

野呂有子 “On Milton’s Proposal for ‘Communitas Libera’,” *East Asia Intercultural Studies Interkulturelle Ostasienstudien* eds Herausgegeben von Yasuo Ariizumi & Konrad Meisig, Harrassowitz Verlag, 2006, 157-164.

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On MILTON’s Proposal for ‘Communitas Libera’
From *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio*
to *Readie and Easie Way*
to *Establish a Free Commonwealth*

I

John MILTON (1608-1674) is generally known as the author of the English national epic, *Paradise Lost* (1667). He devoted some twenty years to his republicanism, and the English republican government led by Oliver CROMWELL (1599-1658). As the Secretary of Foreign Tongues, MILTON encountered a series of political foes and engaged each in verbal combat, using the English language, and Latin as well, the international language in Europe in Milton’s day. He was deeply involved in the English Civil War (1642-1649) and in the controversies between the 17th century royalists and republicans.

While he refuted the so-called divine rights of kings, he adopted the divine rights of *people*, and elaborated his idea of ‘liberty’ and ‘free community’. In spite of Restoration (1660), the idea of ‘liberty’ and ‘free community’, which MILTON tried to defend at the sacrifice of his eyesight and later almost his life, has never been extinguished. The fundamental ideas asserted in *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio* (1651) are as follows.

In the first place, all human beings are equal under the laws of God and nature. Secondly, people have an innate liberty by nature. Thirdly, in the beginning, they gather together to build a community and in order to defend their liberty, choose single or plural leaders to have them defend the community from outward dangers. Fourthly, because this is the origin of magistrates and governments, the government is the institution that should preserve people’s rights, and it should function for the happiness of people and public welfare in peace. In the fifth place, the ‘kings’ are merely one denomination of magistrates, so if they abuse their positions for their own interests, they should be dismissed and punished according to the due process of laws.

These ideas have been encouraging those people in the world who hope for peace and liberty. Being inspired by them, John LOCKE (1632-1704) wrote the *Two Treatises of Government*, which promoted the Glorious Revolution (1688-89).¹ They were also adopted in the Declaration of

¹ 野呂有子 Yūko K. NORO: イングランド国民爲の第一弁護論に於ける「自由」・「法」・「議會」再考—ミルトンの共同体概念を鍵概念として *Ingurando kokumin no tame no*

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Independence of America (1776). Similarly inspired, Comte de MIRABEAU (1749-91) translated MILTON’s *Aleopagitica* (1664) in 1788 and *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio* (published in 1792) into French, which was to lead to the French Revolution (1789).² They were inherited in the speech of Abraham LINCOLN at Gettysburg (1863) in American Civil War (1861-1865), in the Preface of the Constitution of Japan (1945) and the Inaugural Speech by John F. KENNEDY.

Moreover, MILTON designs and proposes a three-layered Parliamentary framework of political constitution in *Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth* (1660), which he seems to have designed in the image of Presbyterian church systems in Scotland. This framework is broadly adopted in modern parliamentary systems in Europe, America and Japan.

II

The Rump-Parliament pronounced a sentence of death on Charles STUART,³ the former King Charles I, and he was beheaded in public on the 30th of January in 1649.

The Royalist Party within and abroad quickly counterattacked against the republican government with *Eikon Basilike: The Portraiture of His Scared Majesty in His Solitudes and Sufferings*. It was written in English and published ten days after the execution of King Charles. It sold as many as twenty editions in one and half months. It prevailed in public as the late King Charles’ own writing on his meditations and prayers during his hard days in prison under the close guard of the Republican government. It overwhelmed the sentiments of common Englishmen. The Republican government was forced to adopt some strategy to stop its currency.

Two weeks after the execution of Charles, MILTON published *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, which he had written and prepared beforehand, and there he argued for the Parliamentary Party, justifying their behavior towards the execution. He was invited to the Council of State on 3rd of March, appointed to be the Secretary of Foreign Tongues on 15th, and ordered to argue against *Eikon Basilike* for the cause of the Republican Government. He published

daiichi bengoron ni okeru ‘jiyū’, ‘hou’, ‘gikai’ saikō—Milton no kyōdōtai gainen o kagigainen toshite [Reconsidering ‘Liberty’, ‘the Laws’, and ‘the Parliament’ in *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio*—Centering around Milton’s Idea of Community as a Keyword]. In: Bulletin Seigakuin University General Research Institute, no.8 (Seigakuin University General Research Institute, 1996) 14, 28-29.

