hopeful youth into their slight and prodigal custodies and send them over back again transformed into mimics, apes & Kickshoes" (CPW 2: 414).

There is an almost overwhelming body of evidence that there was a tremendous humanistic influence on Milton when he was writing Of Education--perhaps, indeed, so much of it that it is tempting to conclude that Renaissance humanism was the only significant influence on him when he was writing it. However, there was another influence on Milton which was equally powerful: that of the practical tendencies of Puritanism.

#### Chapter IV: Modernistic Aspects of Of Education

Educational modernism was certainly not new with the age of Milton. For instance, one great Renaissance educational theorist whose name has been connected with Milton's (Watson, "A Suggested Source of Milton's Tractate" 607-17) is the Spaniard Juan Luis Vives (1492-1540). A friend of Thomas More and Erasmus, Vives was closely connected with England, having tutored the children of Henry VIII and having lectured at both Oxford and Cambridge (Chandler 446). Vivismo features the use of the inductive method (decades before the birth of Francis Bacon) in philosophy, education, and psychology (Chandler 446). In his scientific work on the soul (De Anima et vita), he concentrated not on what the soul was but what it did and how it did it (Chandler 446). In his In pseudo-dialecticos, he also fought vehemently against scholasticism, in true Miltonic and Baconian fashion (Chandler 446). A man of universal erudition, he added the more practical study of law and of medicine to his humanistic accomplishments, thus reminding one of the curriculum of Milton's Of Education (Chandler 446).

Vives's most important educational work is De Tradendis Disciplinis, 1531. There are many modernistic similarities between this work and Milton's Of Education which are pointed out in Watson's Vives on Education. Two of the more significant similarities are that the best way to learn is

to study what is actually visible (Watson, Vives 168; CPW 2: 368-69) and that language is merely a tool of learning, not an end in itself (Watson, Vives 90, 163; CPW 2: 369).

All political revolutions in the direction of increased liberty have a strong tendency towards setting off corresponding intellectual revolutions, and the Puritan Revolution of 1640-1660 was no exception to this rule. Milton was thrust into the thick of this revolution, and he was a major intellectual player in it almost from its inception. Consequently, it is hardly surprising if we find that his educational ideas are rather revolutionary and anything but reactionary. In spite of these facts, however, the prevailing view today is that Milton's Of Education favored a return to the Erasmian humanism of De Ratione Studii and a largely imaginary educational utopia represented by the St. Paul's School of Milton's youth. This prevailing view is ridiculously one-sided and desperately needs modification if one is to approach anything like an understanding of what Milton was about when he wrote Of Education.

The fact is that the Puritan Revolution set off a virtual explosion of educational reform fervor, and almost all Puritans wanted also to revolutionize the pedagogical system which had helped to create the society they were rebelling against (Webster 22-64). Milton's own feeling of urgency in this matter is obvious in his words to Hartlib in

the beginning of his tractate:

To write now the reforming of Education, though it be one of the greatest and noblest designs, that can be thought on, and for the want whereof this nation perishes, I had not yet at this time been induced, but by your earnest entreaties, and serious conjurements. . . . Brief I shall endeavor to be; for that which I have to say, assuredly this nation hath extreme need should be done sooner than spoken. (CPW 2: 362-64)

It would be difficult to imagine that Milton would be speaking with such urgency if his only suggestion for educational reform were to return to the Erasmian humanism of the beginning of the previous century.

By the middle of 1644, when he wrote Of Education, Milton was a confirmed Puritan, already having written copiously against the Anglican Church hierarchy. Being in sympathy with the Long Parliament, he felt that perhaps he could persuade it to dedicate seized Anglican Church estates and possessions to a new school system, whose purpose would be to educate leaders for the Puritan "new world order" (Hill 148). Partly as the result of Milton's own Puritanism and partly due to this hidden agenda, the tone of Of Education is strongly utilitarian in its emphasis, for Milton well understood the practical bias of most of the legislators of the Long Parliament. Another result is the

essay's iconoclasm--Milton tells the "gentle" youth of the nation that they should accept his plan "unless they rely more upon their ancestors dead, than upon themselves living" (CPW 2: 406). Again, this hardly sounds as though Milton is advocating a return to the fairly immediate English past.

Indeed, as Webster notes, "the drift away from humanistic studies [is] detectable in Milton's Of Education" (56). Robert Ulich, in his History of Educational Thought, describes this "drift" well:

A concept of the aim of education developed which was decidedly different from the humanist attitude of the sixteenth century. It was the idea of usefulness and reality as a criterion of good education. A new educational vocabulary arose; no longer was it pietas et eloquentia, but "usefulness," "reality," "things instead of words." (183)

It is clear from this that Milton's Of Education is not fully modern, but is, rather, transitional: he still speaks of pietas et eloquentia, but he also speaks of usefulness, reality, and "solid things" (CPW 2: 368-69).

The transitional nature of Milton's tractate is further brought out by Richard L. Greaves in The Puritan Revolution and Educational Thought: Background for Reform:

A moderate program of Puritan reform was developed by John Milton. . . . His 1644 tract Of Education

was elicited by and addressed to Samuel Hartlib. In it Milton made a careful attempt to fuse the ideals of classical humanism with the principles of Puritanism without losing sight of the utilitarian ideal. (40)

Thus, Milton is seen as a moderate Puritan--not willing to abandon the classics, but insisting that education be held to strict accountability in utilitarian terms.

It is easy to see that Milton's educational position was not that of extreme Puritanism when we see that educational attitude described in M. M. Knappen's Tudor Puritanism:

The Puritan cannot be said to have had the broad interest in pure learning, as such, which was the glory of the Erasmian humanists. His zeal for the unified control and yet wide diffusion of intellectual endeavor may be cited, however, as a compensating factor which entitles him to a not undistinguished place in intellectual history. . . . For lack of any thoroughgoing educational program of his own, the Puritan paid a kind of lip service to the Erasmian teaching on the subject, but his heart was in Bible study, theological discussion, and practical religious living. Puritanism was definitely a Reformation movement; Renaissance influences on it were slight and

indirect. (466, 478)

It should be obvious from reading this that Milton was even transitional between the humanistic and Puritanical educators. He certainly paid more than "lip service" to humanism, but his heart was also "in Bible study, theological discussion, and practical religious living." Although he was a Renaissance man, he was also a man of the Reformation.

There is a utilitarian bias ascertainable in Milton's Of Education, at least in its early scientific reading program, and since everyone's time is limited, this has to be "at the expense of the humanistic." However, as Watson tells us, there were many others in Milton's time who wanted to "reform" the curriculum much more than he did:

The influence of Puritanism upon education was epoch-making. . . . In one direction, it led to what may be described as Educational Skepticism. It denied the usefulness of classical studies. . . . By the time of Comenius this feeling had so intensified that . . . [he] declined to countenance the reading of classical authors in schools, and required that fresh material should be forthcoming for school books. (English Grammar Schools 535)

Milton was not prepared to "reform" his curriculum in such a drastic manner, nor could he have approved of Comenius's

wanting to do so.

Also, although Milton's educational stance was not an extreme one, there were others in his time and later who wanted to carry education much faster into the modern age. For instance, Irene Parker, in her Dissenting Academies in England, states:

There is no doubt that with the rise of Puritanism the 16th century saw a strengthening and a crystallizing into definite shape of the Reformation ideal of the recognition of the worth of the individual. This resulted in the growth among the people of England not only of a desire to exercise their reason with regard to religious questions or even to obtain a measure of control over the government, but also of a firm conviction of the need for universal education. (23-24)

Clearly, Of Education does not suggest that its system of pedagogy is to be universally available to all the youth of England, but Milton did later (1659-60) advocate something like that, although it did not extend to the education of young ladies.

