

## Enflam'd with the Study of Learning: Of Milton's Education<sup>1</sup>

In Chapter 46 of his Leviathan (1651), Thomas Hobbes offers a damning indictment of the status and practices of the English universities in the mid-seventeenth century, deploring what he claims to be an institutionalised taint of popishness and an excessive reliance on the works and methods of Aristotle. Following his formal definition of a university as 'a joyning together and an Incorporation under one Government of many Publique Schools, in one and the same Town or City,' – and with a notorious sneer – Hobbes dismisses the study of philosophy as but 'handmaid to the Roman religion: And since the authority of *Aristotle* is onely currant there, that study is not properly Philosophy, (the nature whereof dependeth not on Authors,) but Aristotelity'.<sup>2</sup> Hobbes' criticisms of the universities are many, but are marked by a distrust of the curricula, stuck as he claims, in a dangerous scholastic rut, with scholars and students alike 'shut vp in the Cells of a few Authors (chiefely *Aristotle*, their Dictator)', as Bacon had described in 1605.<sup>3</sup> Hobbes was not alone in this view; hostility to the universities in the seventeenth century was widespread and came from all quarters.<sup>4</sup> In 1654, in his Academiarum examen, the former Cambridge scholar and member of the parliamentary army, John Webster launched an excoriating attack on the universities, railing against the sloth of the undergraduates, the privileging of Latin over the vernacular and the servile reliance upon Aristotle and his interpreters, and upon the classics more generally. For Webster, the scholastic philosophy enshrined in the curricula of the universities was matched by teaching and learning exercises which were little more than 'mere notions, and quarrellsome disputations, accousteming themselves to no better helps for the searching into nature's abtruse secrets than the *Chymeras* of their own brains, and converse with a few paper Idols'.<sup>5</sup> John Hall's An humble motion to the Parliament of England concerning the advancement of learning, and reformation of the universities (1649) similarly casts students

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank the anonymous readers and the editor for their very helpful advice and suggestions. I am also very grateful to Robyn Adams for her comments on successive drafts of this article.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Hobbes, Leviathan, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 462. Hobbes' criticism of the universities can be traced throughout his writings and even sharpens after the Restoration as he becomes convinced of their role in fermenting discontent against Charles I. See R. W. Serjeantson, 'Hobbes and the Universities' in Conal Condren, Stephen Graukroger, Ian Hunter (eds), The Philosopher in Early Modern Europe: the Nature of a Contested Identity (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 113-39 (134-5).

<sup>3</sup> Francis Bacon, The Advancement of Learning (1605), ed. Michael Kiernan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 24.

<sup>4</sup> In the mid-seventeenth century, and in particular after the abolition of the monarchy in 1649, opposition to the universities gathered momentum as radical puritans called for root and branch reform of the universities as training grounds for godly clergy; Oxford and Cambridge were attacked as elitist and for failing to provide an education with practical applications. See Allen G. Debus, Science and Education in the Seventeenth Century: the Webster-Ward Debate (London: Elsevier, 1970).

<sup>5</sup> John Webster, Academiarum examen (London, 1654), 92. Early English Books Online: [http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.882003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:image:51321:55](http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.882003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:51321:55).

at the universities as out of their depth, entangled in the scholarly abstractions and exhaustive subtleties of Aristotelian scholasticism; 'racked and tortured with sort of harsh abstracted logical notions, which their wits are no more able to endure, then their bodies the Strapado...'.<sup>6</sup> In Of Education (1644), John Milton makes his case for educational reform in response to what he claims to be the failings of the 'Universities not yet well recover'd from the Scholastick grosnesse of barbarous ages'.<sup>7</sup>

These criticisms of the universities as having come through the seventeenth century with their curricula virtually unchanged since foundation – that they laboured under the yoke of Aristotle, unaffected by powerful developments in learning and in society – were pervasive and persuasively argued by a diverse set of writers and educational reformers. Indeed such criticisms of university education have left a lasting legacy for how the curricula of the universities have been, and continue to be, viewed by historians and critics. However, as Mark Curtis, Nicholas Tyacke and especially Mordechai Feingold have argued, such perceptions are 'impressionistic, often prejudiced,' and take at face value the polemical interventions of reformers, autobiographical vignettes and recollections, and the university statutes: all of which are potentially unreliable in a variety of ways.<sup>8</sup> This essay seeks to further expose the problems and dangers identified by Feingold, Tyacke, Curtis and others in approaching evidence for the curricula and pedagogical practices at the universities, through a particular case-study. Focusing on John Milton – Cambridge student, teacher, educational reformer and polemicist – and his own accounts of his educational experiences and criticisms of university curricula, alongside evidence from the university statutes and from less 'official' sources from archives within the colleges (and his own college in particular), this essay will explore the discrepancies between the kinds of evidence of the curricula on offer and illuminate some of the contradictions in Milton's educational proposals.

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<sup>6</sup> John Hall, An humble motion to the Parliament of England concerning the advancement of learning, and reformation of the universities (London, 1649), 26. Early English Books Online: [http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx\\_ver=Z39.882003&res\\_id=xri:eebo&rft\\_id=xri:eebo:image:50533:15](http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.882003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:50533:15)

<sup>7</sup> John Milton, Of Education (1644) in The Complete Prose Works, ed. Don M. Wolfe *et al*, 8 vols (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1953-82), vol. 2, 374.

<sup>8</sup> Mordechai Feingold, 'The Humanities' in Nicholas Tyacke (ed.), The History of the University of Oxford: Volume IV: The Seventeenth Century (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 211-358 (210). See also Feingold, 'The Mathematical Sciences and New Philosophies', 359-61; Feingold, 'Aristotle and the English universities in the seventeenth century' in Helga Robinson-Hammerstein (ed.), European Universities in the Age of Reformation and Counter Reformation (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998), 135-48; Nicholas Tyacke, 'Science and Religion before the Civil War' in Donald H. Pennington and Keith Thomas (eds), Puritans and Revolutionaries: Essays in Seventeenth Century History Presented to Christopher Hill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 73-93; Mark Curtis, Oxford and Cambridge in Transition, 1558-1642: An essay on changing relations between the English universities and English Society (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959). Although many of these studies relate to Oxford, in matters of curriculum and teaching methods there was no significant difference between the universities, as exemplified by Feingold's use of Cambridge material to augment his account of Oxford.