² Christophe Tournu: *John Milton, the English Revolution and the Dynamics of the French Revolution*, which is a paper Mr Tournu delivered at the Seventh International Milton Symposium held at University of South Carolina Beaufort on 8th of June 2002.

³ The remnant of the Long Parliament (restored in May, 1659) which was dissolved by Monk in Feb. 1660; also (esp. in later use) the earlier remnant of the same Parliament from the time of Pride’s Purge (Dec. 1648) to its dissolution by Cromwell in April 1653.

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Eikonoklastes in October and tried to debunk the Christ-like martyr legend about the late king concocted up by *Eikon Basilike*.

However, in November, a book in Latin was published in Holland, severely and publicly attacking the English republican government before all the intellectual audiences of Europe. The crown prince, Charles, in exile in Holland, asked a famous contemporary scholar worldwide, to write a royal defense. Claudius SALMASIUS/ Claude de SALMAISE (1588-1653) was the author of the book in question, *Defensio Regia Pro Carolo I*.

In *Defensio Regia* SALMASIUS denounces the English government as a military autocracy ruled by forty tyrants; they are blasphemous, vicious criminals, ‘parricides’, uncultivated barbarians; these English dregs are cruel murderers and gangs who are devastating the laws of God, nature and people.

He defends Charles I on the ground of Patriarchy. He maintains that subjects must obey their king just like they obey their fathers because the king is Father of his subjects. This assertion is, for royalists, according to the laws of nature. Also, he develops the theory of the divine rights of kings, with emphasis that kings derive their authority and sovereign power to rule their peoples from God. Therefore, people must be obedient to their kings, who are the agents of God on earth. These concepts were believed to be true by many common people and Royalists in MILTON’s day.

In January 1650, the Council of State ordered MILTON to retort to the Royal defense ‘in fluent Latin’. In the following year, MILTON published *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio* (hereafter referred to as *Defensio Prima*) as refutation of SALMASIUS, who was invited to the Palace of Christina in Sweden as an important member of the Queen’s academic circle.

III

In *Defensio Prima*, MILTON asserts that man must conquer two enemies, the outward foe tyranny and the inward foe superstition. He inveighs against SALMASIUS as the slave of tyranny and the blind follower of superstition; the concept of ‘the divine rights of kings’ is a mere product of tyranny and superstition.⁴ He devoted his energies and

⁴ As for Patriarchy theory, MILTON confutes SALMASIUS, clarifying that people, not kings, are like fathers because they choose their magistrates, and the ‘king’ is one name of magistrates, saying ‘*quod regune in familiam rursus contrundis, ut patrifamilias regem assimiles, pater crete suae familiae regnum meretur, quam omnem vel generavit, vel alit; in rege nihil est hujusmodi, sed plane contra sunt omnia.*’ (278) All the citations of *Defensio Prima* are quoted from *The Works of John Milton*, 18 vols., gen. ed. Frank A. PATTERSON (1993; New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), vol. VII. The number in parentheses after the citations shows the page number of the book.

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eyesight to defeat the arguments of SALMASIUS, citing from Roman politicians, Greek tragedies, the writings of early Christian fathers, the Bibles, the laws and histories. In the middle of 1652, he totally lost his eyesight.

As stated above, liberty is, for MILTON, the innate right of people directly endowed by God.⁵ He asserts that people built a community to keep their birth-rights because it would be difficult for them to keep liberty if they were separated from one another, being easily attacked by violent threats from outside. Their behavior runs according to the law of nature. Then they chose some magistrates from the community to make them govern it. Reasonably, if the magistrates betrayed the trust bestowed by the people, abusing their power and damaging the community, the members dismissed those magistrates and published them:

ut quo jure homines consilia et vires mutuae defensionis gratia, ante reges creatos, primo consociavere, quo jure ad communem omnium salutem, pacem, libertatem conservandam unum vel plures caeteris praefecerunt, eodem jure quos propter virtutem et prudentiam caeteris praeposuerant, possent eosdem aut quoascunque alios rempub. male gerentes, propter ignaviam, stultitiam, improbitatem...(272)

Clearly MILTON thinks that originally people built a community, exerting their might and wisdom in order to defend liberty. It is noteworthy that he regards the community as a voluntary gathering of people. MILTON puts the foundation of the self-governing community in people’s gathering, their accumulation of courage and wisdom and collaboration against the threatening outside powers. And its members entrust power and authority to those who are superior in ‘fortitude and wisdom’ to govern them. (Kings derive from instances where one person is chosen.) Here we are able to recognize the concept of magistrates as ‘public servants’.