But Milton was also a man much influenced by Francis Bacon, who preceded him at Cambridge by almost fifty years. As Richard Foster Jones put it in Ancients and Moderns,

The scientific program of Bacon found a natural place in the educational reform which the Puritans



sought to establish. . . . Humanistic studies in general, with the possible exception of history, are to yield in importance to such practical and useful subjects as mathematics, geography, chemistry, and the like. . . . There is evidenced throughout the whole period a spirit . . . which insists upon the practical and useful in education, which emphasizes scientific subjects at the expense of the humanistic. . . . (115)

It is open to debate exactly to how great an extent Milton was influenced by Bacon. In volume one of the Yale Complete Prose Works of John Milton, Kathryn A. McEuen's notes on the Prolusions state that "Milton was an adherent of the Baconian faction at Cambridge" and therefore may be assumed to be familiar with the Novum Organum, even though "no direct reference to the book is found in Milton's writings" (CPW 1: 247). Unfortunately, most of our knowledge of Bacon's influence on Milton is equally conjectural. But although Milton does not mention Bacon in Of Education, the poet's assured and confident tone while verbally destroying his educational enemies is reminiscent of Bacon's tone in his philosophical works. To see an example of this we need only turn to Bacon's Advancement of Learning, 1605, where he states, "I hold it to be an error . . . that scholars in universities come too soon and too unripe to logic and rhetoric, arts fitter for graduates than

children and novices" (31). Who, in reading this, would not note the close similarities between it and Milton's pronouncement upon the same thing:

I deem it to be an old error of universities not yet well recovered from the Scholastic grossness of barbarous ages, that in stead of beginning with Arts most easy, and those be such as are most obvious to the sense, they present their young unmatriculated novices at first coming with the most intellective abstractions of Logic & metaphysics. (CPW 2: 374)

Both the matter and the tone of these two denunciations of scholasticism are largely identical, and this indicates at least a probable influence by Bacon upon Milton's educational ideas. McEuen is very likely right to assume that Bacon's influence on Milton began during the poet's Cambridge years (CPW 1: 247). As Masson tells it,

Bacon, indeed, had died as recently as 1626; and it can hardly be supposed that the influence of his works in England was yet wide or deep. It was already felt, however; more particularly in Cambridge, where he himself had been educated, with which he had been intimately and officially connected during his life, and in the University library of which he had deposited, shortly before his death, a splendidly-bound copy of his

Instauratio Magna, with a glorious dedication in his own hand. (Masson 1: 265)

Milton himself must have only recently arrived to study at Cambridge when this event took place, and it must have caught his attention and interest. And Bacon's verbal destruction of scholasticism must have made an indelible impression on Milton for him to have echoed it in Of Education eighteen years later.

E. L. Marilla in Milton and Modern Man points out that Milton speaks often in his prose works of Bacon, with almost universal whole-hearted approval of his intellectual stature (118). Marilla also brings out the points they were in agreement on: condemnation of scholasticism and pedantry, and the amelioration of "man's estate" (119). However, this "amelioration" meant entirely different things to them. For Milton, this meant "regaining to know God aright" (CPW 2: 367), whereas for Bacon it meant gaining dexterity in coping with the material world (Marilla 123-24). However, as Marilla further points out, Bacon's utilitarianism was not actually opposed to Milton's viewpoint, but it simply did not go far enough for the poet to concur completely with it:

Although he could entertain no respect for Bacon's conception of the ideal life, Milton could nevertheless see in Bacon's relentless industry, notwithstanding its materialistic aim, a contributing force in establishing the conditions

that were of prime importance in an attempt to achieve the highest human accomplishment as defined in his own terms. (124)

That Milton could agree with Bacon at all in terms of "the amelioration" of man's life shows the poet to be at least somewhat modern.

Milton was not alone among the Puritans in partially approving of Bacon's utilitarian and philanthropic conception of the benefits of modern science. As Richard Jones says,

The germ of the idea of progress . . . thoroughly infected the Puritans . . . in the spirit which animates many of their treatises. . . . The duty of promoting Bacon's utilitarian science found sanction in another value which . . . became more potent than ever before, namely, the "public good" or the "welfare of society." (116)

Both Samuel Hartlib and John Amos Comenius were strongly influenced by this philanthropic spirit: the desire to help mankind through their seemingly indefatigable labors.

Adamson in his Pioneers of Modern Education in the Seventeenth Century points out in his third chapter, "Bacon and Comenius," that Comenius was essentially a popularizer of the ideas of Bacon all over Europe (46-49). Both Bacon and Comenius were very much into "method," and each made great claims as to the efficacy of his own method (Adamson

52-53).

Johann Amos Comenius (1592-1670) has no doubt been rightly praised as the first of Europe's great teachers who possessed the new scientific (Baconian) spirit (Cole 328). Born in Moravia, within today's Czechoslovakia, Comenius was descended of a long line of followers of the heretic John Huss who had been burned at the stake centuries before (Cole 330). After graduating in theology from the University of Heidelberg, Comenius returned to Moravia to become a teacher (Cole 331). The Thirty Years' War struck in 1618, and in 1621 his home town became a battleground, causing him to lose everything he owned but the clothes on his back (Cole 331). After seven years of wandering and being under the protection of various noblemen, he finally moved to Lissa, in Poland, where he taught at and administered the local "gymnasium" for thirteen years (Cole 331-32). There he did most of his "pansophic" (encyclopedic) and educational writing, and it was also there that he became a bishop of the Moravian church (Cole 332).

In England, meanwhile, the philanthropic gadfly Samuel Hartlib had become aware of his writings and invited him in 1641 to visit England to put his theories into practice on a nationwide scale (Cole 332). Naively, Comenius thought that Parliament itself had invited him and would be sponsoring his trip, but it, of course, had other more pressing things to do (Cole 332). Subsequently, in 1642, Comenius left

England to go on an almost equally fruitless five-year expedition to Sweden and Northern Germany, writing school textbooks for a wealthy Swedish nobleman (Cole 332). When the Thirty Years' War ended with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, Comenius looked forward to a golden age of peace and prosperity for his Moravian Church, but it was not meant to be, as he and his Moravian Brotherhood were hounded out of every community they tried to settle in (Cole 333-35). Although Comenius was to live for twenty-two years after the Peace of Westphalia, he was never to find relief from religious persecution (Cole 333-35).

Comenius's published educational writings began with his Janua linguarum reserata, 1633, translated and published in England by Samuel Hartlib as The Gates of Tongues Unlocked and Opened. Then, in 1637, Hartlib published Comenius's Conatuum Comenianorum praeludia, which he republished in 1639 as Pansophiae Prodromus, and a third time, in 1642, this time in an English translation, as A Reformation of Schools. The latter was published only a short time after Comenius's departure from England and only two years before the publication of Milton's On Education.

Comenius's most influential work on education was his Great Didactic (Didactica Magna), written about 1632 in the Moravian dialect of the Czech language, and only translated into Latin in 1657 (Graves, Educators 33). Consequently, if Milton was influenced by it, it must have been mostly

through his conversations with Hartlib, who was probably familiar with the main points of it from talking with Comenius during his English visit.