Throughout his prose works, and like many of his contemporaries, as we have seen, Milton subjects the curricula and teaching practices of the English universities to sustained and often vitriolic criticism. In particular he abhors what he sees as an excessive reliance upon the works and teachings of Aristotle and overtly scholastic pedagogical methods such as the lecture and the disputation. In his Latin Prolusion III, 'An attack on the scholastic philosophy' – an exercise completed as part of his university studies and later printed in 1674 – Milton launches a scathing attack upon

petty disputations of sour old men, which reek, if not of the cave of Trophonius, at any rate of the monkish cells in which they were written, exude the gloomy severity of their writers, bear the traces of their authors' wrinkles, and in spite of their condensed style produce by their excessive tediousness only boredom and distaste; and if ever they are read at length, provoke an altogether natural aversion and an utter disgust in their readers. (CPW 1, 240)

In this Prolusion Milton criticizes the scholastic method for being tedious, dry and of little or no use to students who are forced to endure disputations and to undertake these public exercises themselves. For Milton the 'petty disputations of sour old men' fail to foster useful activity since, rather than looking outward to the world, they look inward to themselves and the successive ravelling of their artificial metaphysical abstractions and 'quiddities', a familiar charge.<sup>9</sup> In his criticisms of the disputation and Aristotelian logic, Milton rehearses arguments that had been raging since the denunciations of scholasticism and its dialectical methods by the early *quattrocento* humanists such as Petrarch, Salutati, Bruni and Valla and had continued throughout the centuries: for some seventeenth century reformers, disputations were 'obstacles to the attainment of true knowledge'.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, aside from criticisms of the scholastic methods, Milton and his fellow educational reformers ostentatiously deplore the schoolmen's powerful grasp on the trivium – the three-pronged medieval liberal arts system, derived from Aristotle, which comprised the study of grammar, logic and rhetoric – and what they claim to be the scholastic dialectical emphasis on obscure and arcane points and a metaphorical, rather than practical approach and ideology.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> John Webster makes a similar point about disputations as 'spider webs of sophistical or fallacious argumentations' (Academiarum examen, p. 3); Locke is equally hostile in Some Thoughts Concerning Education (London, 1693), see Feingold, 'The Humanities', 300.

<sup>10</sup> Feingold, 'The Humanities', 300.

<sup>11</sup> On humanist attacks on Aristotelian dialectic and criticisms of the trivium, see Peter Mack, 'Humanist Rhetoric and Dialectic' in Jill Krayer (ed.), The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Humanism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 82-99; Lisa Jardine, 'Humanistic Logic' in Charles B. Schmitt and Quentin Skinner (eds), The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 173-98; Laurence Brockliss, 'Curricula' in A History of the University in Europe: Volume II: 1500-1800, 563-620 (578-9). On Milton's attitudes towards the trivium and the universities, see Thomas Festa, The End of Learning: Milton and Education (New York: Routledge, 2006), 86.

Whilst Milton invested strongly in the idea that the commonwealth needed educating, he nevertheless called for the disestablishment of the universities in the strongest possible terms.<sup>12</sup> In The Reason of Church Government (1642), for example, Milton derides the scholastic leanings of the curriculum at the universities, emphasising this same lack of utility. Of those members of the gentry who support the prelacy, Milton says:

I beleeeve their honest and ingenuous natures comming to the Universities to store themselves with good and solid learning, and there unfortunately fed with nothing else, but the scragged and thorny lectures of monkish and miserable sophistry were sent home again with such a scholastical burre in their throats, as hath stopt and hindered all true and generous philosophy from entring, crakt their voices for ever with metaphysical gargarisms...either slightly train'd up in a kind of hypocritical and hackny cours of literature to get their living by, or els fondly overstudied in uselesse controversies. (CPW 1, 854-5)

The unfortunate students become, according to Milton's digestive imagery, improperly nourished with a kind of insubstantial and inedible education which becomes lodged with them such that they can never hope to digest any other kind of learning again. This image of education as food or diet is one to which Milton returns constantly in Of Education and in his other texts. He begins The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce with an evocation of the relationship between 'Custome', 'Error' and learning, in which 'Custome' is

For him that will, to take and swallow down at pleasure; which proving but of bad nourishment in the concoction, as it was heedlesse in the devouring, puffs up unhealthily, a certaine big face of pretended learning, mistaken among credulous men, for the wholesome habit of soundnesse and good constitution. (CPW 2, 222-3)

In An Apology Against a Pamphlet (1642) Milton notes how the 'queasie' universities 'regurgitate' their students (CPW 1, 884-5). The inability of students properly to 'digest' their learning and to convert that learning into something that can activate them and prepare them for their future involvement in the world of affairs, results in disease and decay in students *and* in the universities.

But how far is this depiction of the curricula and practices at the universities compatible with the evidence available? What information do we have of Milton's own educational experiences? On 12 February 1625 Milton entered Christ's as a 'pensioner' under the tutor William Chappell, after attending St Paul's grammar school. There is some evidence that Chappell and Milton were at loggerheads, possibly resulting in a flogging and rustication for

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<sup>12</sup> See Festa, The End of Learning, 86. See also Angelica Duran, 'First and Last Fruits of Education: The Companion Poems, Epistola and Educational Prose Works' in Angelica Duran (ed.), A Concise Companion to Milton (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 61-77 (62).

Milton, followed by change in tutor.<sup>13</sup> We may surmise that Milton's time at Cambridge was not as happy as that spent at St Paul's.<sup>14</sup> But does this explain his vitriolic condemnation of the universities? How far is Milton's depiction of their curricula and practices compatible with the evidence available? What information do we have of Milton's own educational experiences? And what kinds of evidence can we use to assess his claims?

The influence and status of scholasticism within the curricula of both Cambridge and Oxford during this period has been the subject of much critical debate.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, attempts both by the crown and the university itself to re-enforce the influence of scholasticism are clearly evident in the statutes of both Oxford and Cambridge. In 1601, the Cambridge Chancellor of the time, William Cecil commanded his deputy to ensure that 'all duties and exercises of learninge be diligently and duely performed accordinge to the Statutes & Orders of the Universitie', specifying '(1) In publique Sermons in St. Maries Church. (2) In Lectures and Disputations in publique schools. (3) In diligent frequenting of the same'.<sup>16</sup> In 1619, James I ordered that the scholars of the university continue to attend and participate in 'Learning, Lectures, Disputations, Determinations or Declarations, either publique or private'.<sup>17</sup> These particular pedagogical facets of the curricula which the authorities insisted must be maintained are illustrative of the very dialectical quality of scholasticism, which depended in theory and practice upon debate, discussion and dispute. As we have seen, critics of the dialectical method found that, in its adversarial wordiness, scholasticism was characterized by a preoccupation with the terms of the debate rather than its matter, thus often degenerating into empty digressions rather than authentic and meaningful philosophical discussion.<sup>18</sup> If education should engender and form the *vir virtutis*, the virtuous, manly and active citizen – as Milton and his humanist counterparts believed – then educational practices at Cambridge were, they claimed, failing to achieve such a goal. The 'sour old men' against whom Milton rails are the very opposite of the engaged, virile young men required to support and maintain the commonwealth. At the universities, the characteristic scholastic dependence upon Aristotle is, apparently, clear, and the university syllabus – as set out by Henry VIII in 1535 and confirmed by Elizabeth I in 1570 – included dialectic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geography and music, primarily through the works of Aristotle

<sup>13</sup> On his return Milton was assigned to Nathaniel Tovey. See Christopher Hill, Milton and the English Revolution (London: Faber & Faber, 1977), 34-5; Gordon Campbell and Thomas N. Corns, John Milton: Life, Work and Thought (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 38-9.