IV

We also recognize the concept of power entrusted under the law/ contract. MILTON maintains that those who are entrusted with power and authority should be dismissed if they abuse their power.

⁵ In his religious, matrimonial, and political pamphlets, MILTON argues for three kinds of liberty; religious, matrimonial and civil liberty. For MILTON, civil liberty means the liberty for the members of a community to select the form of government and its magistrates, and depose the magistrate whose name is a king, if he runs into tyranny. Cf. 野呂有子 (金窪) Yūko Kanakubo NORO: イングランド国民の爲の第一弁護論-自由と隷従‘*Ingurando kokumin no tame no daiichi bengoron – jiyū to reijū*, [‘Liberty and Slavery in *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio*’]. In: イギリス革命におけるミルトンとバニヤン *Igirisu kakumei ni okeru Milton to Bunyan* [‘Milton & Bunyan in the English Revolution’]. Ochanomizu Shobou Publishing Company, Tokyo 1991.

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This process is according to natural law. His contract theory is conspicuously modernistic. In this point, he is totally different from Thomas HOBBS (1588-1679), whose contract theory is restricted singularly on the relation between each subject. In *Leviathan* (1651) the contract is made between each individual person, and no contract is made between magistrates and the community. They are nominated in the one-sided power-entrusting contract. Therefore,

Therefore, subjects are respectively bound by the first contract to obey their magistrates, while the magistrates owe no obligation to their subjects under the contract.⁶

In other words, Milton presupposes the voluntary formation of communities before the formation of nations/ states and regards the voluntary community as mediating between each person and the governmental body. On the other hand, Hobbes does not presuppose any community as mediating between each person and the governmental body.

Therefore, Milton’s contract theory assumes the entrusting of authority and power from people to magistrates and its deprivation from magistrates by people as the natural process under contract. Conversely, the Hobbesian contract theory does not assume any such process; sovereign authority and power are completely transferred from each person to magistrates and he/she will be impotent and powerless, arbitrarily ruled by the governmental body. Consequently, people’s rights of resisting ill-governing magistrates are derived from Milton’s theory, while no such rights are deduced from the theory of Hobbes. In Hobbes, the dissolution of a nation or governmental body directly means anarchy. However, in Milton, communities stand still even though the governmental body of the nation dissolves, and the authority and power, which was entrusted to the body, return to the communities.

V

In his *Defensio Prima*, he develops his idea of political society, adopting three Latin words, ‘civitas’ (~ country), ‘communitas’ (~ city) and ‘municipium’ (~ town). They are not used merely as the scales of certain administrative division of regions, but as revealing his concepts of community, because all of them connote the idea of a ‘self-governing’, body politic.

Moreover, his ideas of this self-governing community converge in the word, ‘commonalty’, which is repeated three times in the concluding part of *Readie and Easie Way*, and placed in juxtaposition with ‘commonwealth’, ‘more general assembly’ and ‘country’.

⁶ Yasunobu Fujiwara & Masashi Satoh, *Hobbes Leviathan*. Yuhi-kaku Publishing Company, 1978, 93.

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The other part of our freedom consists in the civil rights and advancement of every person according to his merit; the enjoyment of those never more certain, and the access to these never more open, then in a free Commonwealth, Both which . . . may be best and soonest obtained, if every countie in the land were made a kinde of subordinate *Commonalitie* or Commonwealth . . . they may . . . in these *commonalties* or in more general assemblies . . . declare and publish thir assent number of other counties or commonalties . . . [my italics.]⁷

His chief aim in juxtaposing the word, ‘commonalty’ with ‘commonwealth’, ‘more general assembly’ and ‘county’ is to cleanse preconceived notions from them and redefine them as units of the new community based on his conception of self-governing ‘communitas libera’. Also, the word ‘free’, which appears many times in *Readie and Easie Way* in the set phrase as ‘free commonwealth’, should be regarded as the reflection of Milton’s will to cleanse preconceived notions around the word ‘commonwealth’, and redefine it as a unit of his concept of original communities.

The Latin words, which connote Milton’s conception of communities, are ‘civitas’, ‘communitas’, and ‘municipium’ in *Defensio Prima*, and special attention should be paid to the fact that all of them contain the idea of a self-governing body politic regardless of their size. The most important point for Milton is not the visible grandeur of the communities, but their spirit.

Salmasius says that one of a king’s offices is to develop villages into towns, and towns into cities (*regis est, de vico municipium, de eo civitatem facere, ergo illos creat qui constituunt domum inferiorent*). In response to this, Milton declares ‘*etiam agris populous est populus*’ (428), meaning that people are people even in the fields. Here Milton awakens his audiences obsessed by the outward shaping of communities, and reminds them of the original spirit of communities.