It is clear that the Didactica Magna is at the heart of all of Comenius's educational works (Graves, Educators 32-35). In it, he shows himself to be a Baconian and a "pansophist," or encyclopedist (Graves, Educators 32-35). For Comenius, education has three goals: knowledge, ethics, and piety, and the result of it all should be that man's lower nature should be governed by his higher one (Graves, Educators 36-37). He insists that education should be compulsory for all, female as well as male, and that it should be in four stages: the "school of the mother's lap" (the first six years), the "vernacular school" (ages seven through twelve), the "Latin school" (thirteen through eighteen), and the "academy" (nineteen through twenty-four) (Graves, Educators 37-39). All four of these "schools" are to teach encyclopedic knowledge, only in greater detail as the student progresses through the system (Graves, Educators 41-43). Four languages are to be studied in the "Latin school": the vernacular, Greek, Latin, and Hebrew (Graves, Educators 42). In the last six years ("the university"), many of the students may specialize in a certain field, though even here some will study a broad-based encyclopedic curriculum (Graves, Educators 43). Finally, even beyond the university, some will be chosen to continue their studies in

a "school of schools" (Schola Scholarum), where they may pursue inventions which would be beneficial to mankind (Graves, Educators 40), much in the manner of Bacon's "Solomon's House" in his New Atlantis, 1627.

The method for learning which Comenius insists on, he calls "the method of nature" (Graves, Educators 44). This method involves learning at the proper time (youth) and with the easiest techniques applicable to each subject. Science is to be studied using Baconian observation and induction, whereas for other subjects quite often the deductive method is more appropriate and productive (Graves, Educators 46-47). Languages should be learned through direct visual and tactile association of the objects which the words represent (Graves, Educators 47). With Comenius, we have entered the world of "sense realism" (Graves, Educators 48), with which Milton's essay Of Education has many things in common.

Although Masson does dedicate a full thirty-eight pages to Comenius and Hartlib before getting into the finer points of Milton's Of Education, he never does really state that Milton's essay is a Comenian document; in fact, to the contrary, his claims as to the influence of Comenius and the Comenians on Milton's essay are quite modest. For instance, Masson asks these questions,

Was not Milton pursuing a new method with his pupils, between which and the method of Comenius there were points in common? Might not Comenius



himself, in his retirement at Elbing, be interested in hearing of an eminent English scholar and poet who had views about a Reform of Education akin to his own? (3: 232)

But speaking of "points in common" and an educational reform "akin to his own" is not to imply that Milton's essay was "Comenian." Similarly, Masson speaks of how

Hartlib, trying to indoctrinate Milton with the Comenian views on this subject [education], had found that Milton had already certain most positive views of his own upon it, in some things agreeing with the Comenian, but in others vigorously differing. (3: 232-33)

To make a statement like this is not to "imply" that Milton was an educational disciple of Comenius. Masson shows how Milton's essay differed from Comenius's ideas, stating that Milton's tractate was not concerned with the problem of "national education," as was Comenius's (Masson 3: 237).

Thus, Sirluck is considerably off the mark when he says

Masson's method of studying Milton's tractate is to begin with an extended, if somewhat misleading, account of the views of Comenius, his partner John Dury, and Hartlib, and then to compare, and very occasionally contrast, the tractate with them. It is clearly implied throughout that when allowance is made for certain characteristic peculiarities,

Milton was, without knowing it, a Comenian reformer. (CPW 2: 185)

In the light of Masson's rather modest claims for Comenian influence on Milton's Of Education, it is extreme to attribute such an "implication" to him. Masson had already written much on Milton's Renaissance education at St. Paul's School, so he did not need to belabor that part of the background of Milton's essay. And it should also be remembered that Masson defended Milton's humanism against the "egregious misrepresentation" of his ideas by Samuel Johnson.

Sirluck further states that Foster Watson, in The English Grammar Schools to 1660, "gives a similar impression by bringing Milton into his discussion always, or almost always, in association with Comenius" (CPW 2: 185). However, in Sirluck's five "pertinent" citations of Watson, there is only one where Milton is actually named in connection with Comenius, and that is in their common rejection of the seventeenth-century student's premature exposure to scholastic logic (CPW 2: 186; Watson English Grammar Schools 89-90). Indeed, Sirluck appears to be labeling Milton as an "orthodox Puritan" (if such an entity has ever existed), when he appears to "imply" that Watson was referring to Milton in saying:

It is remarkable how Comenius's method seems to be the general view of the best educationists in

different countries of the first half of the seventeenth century throughout Europe. . . . We may, therefore, by summarizing Comenius's method of morals, accept the general positions there stated as acceptable, educationally, by English . . . Puritanic Protestantism. (Watson English Grammar Schools 117-18)

Watson thus labels Comenius as a representative Puritan educator, and I would not disagree with this. However, I am sure that Watson would not have applied to Milton a similar label. And I would also not concur with Sirluck in saying that Watson was at great pains to call Milton a Comenian reformer. Thus, it appears that Sirluck has raised up two "straw men" in order to knock them down.

In order to attempt to destroy the two "straw men" he has raised, however, Sirluck adopts an indefensibly extreme position:

None of Milton's ideas came from Comenius and his followers; nevertheless, here it is the tractate's general relation to Comenianism which, while negative, must be made clear if we are to understand the contemporary significance of Milton's educational thought. . . . "Made clear"-for the difficulty is by no means that the tractate has not been seen to be related to Comenianism; on the contrary, a relation has been

very widely asserted; but, it seems to me, the wrong relation. (CPW 2: 185)

Although in a footnote Sirluck admits that Milton does owe something, educationally, to Bacon (although "the debt is a limited one"), he illogically still insists that Milton "owes nothing to Comenius," even though he agrees with Richard F. Jones that "Comenianism is for the most part Baconianism in the field of education" (CPW 2: 186).

Sirluck's footnote also states that historians of ideas (as opposed to historians of educational thought) tend to note the Baconian influence on Milton's essay through Comenius (CPW 2: 186).

Sirluck's main argument in defense of his position that there is virtually nothing significant in common between Comenius's and Milton's ideas on education revolves around the notion that their differences are fundamental and directly opposite, rather than only at variance in certain details. Although I would agree that there are more differences between them than simple "variance in certain details" (and so, I am sure, would Masson and Watson), I do not believe that there is any way that they are "poles apart." For one thing, they are to a greater (on Comenius's part) or lesser (on Milton's part) extent Puritans, and since they do have that in common, it is unlikely that they would end up on exact opposite ends of the pole on anything. Also, the influence of Bacon on each of them would dictate

at least some points of agreement in terms of education. A third point of agreement would appear to be their rejection of the late-Renaissance educational system, which seemed to militate against true educational efficiency. Thus, in the light of the many things they have in common, we should perhaps examine Sirluck's assertions about their "fundamental differences" with a certain degree of rigor.

To begin with, Sirluck brings out the Comenian idea of "compulsory universal school attendance" and "state-operated education" (CPW 2: 187). He then goes on to stress the utilitarianism of Comenius and the fact that the "reformer" wanted basically to do away with the reading of great works of literature, replacing them with encyclopedic studies (CPW 2: 189-192). Although these ideas do seem to be diametrically opposed to Milton's suggestions in Of Education, Sirluck has neglected one thing: as Webster tells us in his "Introduction" to Samuel Hartlib and the Advancement of Learning,

There are widely divergent opinions about Milton's relationship with the English followers of Comenius. Masson and Watson detected a general sympathy for the Comenian reforms in Milton's writings, whereas the most recent scholarly introduction to the tractate [Sirluck's] suggests that Milton was "fundamentally opposed" to the Comenian educational policy. This conflict can be

resolved without too much difficulty, if it is remembered that Hartlib aimed to sponsor a series of specialist works dealing with the education of all social classes. Hence, it is not surprising that Milton's elitist academy offers an education different from institutions designed for different social and vocational groups by other members of the Hartlib group. . . . But when the tractate is compared with Dury's "Reformed School," these differences recede in importance. Indeed, Dury is obviously directly influenced by Milton, and both authors are indebted to the Christian humanist educators of the renaissance. It is admitted that Milton developed distinctive ideas not found in other writings of the Hartlib group, but it must be remembered that Hartlib was not concerned to preserve a monolithic Comenian program and was willing to tolerate, even encourage, wide differences of philosophical or educational outlook. Milton's humanistic bias is matched by equally distinctive features in the educational thought of other members of Hartlib's circle. (41-42)

Thus, many dissimilarities between the educational ideas of Milton and those of Comenius and the English Comenians can be accounted for by the simple fact that they were writing

about different areas of education entirely: Milton was writing about the education of the most talented youth of England, whereas the others were writing of the educations of the country's future tradesmen and artisans. It is hardly surprising, then, that the ideas of these various educational theorists show great disparities, especially in terms of emphasis on vocationalism.