<sup>14</sup> In The Second Defence (1654), Milton claimed that it was at St Paul's that he was filled with love for 'the sweetness of philosophy' (CPW 4(i), 613).

<sup>15</sup> See for example, William T. Costello, The Scholastic Curriculum; Mark Curtis, Oxford and Cambridge in Transition; Christopher Hill, The Intellectual Origins of the English Revolution Revisited (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 268-284; Joan Simon, 'The Social Origins of Cambridge Students, 1603-1640', Past and Present 26 (1963), 58-67.

<sup>16</sup> ULC, MS. Baker, xxvii, 27, cited by Costello, The Scholastic Curriculum, 8.

<sup>17</sup> Charles H Cooper (ed.), Annals of Cambridge, 5 vols (Cambridge, 1842-53).

<sup>18</sup> See Rummel, The Humanist-Scholastic Debate in the Renaissance and Reformation (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 31.

and secondarily through the much more recent works of Rudolph Agricola and Philip Melanchthon. The 1570 Cambridge statutes indicate a very brief timetable: 'the first year shall teach rhetoric, the second and third logic, the fourth shall add philosophy'. At Oxford, the Laudian Statutes retain a similar form and schedule and give significant prominence to Aristotle.<sup>19</sup> Rummel argues that despite sustained and impressively waged campaigns by humanists in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Aristotelian logic was obdurately enshrined in universities across Europe; John Morgan suggests that, despite some changes to the curriculum in response to humanist reforms – for instance the promotion of rhetoric to the first year and the relegation of logic to the second and third years – 'the form, and to a large degree, the content of university education remained scholastic,' and, moreover, as the seventeenth century continued, it 'experienced an increasingly scholastic bent'.<sup>20</sup>

However, this view of university curricula and teaching practices as overtly scholastic and dominated by Aristotle, as indicated by the university statutes and as confirmed by Milton throughout his works, has been the subject of vigorous counter-arguments. Such a characterisation of Oxford and Cambridge as outmoded, anachronistic and in decline in the seventeenth century

assumes that the chief studies at both universities were logic, physics and metaphysics, and that the authors studied in the process were principally those indigestible commentators on the works of Aristotle. But in fact the curriculum was quintessentially humanistic in nature...<sup>21</sup>

For these misinterpretations, Feingold blames too literal readings of the university statutes and the tendency of historians to credit unquestioned the censures and anecdotes of educational reformers. The brief outline of the curriculum of rhetoric, logic and philosophy offered in the 1570 Cambridge Statutes suggested merely broad categories and it was, in practice, classical languages and literature which were studied. The study of the classics extended beyond literature and moral and natural philosophy to encompass subjects including history, logic, Roman law, and the mathematical sciences. Whilst Aristotle still dominated the statutes, the curriculum was essentially humanist in practice: Aristotle was still revered, but scholars saw him as a 'past master with whom they openly deserved the right to differ'.<sup>22</sup> As the Laudian statutes unequivocally stated, mastery of classical languages and literature was the primary purpose of the BA degree and examinations through public

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<sup>19</sup> Cited by Feingold, 'The Humanities', 213-14.

<sup>20</sup> John Morgan, Godly Learning: Puritan Attitude Towards Reason, Learning and Education, 1560-1640 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 228. On these changes to the curriculum see also Helen Jewell, Education in Early Modern England, 111.

<sup>21</sup> Feingold, 'The Humanities', 213.

<sup>22</sup> Feingold, 'Aristotle and the English universities', 136. See also James McConica, 'Humanism and Aristotle in Tudor Oxford', English Historical Review 94 (no. 371) (1979), 291-317.

exercises (including the disputation) were meant to test this.<sup>23</sup> Moreover as both Feingold and John Hale have recently argued, hostility towards public exercises like the disputation from reformers such as Milton, Webster and Locke has obscured the generally positive light in which such a practice was seen. The 'wrangling' bemoaned by critics did not, in practice, promote victory at the expense of truth; instead students were encouraged to display their literary knowledge alongside oratorical and debating skills, thereby allowing truth to triumph. Unlike Milton's association of scholasticism and decrepitude, its practice in disputation was often characterized by dynamic and vociferous discussion, passionate debate and healthy competition and emulation amongst students.<sup>24</sup>

The university statutes are also misleading in that they suggest a corporate identity and educational programme for the university institution which is at odds with the collegiate system at Oxford and at Cambridge. Whilst the statutes provided an outline of a programme and curriculum to be followed, day-to-day teaching and learning was conducted in the colleges in small tutorial groups; there were still lectures to be attended in the Schools, although attendance was often poor. The overtly scholastical nature of the lecture, in which various parts of a question were continually and exhaustively divided and sub-divided, often engendered boredom, and the University was constantly complaining about non-attendance. In addition, lecturers seemed to be somewhat neglectful of their duties, as records show.<sup>25</sup>

Consistent attempts to re-enforce the status of the university lecture indicates the extent to which the centralisation of university study was under threat. This successive movement of pedagogic authority away from the university organization to the self-contained corporation of the college occurred around the time when the new colleges, including Christ's, were in the process of establishment, early in the sixteenth century (Christ's was founded in 1505). The institution of the colleges had led to a fragmentation of authority and a diversification in the kinds of texts and methods that were being taught throughout the universities. Under the tutorial system, particular to only Oxford and Cambridge during this period and initiated in the second half of the sixteenth century, individual tutors began to supervise and control their tutees' studies and way of life. The tutor had a great deal of power and influence over what his students were reading, how they were studying and what principles governed their education, moral life and even their finances, often without interference.<sup>26</sup> The potential for the blurring of the boundaries between a tutor's own intellectual interests and those of his

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<sup>23</sup> Feingold, 'The Humanities', 215.

<sup>24</sup> See Hale, Milton's Cambridge Latin, 15-19.

<sup>25</sup> See Costello, The Scholastic Curriculum, 11-14; 33

<sup>26</sup> Brockliss, 'Curricula', 568. See also Stephen Porter, 'University and Society' in A History of the University of Oxford: Volume 4, 25-104 (64-7).

students was thus high.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, as books became cheaper and more easily available, students were able to study the texts independently and discuss them at length with their college tutors, which is certainly one of the factors which threatened the one-sided and often tedious university lecture. The model of teaching in college rather than in the university schools allowed a greater degree of independence for both tutors and their students; the system also encouraged the kind of healthy competitiveness and dynamic emulation which Milton calls for in Of Education, as those in a tutor group and their tutor all lived and studied together in very close proximity, often sharing one chamber and each others' beds.<sup>28</sup> Milton's vision of the learning process is one in which the students may be encouraged, through the example of their teachers and peers, to participate and to become active, such that this activity may institute principles and equip them with the tools to be dynamic and engaged citizens in the future:

But here the main skill and groundwork will be, to temper them such Lectures and Explanations upon every opportunity, as may lead and draw them in willing obedience, enflam'd with the study of Learning, and the admiration of Vertue; stirr'd up with high hopes of living to be brave men, and worthy Patriots, dear to God, and famous to all ages. (CPW 2, 384-5)

Whilst the lecture might be seen to be illustrative of the 'scholastical burre' which Milton sees as choking the students, its declining influence as a methodology of teaching and learning in favour of college-based learning which permitted the students to be powerful readers, and to use the text without the interference of an intermediary and in dialogue with the teacher and other students, suggests that Milton may be overstating the case for polemical effect.