Also, if one wants to ascertain what Milton actually thought of the education of the "non-elite," one is forced to look elsewhere. Two sources of his thinking in this regard are his Considerations Touching the Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings Out of the Church, 1659, and The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth, 1660.

Sirluck readily admits that these two essays are radically different in educational ideas from Of Education, but he suggests that this is because Milton essentially changed his mind on the subject between 1644 and 1659:

By 1659-1660 (and it is perhaps not the least striking indication of the change that the grim experiences of the intervening years wrought in his thinking) Milton had, in modified form, adopted two of the characteristic features of the Comenian educational plan. He called for state-supported schools and libraries (not, certainly, to supplant, but to supplement, private institutions) which should be free of charge to

such ministerial students as would undertake to remain in and serve their native locality. These public foundations would combine vocational training with basic education in languages and arts. Here indeed is a change from 1644. (CPW 2: 193)

However, Sirluck's contention that Milton changed his mind about his educational principles between 1644 and 1659 cannot bear close scrutiny, for he republished Of Education, substantially unchanged, in 1673, and this clearly indicates that he had not changed his mind very much at all about education during that time period. Thus, the implication is that in writing the 1659 and 1660 essays he was talking about an entirely different level of the educational system he envisioned and that they do not represent a complete about-face from his original positions at all. This also confirms the conclusions of Webster, above.

Although Milton never actually advocates "compulsory universal education," especially for women, the fact that any youth who declares himself to be a candidate for the ministry and who promises to be a practicing clergyman in England for a certain period of time can receive an education at the expense of the government shows that Milton is really not that far away from Comenius in this regard.

Also, Sirluck's contention that Milton and Comenius differ in utilitarianism is only partially correct. Anyone



reading Of Education with an attentive eye for utilitarian justifications for Milton's ideas must be amazed at just how many such references there are. In contrast with Erasmus, who hardly ever feels the need to justify on a utilitarian basis what he is recommending, Milton is basically doing a selling job to the highly practical members of the Long Parliament, trying to convince them that they should adopt his plan and set up his academies all over England on confiscated Church lands (Hill 148).

Sirluck then states that Comenius was for "eliminating from the curriculum the whole literature of western civilization, considered as a literature" (CPW 2: 190). However, Holy Scripture is to be read in its original Hebrew and Greek, as well as fairly extensive excerpts from some carefully selected (on moral grounds) classical Greek and Latin authors. Sirluck himself quotes Comenius as saying, "profane and heathen authors must be either quite rejected, or used with more choice and caution" (Comenius 94). Although Comenius's scheme is obviously not as liberal as Milton's, neither is it the work of a "Philistine." And although Comenius was emphatic in his insistence on encyclopedic knowledge as the subject of education, Milton's Of Education was equally all-embracing, but approached this through the reading of great books rather than studying encyclopedias. And if there had been truly "pansophic" encyclopedias available to him, would not Milton have

included their knowledge in his curriculum? His rationale for language study indicates this:

Seeing every nation affords not experience and tradition enough for all kinds of learning, therefore we are chiefly taught the languages of those people who have at any time been most industrious after wisdom; So that language is but the instrument conveying to us things useful to be known. (CPW 2: 369)

Indeed, the logical question to ask after reading this is "would Milton even have suggested the learning of foreign and classical languages at all if all 'wisdom' and 'things useful to be known' had already been adequately and eloquently translated into English?" When seen in this light, Milton's essay is obviously much more Comenian than it might first appear.

Sirluck also contends, perhaps for reasons best known to himself, that in his essay Milton has not "the slightest interest in vocational training" (CPW 2: 194). While it is true that Milton here expresses no concern with such vocations as being a cobbler or blacksmith, the essay's blatantly utilitarian intent is to prepare the projected students for the greatest profession of all: that of being leaders of the state. Such leaders are to perform a variety of positions in the nation, many of which, such as medicine or law, will require a further "remove" of study (CPW 2:

380). Indeed, Milton's very definition of a "complete and generous education" is couched in vocational terms: "that which fits a man to perform justly, skillfully, and magnanimously all the offices both private and public of peace and war" (CPW 2: 378-79). Sirluck admits that there may be practical advantages that accrue from such an educational plan, but he belittles these in a vain attempt to prove his point:

Milton certainly emphasizes the material advantages that may be expected to flow from his plan: the reading of the authors of agriculture should ultimately lead to the improvement of the country's tillage, the study of medicine and of military science to the better condition and use of the armed forces; of political science and rhetoric to the improvement of Parliament, bar, and pulpit. But all these applications to external use, however desirable in themselves, are happy by-products of studies whose primary function is not to make good farmers or soldiers or legislators or lawyers or preachers of the students, but to serve as the materials of a liberal education. (CPW 2: 194)

However, Milton himself consistently touts the above practical benefits as the reason why the highly utilitarian members of the Long Parliament should embrace and implement

his scheme, rather than from any "liberal education" benefits from it.

Sirluck also maintains that there is another major difference: that Comenius recommended state-sponsored education, whereas for Milton, "there can be no doubt that the instrument of this public benefit is to be private initiative" (CPW 2: 194). However, since Milton's real intention in writing the essay was to convince the legislators of the Long Parliament that they should use confiscated church buildings, lands, and resources to set up his projected academies, it cannot be a foregone conclusion that these academies would be almost spontaneously spawned throughout the land through "private initiative" (see Dorian's note 62 in CPW 2: 381). Indeed, it appears much more likely that Milton was hoping for a state-sponsored system of education here, such as he later suggests in The Likeliest Means.

Sirluck also says that Milton's Of Education, unlike Comenius's pedagogical works, emphasizes the trivium at the expense of the quadrivium (CPW 2: 194-95); as he points out, in Milton's essay, "the quadrivium is represented, although its weight in the curriculum is inconsiderable" (CPW 2: 194). If this were really true, I doubt that Samuel Johnson would have found much to criticize in it. The fact is (and this is seen in Edward Phillips's description of his own Miltonic education as well as in Milton's essay) that

literally years were spent in "quadrivial" studies in Milton's educational scheme (Darbishire 60-61). And although rhetoric, in the trivium, is given its due place by Milton, logic is limited to "so much as is useful," and grammatical study is minimized, hardly amounting to emphasis (CPW 2: 402).

Sirluck then states that certain obvious "particular similarities" are not "significant" (CPW 2: 196-205). By this, he seems to mean that even where their ideas are identical, if there is another source where Milton might have received those ideas, then they are not "significant similarities." This interpretation, however, ignores two important facts: there is hardly any idea in any field which cannot be traced to more than one source, and, also, if the total impression made by two works is similar, then this similarity itself is significant.

According to Sirluck, some of these supposedly insignificant similarities are:

With respect to the end of education, both emphasized the role of religious and moral training. Both complained that prevailing curricula and modes of instruction made studies unnecessarily prolix and difficult and rendered some disciplines almost inutile. They shared two educational maxims: that foreign languages are of value only as instruments, and that learning

should be a progression from the sensible to the abstract. As consequents of these maxims, both criticized the way languages were generally taught and the position in the usual curriculum of logic, metaphysics, and rhetoric, and they recommended fuller educational use of the natural and applied arts and sciences.