But if the sources which have been used to portray the universities as scholarly backwaters – and their curricula as dominated by scholasticism – are as potentially unreliable as those recollections of former students and the polemics of reformers, then where can we turn for a clearer and more accurate picture of what students were actually studying and how? It is evident that an investigation of the day-to-day studies within colleges might tell a rather different story than that told by the statutes, and suggest a different version of the university curricula and experience from those related by reformers. The documents to which I will now turn to investigate Milton's claims surrounding the educational practices available in Cambridge are the account books of Joseph Mede (1586-1638), a tutor and fellow of Christ's College from 1613 until his death in 1638. Mede had himself graduated from Christ's and was elected Fellow amidst some controversy, having been wrongly identified as a Calvinist:

<sup>27</sup> See Victor Morgan and Christopher Brooke, A History of the University of Cambridge: Vol. II: 1546-1750 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004), 314-33

<sup>28</sup> Milton's was probably the last generation without some private living space within the college. See Campbell and Corns, John Milton, 27; Morgan and Brooke, A History of the University of Cambridge, 32-7.

in fact, despite some puritan sympathies and moderate millenarian beliefs – as propounded famously in *Clavis Apocalyptica* (1627), translated as *The Key of the Revelation* in 1643 – Mede's theological and ecclesiological allegiances were to moderation, settlement and episcopacy. He was, by all accounts, an excellent tutor, with rigorous academic standards and a keen commitment to pastoral care; those in his tutorial groups benefited from one-on-one lectures which he tailored to the needs of each individual student.<sup>29</sup> His account books are one of the most illuminating sources to offer an insight into educative processes and methodologies relevant to Milton's time at the university. They provide itemized details of virtually every charge incurred by Mede's pupils, including the books they bought on Mede's recommendation. From this source it is possible to trace how the curriculum and teaching functioned in practice at Christ's in this period, to establish the kinds of texts that Milton and his contemporaries were reading whilst at college, and to glimpse how they were taught. In many ways, as I shall demonstrate, these account books go some way to countering generalized accounts of the academic experience at Cambridge during this period and suggestions that the education detailed in the statutes was necessarily that undertaken by tutors and students.<sup>30</sup> In looking at these sources, it is possible to determine some of the goals of a Cambridge university education, and the academic and social life of students at college, at least according to Mede and for his students at Christ's.

Turning to Mede's account books, we see real and fascinating evidence of this disconnection between university and college life. There are four extant account books of folio height, narrow and bound in ivory vellum, covering over five hundred pages; some of the pages have only minimal entries and some are blank. The account books begin with a year by year account of expenses incurred by Mede's tutees, and at the opening of each book, Mede has organized his entries with a contents page detailing students' names and the pages on which their accounts can be located; this index was clearly compiled in advance and sections devoted to each student were allocated at this stage as some entries tail off leaving several blank pages before the next entry, whilst others are cramped as Mede appears to run out of space. Book purchases tend to be described using the surname of the author and

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<sup>29</sup> See Bryan W. Ball, 'Mede, Joseph (1586–1638)' in H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (eds), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); online ed. Ed. Lawrence Goldman (Jan. 2008): <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18465>, accessed 30 Jan 2009; Jeffrey Jue, *Heaven Upon Earth: Joseph Mede (1586-1638) and the Legacy of Millenarianism* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006), 7-16; Morgan and Brooke, *A History of the University of Cambridge*, 461-2.

<sup>30</sup> Until recently these account books had only been partially transcribed and fairly cursorily analysed by Fletcher, *The Intellectual Development of John Milton*, vol. 2, 'Appendix I', 553-622. Mordechai Feingold has considered them in relation to mathematical instruction in the period, see Feingold, *The Mathematician's Apprenticeship*, 96-8; but Quentin Skinner has re-examined and analysed them in detail. See Skinner, 'The Generation of John Milton' in David Reynolds (ed.), *Christ's: A Cambridge College Over Five Centuries* (London: Macmillan, 2005), 41-72. Mede's extensive and beautifully bound account books are still kept in Christ's College Library, Cambridge, (without a shelf mark) and I would like to thank the Masters and Fellows for allowing me permission to view them.

some part of the title, although this is by no means standard; at times texts can be difficult to identify and it is often impossible to tell which edition Mede recommends. Some students settle their accounts on time and some do not. To the student Haggar's account is added in Mede's handwriting what might be read either as a waspish or resigned comment: 'which he is still owing me'. It looks likely that Mede took these debts seriously and chased them up as there is also a missive enclosed with John Haggar's account entry which reads as follows: 'Memorandum that I Thomas Haggar do give my word to Mr Mead for to discharge or fee discharged whatever debt is due unto him for the expenses of John Haggar my brother late under the tuition of the sayd Mr Mead in Christ's College in Cambridge'.<sup>31</sup> It seems that Thomas Haggar was required to step in for his recalcitrant brother.

But it is not simply book purchases which Mede records: the expenses incurred cover most aspects of the life of a typical university student of the time. For example, in the Michaelmas quarter of 1621 a student named Thomas Lambe purchased fabric, two pounds of candles, a charge for the mending of his breeches and his 'sute', and the cost of a visit from the barber.<sup>32</sup> Lambe also made some interesting book purchases, including texts by Horace, Plautus, Keckermann, and the ubiquitous Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics.<sup>33</sup> John Stuteville, whose records cover the period 1625-1628 and who was a contemporary of Milton, purchased a large number of books through Mede.<sup>34</sup> In the Michaelmas quarter of 1625, he acquired Keckermann's Systema logicae (1600) and Systema rhetoricae (1608), Seneca's tragedies and Erasmus' 'Epistles' (the De conscribendis epistolis, first published officially in 1522). In the Lady quarter of 1626 he bought a Hebrew primer and Giovanni della Casa's Galateus (1558; translated by Robert Peterson of Lincoln's Inn and published as Galateo in

<sup>31</sup> John Haggar matriculated as a pensioner in July 1621, gaining his B.A. in 1625 and M.A. in 1628 at Queens' College, Cambridge. See John Peile, Bibliographical Register of Christ's College, 1505-1905 and of the earlier foundation, God' House, 1448-1505, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910), 340. The social status of these students can be determined by their classification at matriculation. Students signed as, respectively, pensioner, sizar or fellow-commoner. Pensioners were usually sons of clergy and small land-owners with, often, significant income and good social standing; sizars were generally poorer students who, in order to be able to afford their tuition and board, often worked as servants to fellows or tutors; fellow-commoners were most often the sons of landed-gentry or of noble families. See, Peile, Bibliographical Register, vii-viii; on the social composition of the university, see Morgan and Brooke, A History of the University of Cambridge, 131-46.