But these are all matters on which rival systems could easily agree. (CPW 2: 196-97)

Sirluck then says, quite rightly, that religious and moral training were traditional in the English grammar schools of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. However, Puritanical religious and moral training was different from what came before in terms of intensity--a quality which is in evidence in Milton's and Comenius's educational schemes to a much greater degree than in the typical Renaissance grammar school.

As to the charge that the schools of the seventeenth century made learning unnecessarily difficult, Sirluck does "not question that Milton was consciously following Bacon's lead" (CPW 2: 198). However, he also adds that Milton could have just as well been following the lead of Erasmus in his De Ratione Studii (CPW 2: 198-200). Although this is true, it is far more likely that both Milton and Comenius were Baconian in their almost total rejection of what they both personally experienced in seventeenth-century education.

As for their rejection of contemporary methods of teaching foreign languages, Milton and Comenius are at one in saying, to begin with, that language study is only worthwhile "in order to get at information not available in the vernacular" (CPW 2: 200-01; 2: 369). Beyond this initial point of agreement, however, Sirluck is no doubt right in saying that their actual methods of learning languages are different. Milton's method is to learn a minimum of grammar and then go right into extensive, even exhaustive, reading in order to finish the learning process; Comenius's method is to associate words with actual objects they represent (Graves, Great Educators 47).

The final "insignificant similarity" between Milton and Comenius is the fact that both believe in beginning education with the most simple items and then progressing from there to the most difficult (CPW 2: 204-05). As Comenius put it,

It is indeed the common voice of all, that we ought according to the order of nature to proceed from those things, which are first, to those that follow, from generals to those which are more special, from things known to those which are more obscure. (14)

Milton echoes this passage when he says,

because our understanding cannot in this body found it self but on sensible things, nor arrive

so clearly to the knowledge of God and things invisible, as by orderly conning over the visible and inferior creature, the same method is necessarily to be followed in all discreet teaching. (CPW 2: 367-69)

The similarity here seems "significant," Sirluck notwithstanding, as do most of the above similarities, for even if precedents other than Comenius can be found for many of Milton's ideas, many of the essential points of their essays are similar, though seldom precisely identical. Thus, it appears that Sirluck "protests too much" when he says,

What Milton and the Comenians have in common, then, does not link them. Sometimes it is an inescapable commonplace; sometimes it is a generalization concealing differences more important than the agreement; even where Milton reflects Bacon's influence it is independently of Comenian mediation. (CPW 2: 205)

How Sirluck can be so sure that Bacon's influence on Milton definitely did not come through Comenius is problematic. If the Miltonic and Comenian educational theories had only two or three points in common, one might be inclined to agree with Sirluck. However, in the light of so many similarities, as seen above, especially with regard to their rather revolutionary educational ideas, it seems foolish to



suppose that Milton's essay is almost totally humanistic and that its similarities with the ideas of Comenius are "insignificant."

But if we are to conclude that Comenius was somewhat influential on Milton's educational ideas, we must first decide how this influence was exerted. In the light of Milton's passing reference to two of Comenius's works in Of Education, it appears likely that Milton had never read any of the Moravian's writings (CPW 2: 364-66). However, it is clear from the beginning of Milton's essay that he had participated in some discussions with Samuel Hartlib on education, and the Prussian immigrant must have used them to explain the ideas of Comenius to him in at least some detail. Many of the most important ideas of The Great Didactic must have been passed along to Milton in this manner. Thus it would be surprising indeed if Milton had not been influenced at least to some degree by Comenius.

One striking instance of this possible influence is seen in The Great Didactic's suggestion that "In spring they [the students] may be taken into the garden or into the country, and may be taught the various species of plants, vying with one another to see who can recognize the greater number" (Comenius 179). The similarity between this and the following Miltonic statement in Of Education suggests that Milton had become acquainted with the idea through his conversations with Hartlib: "In those vernal seasons of the

year, when the air is calm and pleasant, it were an injury and sullenness against nature not to go out, and see her riches, and partake in her rejoicing with heaven and earth" (CPW 2: 412-13).

Samuel Hartlib was the immediate cause of Milton's writing Of Education. As Milton himself put it,

To write now the reforming of Education, though it be one of the greatest and noblest designs, that can be thought on, and for the want whereof this nation perishes, I had not yet at this time been induced, but by your [Hartlib's] earnest entreaties, and serious conjurements. . . . Nor should the laws of any private friendship have prevailed with me to divide thus, or transpose my former thoughts, but that I see those aims, those actions which have won you with me the esteem of a person sent hither by some good providence from a far country to be the occasion and the incitement of great good to this Island. And, as I hear, you have obtained the same repute with men of most approved wisdom, and some of highest authority among us. . . . Neither can I think that so reputed, and so valued as you are, you would to the forfeit of your own discerning ability, impose upon me an unfit and over ponderous argument, but that the satisfaction which you profess to have

received from those incidental discourses which we have wandered into, hath pressed and almost constrained you into a persuasion, that what you require from me in this point, I neither ought, nor can in conscience defer beyond this time both of so much need at once, and so much opportunity to try what God hath determined. I will not resist therefore, what ever it is either of divine, or human obligement that you lay upon me; but will forthwith set down in writing, as you request me, that voluntary Idea, which hath long in silence presented it self to me, of a better Education, in extent and comprehension far more large, and yet of time far shorter, and of attainment far more certain, than hath been yet in practice. (CPW 2: 362-64)

One can detect here even a certain veneration which Milton feels towards Hartlib, especially notable since the poet was not one to bestow obsequious and insincere flattery on any man. Although Milton talks of their conversations on education as "those incidental discourses which we have wandered into," at least they were sufficient to inspire him to set down his thoughts on education. Milton indeed appears to wonder if Hartlib is not a messenger of God in telling him that he should commit these thoughts to writing (CPW 2: 363).

Samuel Hartlib (c.1599-c.1670) had been born in Elbing, Prussia, of Polish and English parentage. He studied at Cambridge in 1625-26, overlapping briefly there with Milton (Turnbull 13-15). In 1628 he immigrated to England, and in 1630 he established in Chichester a school for "gentry," in which, however, he did not actually teach (Turnbull 16-18). The school was a financial failure, and it set the pattern for Hartlib's life: the best philanthropic intentions backed up by too few funds, resulting in at best consistent flirtation with dire financial need. One lasting result of his Chichester experience was a fascination with the educational works of Comenius and a desire to propagate them in England (Turnbull 88-91). By 1643 he had met Milton, and he records this meeting in his diary, Ephemerides: "Mr. Milton in Aldersgate Street has written many good books a great traveler and full of projects and inventions" (qtd. in French 2: 82). In their conversations, Hartlib no doubt championed Comenian educational reform with Milton and was probably pleasantly surprised to find that the poet had some pedagogical ideas of his own, having at least revolutionary change in common with those of the Moravian bishop. Consequently, he urged Milton to write out his ideas on education, a challenge which the poet readily accepted because he had surely wished to do so anyway since establishing his own tutorial "academy" with his nephews as his first students.