<sup>32</sup> Thomas Lambe, matriculated as a pensioner in July 1620, gaining his B.A. in 1624 and his M.A. in 1627. He was transferred to Mede after his original tutor, Bentley, died. His cousin, Robert, matriculated in the same year and was also under Mede's tutelage, but it is Thomas whose purchases were more prolific. See Peile, Bibliographical Register, 334.

<sup>33</sup> It is unclear which edition of the text is recommended by Mede and purchased by his students.

<sup>34</sup> John Stuteville matriculated as a pensioner in April 1625, two months after Milton. It seems that, although he resided at Christ's until 1628, he did not receive his B.A. He was the second son of Sir Martin Stuteville, Mede's great friend and regular correspondent; between 1623 and 1631 Mede wrote regularly to Sir Martin on matters of university life and education and contemporary events. The extensive correspondence fills two folio volumes of the Harleian MSS in the British Library (389 and 390). In the correspondence Mede often describes John as a youth of limited application, despite his large number of book purchases. He clearly had a generous allowance (on fast-days always 4d) which might explain the quantity of books he buys. See Peile, Bibliographical Register, 366.

1567) – a text to which I shall return later – followed by Keckermann's Systema systematum (1613), a textbook by Eustachius (Summa philosophiae quadripartia [1609], a schematic treatment of the four standard academic subjects in order) and Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics (a popular text) in the Midsummer quarter. The following Christmas he purchased The Compleat Gentleman (1622) by Henry Peacham, and over the next year he bought texts including Aristotle's De Anima, Thomas Blundeville's mathematical Exercises (1622), a Latin primer with psalms, Homer's Odyssey and a Hebrew grammar. Whilst this is by no means a record of every book that Stuteville read during this period, it does give us a good indication of the kind of texts that Mede was recommending and students were reading, and offers a sense of the point at which students were undertaking different aspects of a curriculum.

If we turn to consider this evidence, it is clear that Mede often deviated substantially from the curriculum authorised by the university statutes. Despite the fact that the statutes called for the first year to be spent on rhetoric, Mede preferred his students to commence with logic and recommended Keckermann's textbook. In Of Education, Milton explicitly criticizes such a beginning as being overly complex for those just matriculated, following Bacon who had argued for a postponement of logic in The Advancement of Learning (1605) (CPW 2, 374).<sup>35</sup> Moreover, although the recommended logic texts were Cicero's Topica and Aristotle's Elenchi, a study of fallacious reasoning, Mede fails to recommend the Topica, whereas he takes the study of Aristotle's logic much further than the statutes require, recommending a considerable number of his students to buy the complete edition of Aristotle's Organon, the system of which the Elenchi forms the final part.<sup>36</sup> The Organon appears over thirty times in the account books, and it may be that it was studied by even greater numbers of Mede's students than is apparent if they already owned a Latin translation of the complete works of Aristotle, such as the large two-volume set published in Paris and edited by Guillaume du Val in 1619.<sup>37</sup> It was after such a thorough training in syllogistic reasoning that Mede and his students turned their attention to the study of rhetoric near the beginning of their second year, a point in their educative career which Milton similarly sees as being too early: 'And now lastly will be the time to read with them those organic arts which inable men to discourse and write perspicuously, elegantly, and according to the fitted stile of lofty, mean, or lowly' (CPW 2, 401). In the teaching of rhetoric, Mede seems to reject Quintilian's Institutio Oratoria, the text specifically recommended by the University, in favour of Cicero's De Oratore; whilst the Institutio does appear, Cicero's text is apparently recommended in many more cases.<sup>38</sup> The reasons for this are unclear, Erasmus had, after all, pronounced

<sup>35</sup> Francis Bacon, The Advancement of Learning, 59

<sup>36</sup> See Skinner, 'Christ's in the Generation of John Milton', 56.

<sup>37</sup> See Fletcher, The Intellectual Development of John Milton, vol. 2, 560.

<sup>38</sup> See Skinner, 'Christ's in the Generation of John Milton', 61.

Quintilian's work to be the 'last word' on teaching and oratory.<sup>39</sup> It may be that Quintilian's emphasis on methods of teaching grammar alongside rhetoric rendered his work less relevant to Mede's students. Despite Mede's preference for Cicero for the study of rhetoric and his evident fondness for Aristotle, it is clear that his recommendations fall in line with an 'expansive humanistic culture of learning', which characterised teaching at the universities in this period.<sup>40</sup> Asking his students to immerse themselves in the classics, Mede seems to follow Erasmus and concur with Milton's belief in the need for wide and varied reading, 'a well-continued and judicious conversing among pure authors digested' (CPW 2, 373) to enable students to follow the lead of the finest writers. To this end, Mede's account books indicate that his students were asked to study a large number of literary and historical works including those of Juvenal, Aristophanes, Hesiod, Seneca, Lucan, Ovid (including Sandys' English translation c. 1621), Virgil and Homer (whose Odyssey and Illiad were popular with Mede, texts that were consistently bought, even as early as the second term), leading Roman historians such as Sallust, Livy, Suetonius and Tacitus and Greek historians such as Polybius and Plutarch.<sup>41</sup> There are only two English literary works which appear to be recommended by Mede. One is Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia (first published in 1590) for which he charged 8s – a significant sum. The text first appears in Mede's accounts in 1625, by which time it had gone through several editions and gained enormous popularity, although apparently not with Milton who dismissed it as a 'vain amatorius Poem' in his Eikonoklastes (1649) (CPW 3, 362).<sup>42</sup> The other is the royalist and Anglican Francis Quarles' Divine Fancies (1632) which consisted of verse epigrammes, observations and meditations. Quarles had links with Christ's as a former student and his Divine Fancies was often recommended as an aid to the composition of verse, particularly in the upper forms of some grammar schools.<sup>43</sup> English political thought is represented by the humanist scholar and diplomat Sir Thomas Smith's The Discourse of the Commonweale (1581) and De Republica Anglorum (1583). Many of Francis Bacon's writings of civil and natural philosophy also appear, including The Advancement of Learning (1605), De sapientia veterum (1609) and Sylva sylvarum (1627); there are also a wide variety of geographical materials purchased including maps 'to hang on [the] wall' and texts such as Robert Hues' Tractatus de Globis

<sup>39</sup> W. H. Woodward, Studies in Education during the Age of the Renaissance, 1400-1600 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1924), 10.

<sup>40</sup> Feingold, 'The Humanities', 213.

<sup>41</sup> Skinner, 'Christ's in the Generation of John Milton', 61. Sallust's Bellum Catalinae is profoundly influential on Milton's thinking on liberty and the state. See Martin Dzelzainis, 'Milton's Classical Republicanism' in David Armitage, Armand Himy and Quentin Skinner (eds), Milton and Republicanism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 3-24 (22-4); Quentin Skinner, Liberty Before Liberalism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 177.

<sup>42</sup> See Fletcher, The Intellectual Development of John Milton, vol. 2, 614.