Masson was the first to note the seeming contradiction in Milton's paragraph addressing Hartlib at the beginning of On Education:

What must have pleased Hartlib in this was the tone of respectful compliment to himself; what may have pleased him less was the slighting way in which Comenius is passed over. "To search what many modern Januas and Didactics, more than ever I shall read, have projected, my inclination leads me not," says Milton, quoting in brief the titles of the two best-known works of Comenius. It is as if he had said, "I know your enthusiasm for your Pansophic friend; but I have not read his books on Education, and do not mean to do so." This was barely polite. (Masson 3: 235)

The problem with Masson's and many subsequent interpretations of this is their belief that there is a clear indication that Hartlib felt actually insulted by Milton's reference to Comenius's Januas and Didactics. However, as Dorian points out, "It is not necessary to interpret Milton's allusion to Comenius as more or less contemptuous, as practically all editors of the tractate have done" (CPW 2: 366). In fact, these words appear to be an instance of Miltonic humor, a phenomenon perhaps less rare than many people imagine. Milton seems to be mildly chiding Hartlib here for telling him, perhaps a bit too

frequently, that he should read Comenius's works. Thus, Milton is gently hinting to him, in a politely humorous fashion, that he should "cease and desist" from this mildly annoying practice. If this interpretation is true, as I believe it to be, then Hartlib could not have felt at all insulted by this not really slighting reference.

Sirluck, however, having concluded, erroneously in my opinion, that Milton and Comenius had nothing "significant" in common, had to attempt to answer the question, "why should Hartlib, that indefatigable bureau of Comenian propaganda, have solicited Milton's tractate?" (CPW 2: 206). Sirluck's admittedly ingenious attempt to escape from this dilemma involves his contention that Milton's conversations with Hartlib about education were extremely superficial and that therefore Hartlib mistakenly believed on their basis that Milton was essentially in agreement with Comenius (CPW 2: 206), and, on the basis of this mistaken belief, Hartlib solicited Milton's essay (CPW 2: 206). Sirluck further argues that at some time after he had agreed to write his essay, Milton had read, under the urging of Hartlib, the abstract of Comenius's Great Didactic which Hartlib had published in A Reformation of Schools, 1642 (CPW 2: 208). However, Sirluck avers, after Milton read this abstract, he saw the "great gulf" that separated him from Comenianism, and therefore felt the necessity to disassociate himself from Comenius in his essay (CPW 2: 208-09). Sirluck then

contends that Hartlib recognized this disassociation for what it was and refused to publish Milton's essay, causing the poet to have to perform this function himself if he wished his educational ideas to be propagated (CPW 2: 209). Although internal evidence suggests that Masson and Sirluck are probably right in stating that Milton himself published the essay (Masson 3: 233; CPW 2: 209), Sirluck's contention that this was due to a falling out between Milton and Hartlib is not justifiable by the facts. Not all of the educational tracts solicited by Hartlib were published by him, and in this case especially, there may have been the matter of the expense of publication involved. Hartlib was almost always on the brink of bankruptcy, whereas Milton was obviously affluent enough to have afforded an extended European "grand tour," although that had actually been paid for by his father. Thus, Milton may very well have borne the expense of publication and then turned over the folios to Hartlib to dispose of as he wished.

There are, of course, other reasons to reject Sirluck's contention that there was a falling out between Milton and Hartlib which caused Hartlib to refuse to publish the essay. For one thing, if Sirluck's idea were correct, Milton simply could have (and no doubt would have) dropped the initial paragraph addressed to Hartlib or at least changed its flowery compliments to a less flattering mode of address. Indeed, if Hartlib had been as cold to Milton as Sirluck

implies, the poet might very well have decided not to publish the essay at all, thus giving Hartlib a truly ultimate "snub." Another problem with Sirluck's contention is that Hartlib and Milton surely must have been better at communicating ideas with one another than the editor says they were. Indeed, it seems highly likely that there was no need for Hartlib to give any abstract of The Great Didactic to Milton to read, for by the time of his writing of the essay, the poet no doubt already knew the most important aspects of what was in it anyway from having discussed them with Hartlib.

Further evidence of Sirluck's misinterpretation of the circumstances of publication of Milton's essay is to be found in the uses Hartlib subsequently made of it. For instance, Hartlib appears to have sent John Dury (a fellow English Comenian) a copy of Milton's essay almost immediately after publication (French 2: 104-05). Would he have done this if he had really been in essential disagreement with it? Hartlib evidently also sent a copy of Milton's essay in 1644 to John Hall, another member of the English Comenian circle (French 2: 115-16). And if it is documented that Hartlib sent these two copies of it out to his fellow Comenians, might there not also be quite a few more undocumented instances of this? Hartlib also evidently continued to recommend both Milton's essay and his direct teaching for the benefit of his friends' children. An



example of this is seen in the politician Sir Cheney Culpepper's letter (1645) to Hartlib:

I pray (as you shall have opportunity) inform your self of the charge on which a scholar may be with Mr. Milton; that . . . I may satisfy such with whom (until he be more known) that consideration is like to weigh. There are some good sprinklings in his (as I conceive it to be) letter of Education, but (under favor I conceive) there is not descending enough into particulars, but rather a general notion of what experience only can perfect. (Hartlib Papers xiii, qtd. in Webster 43)

Webster also tells us in his "Introduction" to Samuel Hartlib and the Advancement of Learning that "Milton was mentioned occasionally in Hartlib's later correspondence, usually in connection with his political writings, but he was also named as one of the eight members of a tentative "Council for Schools" (Webster 43). And finally there is the fact that Milton saw fit to republish his essay in 1673, substantially unchanged and including the highly complimentary paragraph to Hartlib. Thus it appears that Webster is justified in saying that "there was no basic antagonism between the Hartlib circle and Milton" (Webster 43). Consequently the conclusion seems inevitable that Sirluck's contention that there was a falling out between Milton and Hartlib which caused Milton himself to be forced

to publish his essay is erroneous.

Those who would place Milton firmly in the camp of the "Christian humanist" rather than a relatively modern category make much of his statement that

The end . . . of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true virtue, which being united to the heavenly grace of faith makes up the highest perfection. (CPW 2: 366-67)

Although this may appear to be a Christian humanist statement, it finds an analog in Comenius's statement that "the ultimate end of man is eternal happiness with God" (Comenius 23) and can be reconciled with Bacon's emphasis on the importance of gaining knowledge about the physical world. For Milton, the object of education is to make men as close to the condition of the prelapsarian Adam as possible, and this is to be done by "regaining to know God aright" (CPW 2: 367). However, we are constrained to learn first about the "inferior creature" if we are ever again to approximate a prelapsarian state. And this becomes Milton's justification for concentrating so much in the beginning of his educational scheme on reading classical scientific texts. This scientific emphasis then becomes part of a truly "liberal" education, meant to free the mind totally of

any Baconian "idols" it has gathered about itself as the result of the Fall (Bacon 111-13). And a by-product of this is that the student, freed of all illusions and stocked with encyclopedic knowledge, would be enabled to perform "all the offices both private and public of peace and war" (CPW 2: 379). Thus there is no real contradiction between Milton's statements of the end of and the definition of education. As Milton put it in Christian Doctrine,

The things which the new life brings with it are an understanding of spiritual affairs and charity or holiness of life. Spiritual death led to a weakening and virtual extinction of these things. But in the new spiritual life the intellect is to a very large extent restored to its former state of enlightenment and the will is restored, in Christ, to its former freedom. (CPW 6: 478)

Thus, for Milton, education and redemption are almost one and the same.

There are a great many other aspects of On Education which are "relatively modern," including some already mentioned, such as the argument against scholasticism, the practical (not humanistic) rationale for learning languages, and the progression in the learning process from the most tangible to the most abstract. This latter progression causes Milton to begin his educational process (after Latin

is learned reasonably well and a few educational tracts are read for inspiration) with relatively simple arithmetic and geometry, "even playing, as the old manner was" (CPW 2: 386-87). After beginning with these "quadrivial" subjects, a rather rare practice in the Renaissance, Milton becomes even more revolutionary, recommending "Authors of Agriculture, Cato, Varro, and Columella, for the matter is most easy, and if the language be difficult, so much the better, it is not a difficulty above their years" (CPW 2: 387-89). Although Hartlib no doubt applauded this, being an encourager of agricultural as well as educational reform, this is not humanistic but modern in its practical emphasis.

Milton then proceeds to recommend the study of geography, "first with the old names; and then with the new" (CPW 2: 389). Although Erasmus recommends this in De Raticne studii (Woodward, Erasmus 167), Milton shows his modernism by demanding that this be learned from a "modern author" (CPW 2: 389). Dorian points out the practical need for knowing both the old and new names in order to read the maps of the day (CPW 2: 389). Milton also shows the practical side of his geographical interests when he has his projected students ride out on horseback in the springtime:

I should not therefore be a persuader to them of studying much then, after two or three years that they have well laid their grounds, but to ride out in companies with prudent and staid guides, to all

the quarters of the land: learning and observing  
 all places of strength, all commodities of  
 building and of soil, for towns and tillage,  
 harbors and Ports for trade. (CPW 2: 413)

It is rather dubious that Erasmus would have countenanced such practical activities for "St. Paul's pigeons."

Milton then recommends that his students plunge into "any compendious method of natural Philosophy" (CPW 2: 390). As Parks points out in Milton and Seventeenth-Century Attitudes to Education, "natural philosophy" was interchangeable in Milton's time with the word "physics" and embraced quite a bit more than modern physics:

Physics, unlike metaphysics, was the study of changeable being. In Milton's time it was a mixture of philosophy and natural science: it was philosophical in its inclusion of time, motion, matter, and extension, scientific (in subject, not in method) in its study of all phases of natural phenomena. "Natural philosophy," as it was often called, describes it more adequately, for it was more philosophy than science. . . . To be found under physica were what we now know as astronomy, chemistry, biology, psychology, physics, anatomy, meteorology, geology, and human physiology. (55)

After learning Greek, Milton's students would be ready for "all the Historical Physiology of Aristotle and

Theophrastus" (CPW 2: 390), and

The like access will be to Vitruvius, to Senecas natural questions, to Mela, Celsus, Pliny, or Solinus. And having thus past the principles of Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy, and Geography with a general compact of Physics, they may descend in Mathematics to the instrumental science of Trigonometry, and from thence to Fortification, Architecture, Enginry [military engineering], or navigation. And in natural Philosophy they may proceed leisurely from the History of Meteors, minerals, plants and living creatures as far as Anatomy. (CPW 2: 390-92)

Obviously, these scientific studies are far in excess of what any thorough-going humanist of Milton's time would have advocated. What is even more striking, however, is that the "pure sciences" have "descended" into the more practical engineering studies, a clear indication that Milton has at least one foot in the modern world.

However, with both eyes firmly fixed on the practical side, Milton is to teach his projected students enough medicine to make them amateur medical practitioners:

Then also in course might be read to them out of some not tedious writer the institution of Physic; that they may know the tempers, the humors, the seasons, and how to manage a crudity: which he who

can wisely and timely do, is not only a great Physician to himself, and to his friends, but also may at some time or other, save an Army by this frugal, and expenseless means only; and not let the healthy and stout bodies of young men rot away under him for want of this discipline; which is a great pity, and no less a shame to the commander.

(CPW 2: 392-93)

Although this may have been put into Milton's essay primarily as a selling point to the members of the Long Parliament, no doubt it also demonstrates Milton's own utilitarian bent.

But Milton's practical side is nowhere more in evidence than in his suggestion that local workers and professionals should visit his projected academy and pass on their mundane wisdom to the students:

What hinders, but that they may procure, as oft as shall be needful, the helpful experiences of Hunters, Fowlers, Fishermen, Shepherds, Gardeners, Apothecaries; and in the other sciences, Architects [,] Engineers, Mariners, Anatomists; who doubtless would be ready some for reward, and some to favor such a hopeful Seminary. And this will give them such a real tincture of natural knowledge, as they shall never forget, but daily augment with delight. (CPW 2: 393-94)

With this suggestion, Milton's mild Puritanism is actually verging toward "Yankee ingenuity."

Even the poets whom Milton recommends tend to have a practical rationale for being read: Orpheus, Hesiod, Aratus, Nicander, Oppian, Dionysius, Lucretius, Manilius, and "the rural part of Virgil" are all concerned with scientific or technical topics (CPW 2: 394-96). Only Theocritus among Milton's first list of poets to be read might be perceived as unscientific, but even he might be considered to be a source of valuable practical lore for shepherds.

Milton's recommendation of the study of politics must also be considered practical in the light of his justification of it:

The next remove must be to the study of Politics; to know the beginning, end, and reasons of political societies; that they may not in a dangerous fit of the commonwealth be such poor, shaken, uncertain reeds, of such a tottering conscience, as many of our great counsellors have lately shown themselves, but steadfast pillars of the State. (CPW 2: 398)

No doubt this was also meant to be a selling point to Parliament, but it gives us one more instance as well of Milton's propensity to justify in utilitarian terms every item studied.

Law is also to be perused in some depth by the long-



suffering but presumably by now well-rounded projected students:

After this they are to dive into the grounds of law, and legal justice; delivered first, and with best warrant by Moses; and as far as human prudence can be trusted, in those extolled remains of Grecian Law-givers, Lycurgus, Solon, Zaleucus, Charondas, and thence to all the Roman Edicts and tables with their Justinian; and so down to the Saxon and common laws of England, and the Statutes. (CPW 2: 398-99)

Although law is one of the most "liberal" of all professions, its practicality in Milton's England cannot be denied.

Even the more liberal studies Milton recommends (dramatic poetry, oratory, heroic poetry, literary criticism) are justified by him on practical grounds, as they will produce better Parliamentarians, preachers, and writers in the service of the commonwealth.

Also, the physical exercise and group maneuvers of Milton's projected school are to be almost exclusively directed towards the production of good soldiers--a highly practical goal in a time of revolution. This was also, no doubt, an excellent selling point to Parliament, whose military star was not dominant at the time.

Individual military exercising was to be done for about

an hour and a half before the noon meal, although this time could be expanded if the students were to get up earlier in the morning (CPW 2: 408-09). As Milton describes it,

The exercise which I commend first, is the exact use of their weapon; to guard and to strike safely with edge, or point; this will keep them healthy, nimble, strong, and well in breath, is also the likeliest means to make them grow large, and tall, and to inspire them with a gallant and fearless courage, which being tempered with seasonable lectures and precepts to them of true fortitude, and patience, will turn into a native and heroic valor, and make them hate the cowardice of doing wrong. They must be also practiced in all the locks and grips of wrestling, wherein English men were wont to excel, as need may often be in fight to tug, to grapple, and to close. (CPW 2: 409)

Virtually all of the physical exercise in Milton's projected academy is thus dedicated to creating larger, stronger officers to serve in the Parliamentary army until peace arrives once again in England. But Milton had more than just individual military training in mind. The projected one hundred and thirty students were almost perfect for forming either an infantry foot company or two troops of cavalry (CPW 2: 379-81). Thus their number is suitable for the "war games" which Milton prescribes for them:

Having followed it close under vigilant eyes until about two hours before supper, they are by a sudden alarm or watch word, to be called out to their military motions, under sky or covert, according to the season, as was the Roman wont; first on foot, then as their age permits, on horse back, to all the art of cavalry; That having in sport, but with much exactness, and daily muster, served out the rudiments of their soldiership in all the skill of embattling, marching, camping, fortifying, besieging and battering, with all the helps of ancient and modern stratagems, Tactics and warlike maxims, they may as it were out of a long war come forth renowned and perfect Commanders in the service of their country. (CPW 2: 411-12)

Milton also insists that his "cadets" should go out to the ships of the English Navy and learn "what they can in the practical knowledge of sailing and sea fight" (CPW 2: 413).