<sup>43</sup> See Ian Green, Print and Protestantism in Early Modern England (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 407; Francis Quarles matriculation records are lost, but he is believed to have arrived in 1605, receiving his B.A. in 1609. See Peile, Bibliographical Register, 254.

(1594), Abraham Ortelius' Theatrum Orbis Terrarum: The Theatre of the Whole World (1606) and one described as 'Speed's Maps', which Fletcher suggests might be John Speed's Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain (1611). As well as Latin and Greek, Mede (a formidable Semitic scholar) also taught Hebrew to some of his undergraduates and his accounts include Hebrew grammars (one of which is bought by Stuteville), rabbinical commentaries and parts of the Hebrew Scriptures. Metaphysics and theology were usually studied from the beginning of the second year onwards and Mede offers a range of textbooks including those by Cornelius and Jacobus Martinus (either Metaphysica commentatio [1605] or Partitiones et quaestiones metaphysicae [1615]), Crisostomo Javello (In omnibus metaphysicae libris quaestita textualia [1559]) and Keckermann's Systema Systematum (published in Hanau in 1613). Aristotle's Metaphysics was only rarely purchased by students; this may have been due to Mede's preference for other authors, but it may also be due to a lack of availability: the Metaphysics was only printed on the continent. Keckermann was also the author of one of Mede's favourite theological textbooks, Theologica Systema, which ranged in price from 1s to 2s 6d, depending, presumably, on availability, as it was not printed in England according to the STC.

What, then, does Mede's curriculum tell us about university education in the period? Contrary to the scholastic versions of education at the universities as depicted in the statutes and by educational reformers, the books bought by Mede's students at Christ's indicate a comprehensive humanist curriculum, 'a panorama of knowledge, rooted in the connectedness of its various constituents'; the student could leave university with a solid foundation upon which he could build throughout his life. Moreover such an education intended the inculcation of gentlemanly and social virtues through the cultivation of the mind with learning.<sup>44</sup> If we look at the final subject which Mede's students were asked to tackle, moral philosophy, the goals of his educational curriculum come more clearly into view. In fact, in departing once again from the university curriculum as detailed in the statutes, Mede's accounts again suggest some of the contradictions in the versions of higher education available for consideration. Whereas the university statutes recommend Aristotle's Politics and Ethics, texts which elevate the contemplative life and search for truth as the most perfect virtue, Mede ignores the Politics completely and although, as Skinner points out, he uses the Nicomachean Ethics, his own view of ethics seems to deviate substantially from that of Aristotle.<sup>45</sup> This is evident from his use of recently published texts such as Henry Peacham's The Compleat Gentleman (1622) which, rather than insisting on virtuous living in contemplation, shift their emphasis to promoting practical civility and good manners, and to

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<sup>44</sup> Feingold, 'The Humanities', 218-19.

<sup>45</sup> Skinner, 'Christ's in the Generation of John Milton', 62.

imparting the polish required of a 'gentleman'.<sup>46</sup> Although Peacham advises the study of a wide variety of subjects, including modern history, geography, astronomy, geometry, music, drawing and painting, the acquisition of *skills* is not the end of educational endeavours, rather they are useful in terms of how they indicate or mark culture; they become interests or accomplishments and not vocations. Of a gentleman, Peacham writes, for example, that '*By gate, laughter, and apparel, a man is knowne what he is. Wherefore I call it the crowne of good parts, and loadstone of regard*'.<sup>47</sup> Texts like Peacham's, despite suggesting a gentleman's role in society, are generally more concerned to serve to ornament and signify the gentleman. Mede's favourite such text was Giovanni Della Casa's Galateus seu Morum Honestate, first published in Italian in 1558.<sup>48</sup> To an even greater extent than The Compleat Gentleman, the Galateus, which was translated in 1567 as Galateo: A Treatise of Manners,<sup>49</sup> is concerned with the attributes which denote gentlemanly behaviour, and particularly the external signifiers of status, including the correct way to dress, eat, to sit on a horse and to conduct oneself in a simultaneously courtly and agreeable manner:

I meane what manner of Countenance and grace, behoveth a man to use, that hee may be able in Communication and familiar acquaintance with men, to shewe him selfe plesant, courteous, and gentle.<sup>50</sup>

As Anna Bryson suggests, texts such as the Galateus offer 'the code of civility as a language of social orientation'.<sup>51</sup> Mede's curriculum allows his students to envisage themselves as participants in a community, as engaging with the world; it is designed to produce accomplished gentlemen, properly signified as members of the ruling class, who whilst perhaps not becoming the stereotypically lazy, self-serving and money-grabbing individuals who Milton imagines, may, nonetheless, be limited to activity in a social sense, rather than in a political or civic sense.<sup>52</sup> As Rumrich has argued, 'we may not classify Mede as an advocate of the new learning, or a nascent radical' in the education he offered at Christ's.<sup>53</sup> Essentially, Mede was content to work within a system, rather than attempting to change it

<sup>46</sup> Skinner, 'Christ's in the Generation of John Milton', 62-3.

<sup>47</sup> Henry Peacham, The Compleat Gentleman (London, 1622), 185.

<sup>48</sup> Fletcher shows that this was the version used by Mede's students (The Intellectual Development of John Milton, vol. 2, 577-9).

<sup>49</sup> The text was popular throughout the period, with new translations appearing in 1640 and 1663.

<sup>50</sup> Giovanni Della Casa, Galateo of Manners and Behaviours, with an introduction by J.E. Spingarn (London: Grant Richards Ltd, 1914), 13-14.

<sup>51</sup> Anna Bryson, From Courtesy to Civility. Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 87. On Della Casa, see further Markku Peltonen, The Duel in Early Modern England: Civility, Politeness and Honour (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 19; 31-2; 80; 148.

<sup>52</sup> Milton's description of the effects of the wrong kind of education, in which the poorly educated student becomes slavishly devoted to money and blindly devoted to 'court-shifts', emphasizes a relationship between education and political activity, with only the right kind of the former leading to the right kind of the latter. See CPW 2, 375-6.

<sup>53</sup> John Peter Rumrich, 'Mede and Milton', Milton Quarterly 20.4 (1986), 136-141 (141).

and, especially in the 1630s, did everything he could to avoid controversy of any kind.<sup>54</sup> In a letter to Samuel Hartlib in 1638, Mede writes characteristically of his reluctance to challenge the status quo in relation to religious doctrine: 'and yet my freedom to utter my mind than to such as are prejudiced the contrary way, does neither them nor me any good'.<sup>55</sup> Whilst Mede believed that there would be an imminent seismic political shift, he saw himself as an observer rather than an instigator. And yet his curriculum is not recognisable as filled with the 'sowthistles and brambles' that Milton so derides, nor is it characterised by an unwary dependence upon Aristotelian scholasticism, dialectic or indeed the useless controversies of the schoolmen (CPW 2, 377). With the trivium at its heart, the evidence of Mede's curriculum exposes the foundations upon which educational reformers based their criticisms to be significantly less secure than they first appeared: as Mede's account books show, university education could and did at least attempt to provide students with 'a compleate and generous Education' which would prepare those of noble birth or spirit for the world at large (CPW 2, 377-8). Moreover, there is the potential in Mede's curriculum for the study of polities and politics; many of the texts recommended by Mede are included in Milton's Of Education. The inclusion of authors like Sallust and Cicero and the political works of Sir Thomas Smith suggest the openness of Mede's curriculum and the possibility that students like Milton could pursue their interests independently, 'suited to their circumstances and capacities', as the tutor Daniel Waterland suggested.<sup>56</sup>