Thus, Milton is able to claim that

herein it [his academy] shall exceed them [the Greek educational institutions], and supply a defect as great as that which Plato noted in the common-wealth of Sparta; whereas that city trained up their youth most for war, and these in their Academies and Lyceum, all for the gown, this

institution of breeding which I here delineate, shall be equally good both for Peace and war. (CPW 2: 408)

Although Milton's essay is quite utilitarian in its preparation of his "students" for war, one should always remember that the English Civil War was in full progress at the time and the climactic Battle of Marston Moor was less than a month away.

Finally, Milton's Of Education recognizes the importance of aptitudes, a significant principle of modern education and society:

These ways [expeditions out of the academy] would try all their peculiar gifts of nature, and if there were any secret excellence among them, would fetch it out, and give it fair opportunities to advance it self by, which could not but mightily redound to the good of this nation, and bring into fashion again those old admired virtues and excellencies, with far more advantage now in this purity of Christian knowledge. (CPW 2: 413-14)

Obviously, the search for special aptitudes is the first step towards specialization of both education and vocation, and tends towards utilitarianism rather than humanism.

## Chapter V: Conclusion

After reviewing the evidence, it is apparent that today's prevailing view on Milton's Of Education--that it is a Renaissance educational tractate almost to the exclusion of any modern elements--is totally unjustifiable. Although it obviously has a great many humanistic elements, it also has modern characteristics as well. Indeed, the conclusion seems inescapable that it cannot be classified as either a humanistic or a modern document: rather it must be categorized as a transitional work between the two.

Milton was strongly influenced by his own education at St. Paul's School, but that institution was hardly the ideal Renaissance academy Clark depicted it as being in John Milton at St. Paul's School (250). In spite of the good intentions of John Colet and Desiderius Erasmus in founding it, St. Paul's had deteriorated in its educational practices, along with the other Renaissance academies which had been modeled after it, to the point where Milton was inclined to characterize all of them as "that asinine feast of sowthistles and brambles which is commonly set before them [the students], as all the food and entertainment of their tenderest and most docible age" (CPW 2: 377).

Milton had even worse things to say about English universities, no doubt reflecting his own rather adverse experience at Cambridge, with its entrenched scholasticism. Thus, he paid English universities the ultimate insult in

simply cutting them out of his educational scheme altogether, except perhaps for specialized professional schools such as medicine and law.

Milton was, however, much influenced in his educational ideas by Bacon and the Puritans. From them he learned to emphasize the usefulness to society of his pedagogical ideas, but of course he did not carry this utilitarianism to the logical conclusions the others did. And his love of liberty caused him to recommend the reading of whole classical texts, leaving out only a few, such as Ovid and Catullus, on evidently moral grounds.

Sirluck's conclusions concerning Milton's pedagogical ideas appear almost universally one-sided and incomplete. His contention that Milton was virtually uninfluenced by Comenius is actually irrelevant. Sirluck distorted the positions of both Masson and Watson to make Milton's essay a purely Comenian document, and then he attempted to prove the opposite--and equally untenable--position that Milton and Comenius have absolutely nothing in common. Rather than inquiring about influence, Sirluck should have asked a much more provable question: did Comenius and Milton coincide in their educational ideas due to their mutual Puritanism, their own somewhat unpleasant educational experiences, their living in revolutionary times (both politically and intellectually), or the Baconian influence on both of them? If he had pursued his inquiry in these terms, it seems

likely that he would have seen many "similarities" that were "significant."

There is also, of course, one influence on Milton's Of Education which is all too seldom emphasized: the influence of his common sense and good judgment applied to his own educational experience. This is no doubt the main source for his rejection of Renaissance educational practice both on the pre-college and university levels. Milton was a highly original and strong-minded thinker who would never rely exclusively on any authority for his ideas. For him to accept anything as true, it had to pass through the crucible of his intellect and excellent critical judgment. And it is in this light that one should read and evaluate Of Education.

Two questions that should always be asked toward the end of a study such as this are how good are Milton's educational ideas and can we learn something of value from them which can be applied to today's educational practices? Parker attempts to answer these questions in Milton: A Biography:

As a statement of educational ideals . . . the letter remains one of the most interesting and provocative of his pamphlets. . . .

If we strip the curriculum of its obviously obsolete bibliography and leave open the question of which foreign languages are to be studied

(keeping, however, the ultra-modern method of study and the rationale for choosing the languages), Milton's letter constitutes a continuing challenge to educational philosophy and practice in both his own country and the United States. . . . What is still remarkable about Milton's curriculum is its high degree of integration and progression, its tight texture and firm efficiency. . . . Everything contributes to something else; it builds toward a clearly defined goal, and nothing is irrelevant or peripheral to that goal. . . . Perhaps posterity . . . should take another look at his proposed solution. (258)

Masson's evaluation of the essay is essentially the same as Parker's, but with an added appreciation of its spirit:

That in Milton's scheme which is now obsolete is its determinate intertwining of the whole business of the acquisition of knowledge with the process of reading in other languages than the vernacular. This taken out of the scheme, all the rest lasts, and is as good now, and perhaps as needful, as it was in Milton's time. Above all, the moral glow that pervades the Tractate on Education, the mood of magnanimity in which it was conceived and written, and the faith it inculcates in the powers of the young human spirit, if rightly nurtured and



directed, are merits everlasting. (3: 252)

Masson also suggests, however, that modern scientific textbooks should be substituted for the original classical "scientific" texts which Milton recommends (3: 252).

Among the more modern critics, James Holly Hanford in his Milton Handbook states that Of Education

is the fruit of Milton's thoughtful experience of teaching and represents the program of humanistic education as it was conceived by the man who, of all scholars of his time, perhaps, best understood its meaning. The wisdom and modernity of many of the methods recommended, as, for example, the supplementing of textbook instruction by contact with men of practical experience, and by the observation of actual institutions and activities, has won the admiration of all thinkers on this subject. (94-95)

Lane Cooper in his Two Views of Education contrasts the somewhat undisciplined educational views of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, to some degree at least the patron saint of American education, with the almost infinitely disciplined pedagogical views of John Calvin, as represented by Milton's Of Education (267-93). Somewhat predictably, Cooper assigns the pedagogical palm to Milton, while castigating American education for its bad taste in choosing to emulate Rousseau's educational ideas over those of the poet (267-

93). As Douglas Bush put it in John Milton: A Sketch of His Life and Writings, "Renaissance humanists did not believe in adjustment to life through the prolonging of infancy" (93). Perhaps Lane Cooper's appreciation of Milton's essay and his suggestion that we still have much to learn from it is as close to a last word on it as we are ever likely to see.

This study began with a definition of "liberal" education as that for those destined for freedom, contrasted with "modern" vocational education. We then saw that Milton's Of Education was neither totally liberal nor completely modern, but was something of a link between the two, due to the poet's somewhat moderate but still very essential Puritanism. J. F. Dobson's conclusion of his Ancient Education and Its Meaning to Us might well be labeled the ultimate statement on "liberal" and "vocational" education:

Education should be as broad as possible, and should not be condemned because it does not seem, prima facie, to equip the youth for any specialized business or vocation. In the long run, those who have received a liberal education will in most cases outstrip those who lack it. We are coming round again to the Greek view that the best preparation for citizenship lies not in any specialized training, but in an all-round development of the mental faculties. (189-90)

In spite of his relative modernism, Milton would surely have approved of this statement. However, as a supreme advocate of liberty, he might have wished to append to it these words from the Bible: "You will know the truth and the truth will make you free" (John 8.31).

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