If we turn to Milton's proposals for educational reform and to other evidence of his approved curricula, it becomes clear that his depiction of the state of education at the universities is potentially both misleading and disingenuous. Whilst a glance at the statutes appears to confirm Milton's (and other reformers') claims that university curricula and pedagogy are in thrall to Aristotle and scholasticism, evidence from within the colleges suggests a markedly different situation. As a student at Christ's, Milton was witness to and the beneficiary of an education which deviated substantially from the statutes and had as its basis and as its goal the ideals of erudite humanism. Moreover whilst Milton clearly attempts to disassociate his proposals from scholastic curricula, they are nevertheless in many essential points indebted to the medieval trivium. As Sirluck states:

With respect to the trivium Milton is as far removed as is possible from the Comenians and their contempt for those 'Gramaticall, Rhetoricall, and Logicall toys.' The trivium dominates his scheme. It does not, of course, stand alone. The quadrivium is represented... [but] at the beginning and end of the whole program stands the trivium, albeit with its sequence...modified, and its scope extended. (CPW 2, 194-5)

<sup>54</sup> Rumrich, 'Mede and Milton', 139.

<sup>55</sup> Joseph Mede, 'Epistle XCVII to Mr Hartlib' in Works (London 1667), 883

<sup>56</sup> Cited in Feingold, 'The Humanities', 216.

Milton's attempts to position himself in opposition to university education are not as clear-cut as it would seem, since whilst criticizing other versions of education, and deviating from them to some extent, his proposals remain rooted in the familiar models of the trivium and the quadrivium. So, whilst attacking the scholastic curriculum at the universities and, in doing so, misrepresenting pedagogical practice in the colleges, and certainly that of his own college, Milton nevertheless bases his proposals on a model to which he is apparently vehemently opposed. In a similar move, Milton both associates and disassociates his text and ideas from the educational proposals of John Amos Comenius, the Hartlib circle and the universal reformers. Despite having been commissioned by Hartlib to write on education and addressing the text as a letter to him, Milton's attempts to renounce the influence of both Hartlib and his circle are pointed.<sup>57</sup> Milton claims that, not only has he *not* read Comenius' 'Januas' and 'Didactics', he does not have the 'inclination' to do so (CPW 2, 365).<sup>58</sup> And yet Milton's ideas of education are similar to those of Comenius in a number of ways, in particular in their shared view of foreign languages (especially the classics) as instruments or resources for ideas rather as an end in themselves and in their sense, following Bacon, that learning should progress from the sensible to the abstract, from empirical observations to universals.<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless, throughout Of Education, Milton continues to attempt to distance himself from both rival and sympathetic educational reformers as well as from current educational systems, offering instead postures of novelty and apparently revolutionary thinking.

Milton's self-conscious disavowal of any indebtedness to the curricula at the universities, and to the proposals of other educational reformers, is striking given that his plans are so reliant on the trivium and on other schemes for educational reform, such as those of Comenius and Dury. But despite these unacknowledged borrowings, there is much which *is* distinctive. Milton repeatedly insists on inculcating fortitude, in the Ciceronian sense certainly and following the humanist ideal of a trained leadership, but also in response to pressing exigencies: in particular, the current failure of parliamentary leaders to exhibit such virtue in

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<sup>57</sup> Lewalski, The Life of John Milton, 173. She argues that Milton did not wish to be perceived as Hartlib's client and is a 'version of Milton's thoroughly characteristic claim to originality' (173).

<sup>58</sup> The works to which Milton refers are Janua Linguarum Reserata, published in 1631 and Didacta Magna, written between 1628 and 1632, and published in 1649.

<sup>59</sup> Comenius' 'panosophia' shares much with Milton's notion of education as a means of creating the complete individual. See Dagmar Capkova, 'Comenius and his ideals' in Samuel Hartlib and the Universal Reformation, 75-91 (79). On Hartlib and his circle, see Mark Greengrass, Michael Leslie, and Timothy Raylor (eds), Samuel Hartlib and Universal Reformation (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Timothy Raylor, 'New Light on Milton and Hartlib', Milton Quarterly 27 (1993), 19-30; On the similarities and differences between Milton's proposals and those of Bacon, the Hartlib circle and Comenius, see Festa, The End of Learning, 13-16; Richard DuRocher, Milton Among the Romans: the Pedagogy and Influence of Milton's Latin Curriculum (Pittsburgh, P.A.: Duquesne University Press, 2001), 6-12; Lewalski, 'Milton and the Hartlib Circle: Educational Projects and Epic Paideia' in Diana Benet and Michael Lieb (eds), Literary Milton: Text, Pretext, Context (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1994), 202-19.

the face of the tyranny of Charles I.<sup>60</sup> As Milton exclaims pointedly, his programme is designed to ensure his graduates 'may not in a dangerous fit of the common-wealth be such poor, shaken, uncertain reeds, of such a tottering conscience, as many of our great counsellors have lately shewn themselves, but stedfast pillars of the State' (CPW 2, 398). His curriculum is thus formulated on the principle that civic identity is constructed through duties and offices, with a particular emphasis on preparing men for political service. For example, he argues in Of Education that the study of rhetoric should be delayed since he regards mastery of rhetoric as the culmination of an education which will enable the student to participate enthusiastically in the world, as a political subject:

From hence, and not till 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. Or whether they be able to speak in parliament or council, 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, oftentimes to as great a trial of our patience as any other that they preach to us. (CPW 2, 406)

Here Milton envisages a particularly public forum for his students: he is instructing them to be opinion-formers in an overwhelmingly political sense, placing them in parliament or in the Privy Council and in the pulpit. Milton desires that his students should participate in public life to the same extent as students of 'those ancient and famous schools of Pythagoras, Plato, Isocrates, Aristotle, and such others' (CPW 2, 407-8). Although the occupations which Milton envisages for his students are not, in comparison with those of the 'ancient schools', all overtly political, they are nevertheless intrinsic to a flourishing society. His students, like those of Pythagoras, Plato and Isocrates, are to be rulers or commentators, inspiring both thought and action.

In proposing an education to create a new generation of politicised, resilient and zealous public servants, Milton insists upon a thorough immersion in the classics and the importance of technical skills. It is in this development that Milton's curriculum differs most radically from other educational proposals and curricula.<sup>61</sup> This emphasis is clear not only in Of Education, but also governs his own teaching practice. Between 1640 and 1646, Milton acted as tutor to a small group of boys including his nephews, Christopher and Edward Phillips, Cyriack Skinner, John Overton, Thomas Gardiner, Richard Barry and a number of others; the group

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<sup>60</sup> Dzelzainis, 'Milton's Classical Republicanism', 13-14. See also James Holly Hanford, 'Milton and the Art of War' in Hanford, John Milton: Poet and Humanist: Essays by James Holly Hanford (Cleveland: Case Western University Press, 1966), 185-223 (187); Festa, The End of Learning, 70-1.

<sup>61</sup> A notable exception was that of John Dury with The Reformed School and The Reformed Library Keeper (London, 1651) which included many of the same authors as Milton and emphasised agricultural and military training, see DuRocher, Milton Among the Romans, 10-12.

came to be known as 'Mr Milton's Academy', a title coined by Samuel Hartlib.<sup>62</sup> In his biography of Milton, Edward Phillips recalls the curriculum:

And here by the way, I judge it not impertinent to mention the many authors both of the Latin and Greek, which through his excellent judgment and way of teaching, far above the pedantry of common public schools (where such authors are scarce ever heard of), were run over within no greater compass of time, than from ten to fifteen or sixteen years of age. Of the Latin, the four grand authors *De Re Rustica*, Cato, Varro, Columella and Palladius; Cornelius Celsus, an ancient physician of the Romans; a great part of Pliny's *Natural History*; Vitruvius his *Architecture*; Frontinus his *Stratagems*; with the two egregious poets, Lucretius and Manilius. Of the Greek, Hesiod, a poet equal with Homer; Aratus his *Phaenomena*, and *Diosemeia*, Dionysius, *Afer de situ Orbis*; Oppian's *Cynegetics* and *Halieutics*; Quintus Calber his *Poem of the Trojan War* continued from Homer; Apollonius Rhodius his *Argonautics*: and in prose, Plutarch's *Placita Philosophorum*...Germinus' *Astronomy*; Xenophon's *Cryi Institutio*, and *Anabasis*; Ælian's *Tactics*; and Polynæus his *Warlike Stratagems*.<sup>63</sup>

Whilst many of these are also specifically mentioned in Of Education, they make up, as Phillips himself states, an extraordinarily eclectic and distinctive collection of texts; some of them would have been as unfamiliar to seventeenth century readers as they are today.<sup>64</sup> Indeed, if we compare Milton's reading-list with Mede's, there is little common ground: whilst both have some Greek authors in common (Hesiod, Plutarch and Xenophon), none of Milton's choice of texts in Latin appears in Mede's accounts, or indeed in the university statutes.<sup>65</sup> Whilst Mede's list indicates an emphasis on the cultivation of learning as a mark of gentlemanly civility, Milton's curriculum is geared towards the technical, the practical and the rural including: the study of agriculture, farming, animal husbandry and household management (Cato, Varro, Columella, Palladius and Oppian); medical practice (Celsus); the natural world and the cosmos (Pliny, Lucretius and Aratus); architecture (Vitruvius); geography (Dionysius); military tactics (Frontinus, Xenophon, Ælian and Polynæus); and astronomy (Manilius and Germinus). The poetry on Phillips' list also suggests the importance of the creative arts in Milton's thought: as he writes in Of Education, such study will 'shew

<sup>62</sup> See William Riley Parker, *Milton: A Biography*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Ed. Gordon Campbell, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), vol. 1, 312; see also vol. 2, 882; 837; 922-25.

<sup>63</sup> Edward Phillips, *The Life of Milton* (1694) in John Milton, *Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: Odyssey Press, 1957), 1025-37 (1029).

<sup>64</sup> See DuRocher, *Milton Among the Romans*, 1-5; 171-5. On the importance of these authors' influence on Milton's works, see for example DuRocher, 'The Wounded Earth in *Paradise Lost*', *Studies in Philology* 98.1 (Winter, 1996), 93-115.

<sup>65</sup> In Of Education, Milton's proposed curriculum is far more detailed and extensive than that recalled by Phillips and includes some few more texts and authors which also feature in Mede's account books. Nevertheless, the large majority of texts recalled by Phillips do appear in Of Education.

them, what Religious, what glorious and magnificent use might be made of Poetry both in divine and humane things' (CPW 2, 405-6).

However, this curriculum, designed to engender the civilised but technically trained public servant also satisfies what Milton claims is the primary goal and process of education. The practical skills which Milton insists on and the importance of poetry in inculcating virtue are part of the process of spiritual education, which is at the very heart of Milton's thought and the goal of his programme, as he states in Of Education:

The end then of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true vertue, which being united to the heavenly grace of faith makes up the highest perfection (CPW 2, 366-7).

Milton's curriculum is practical, technical and insists on the centrality of virtue and public service, but at its heart is a belief in God's creation of the natural world and man's only partial ability to comprehend it. For Milton then, education is crucial in enabling man to deal with both the natural and political world whilst prompting him to recognise his fallibility, and to seek spiritual growth.<sup>66</sup>

In his Life of Milton (1779), Samuel Johnson disdainfully mocks Milton's 'great promises and small performance' at the opening of the civil war. Rather than joining his brave countrymen on the battlefield, Milton, claims Johnson, 'vapours away his patriotism in a private boarding school'.<sup>67</sup> But Milton had pre-empted such charges in Of Education, claiming that the work of the teacher and educational reformer 'will require sinews almost equall to those which Homer gave Ulysses' (CPW 2, 415). The education of future citizens is, for Milton, integral to a functioning and glorious commonwealth and his educational proposals and curricula arise out of a muscular commitment to political and spiritual reformation. There is much that is familiar and much that is distinctive in the shape and detail of what he plans. Unlike the 'panosophic' model of Comenius and his adherents which sought to integrate all forms of human activity, Milton desires to equip men to bolster the commonwealth and counter forms of tyranny. Unlike the model of education enshrined in the university statutes, Milton rejects learning for its own sake and demands it be useful. Unlike the education on offer to Mede's students, Milton opposes an education which merely befits a man to conduct himself in society. Yet as we have seen, such depictions of these systems and practices of education are in many ways distorted and provisional and, moreover, Milton's large debt to these existing and proposed systems and practices goes unacknowledged. Whilst Milton's Of Education is distinguished from these other educational systems in many ways, it

<sup>66</sup> See DuRocher, Milton Among the Roman, 15.

<sup>67</sup> Samuel Johnson, The Lives of the English Poets, ed. G. B. Hill, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905) vol.1, 98-101.

nevertheless relies on these same systems for its content and for rhetorical effect: they provide a framework into which he can both situate his proposals and against which he can struggle. Milton's text presents distorted versions of educational experiences, requiring more critical reading than is at first apparent. These versions of education, present around the margins of Of Education, sometimes overlapping, sometimes contradictory, are integral to our understanding of how Milton envisioned his proposals performing in the realm of ideas. Situating his proposals firmly within an age-old, but vibrant debate on the philosophy and practice of education and, at the same time, dramatising that debate, Milton establishes the credentials for his own contribution and firmly insists that it is the responsibility of a generation of active, engaged and industrious citizens with the 'spirit and capacity enough to apprehend' to put his proposals into practice (CPW 2, 415).

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