For Milton, the laws of nature and God are the laws of community. To behave according to God’s will is to contribute to the public welfare. Thus, Milton introduces the conception of communities to objectify the existent nations against the original and ideal form. And at the same time, he uses the conception as a brake on the danger of a community transforming itself into a fanatical, self-righteous tribe. Moreover, he warns each person against degrading himself/ herself to a small-scaled *tyrant* in the name of ‘individual liberty’.

Milton regards man and wife as the smallest unit of a community. ‘It is not good that man exists alone,’ as God says in the Bible. Eve in *Paradise Lost* (1667) shows us how dangerous it is for each person to be tyrannical and drop out of a community, when she demonstrates her free will, refutes Adam on the grounds of individual liberty and dignity and is tempted by Satan and falls.

On the other hand, Milton realizes that a willful assembly aiming at a free community falls into a fanatical, self-righteous tribe. He is too conscious of it. However supreme the ideas are a body

⁷ *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, 8 vols., gen. Ed. Don M. Wolfe. New Haven 1966, vol. VII, 458f.

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politic embraces, it will corrupt in the end, if both magistrates and people are conscious of self-controlling, the history tells. In order to prevent it, the free community should be always open-minded, self-purified, and self-controlled. The devil’s party in *Paradise Lost* rebelled against God, aiming at ‘free community’, but they corrupted into a fanatical, self-satisfied tribe because they sought for their own interest, not for the public welfare of all the creatures.

Now, we are here together seeking for the ideal community on a worldwide scale. This global community of ours consists not only of all human beings, but all animals and plants as well. I am deeply honored to attend this symposium and present Milton’s idea of a free community. Just as Milton says, even in the fields, we are free people and must try to make a global community.

With five minutes left in my presentation, I would like to give notice to two interesting aspects of *Paradise Lost* from an intercultural point of view.

One is about the difference of attitudes toward contaminated situations. In Book X, Eve realizes that the results of her behavior will have serious influence on all of her posterity, so she proposes double-suicide to Adam. This is Eve’s second temptation of Adam, and because she is truly sincere and seemingly seeking for the public welfare of all human beings, her proposal is far more dangerous than that of the first temptation. They are on the verge of sinning again and the result would be irrecoverable. But this time, Adam dissuades her, and they decide to live, believing in God’s Providence. In this scene, a kind of cultural conflict occurs. Adam represents one type of culture, which forbids suicide, and Eve represents the other, which admits suicide.⁸

Secondly, Satan having given a victorious speech after he caused Adam and Eve’s fall, he is transformed into the shape of a serpent together with other devils. This scene is Milton’s original as well as the first aspect stated above. However, since the Old Testament chose the serpent as the tempter in Eden, the fate of these serpent⁹s was determined in the Christian culture, where various figures of serpents have been represented as the symbol of enemies, which Christians must fight and conquer.

However, there are many types of cultures in the world, which admire serpents as divine beings, symbolizing supernatural abilities and abundant prosperities of plants and animals, for example, Egyptian, Chinese and Japanese cultures.

⁸ Cf. Yūko Kanakubo Noro (2002): *A Comparative Study of ‘the Ultimate Love’ in Paradise Lost and Shitsurakuen*. In: Tokyo Seitoku University Bulletin, no. 9, (Tokyo Seitoku University). As for equality between man and woman in Milton’s ideal community, they are on the contract of marriage and their relation is on the equal terms as far as they rely on ‘recta ratio’ and communicate to the full, when they confront many problems to solve, while Eve obeys Adam as her ‘head’.

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In Japan, many houses have *kamidana* 神棚, a Shintoist family altar with *shimenawa* しめ縄, a kind of holy rope originally signifies the intercourse of male and female serpents twisting and winding each other.¹⁰

The Greek culture has Medusa, the Gorgon sisters, who also had been divine beings, symbolizing abundance and prosperity of plants and animals, as Yoshinori Yasuda and other scholars point out.¹¹ He maintains that these cultures, which admire the supernatural power of serpents also admire forests. The devastation of forests began when people stopped admiring serpents, he asserts.

Not only in Japan, but also here in Mainz as part of the Old German culture, I am told, the Druid religion, which admired serpents and the forests, prospered.¹² Here I find even now that the spirit of the Ancient religion survives, preserving the forests and nature.

We must regain the wisdom, which is contained in various cultures in the world, old and new, and apply it to solve such problems as global warning, the greenhouse effect and others confronting us.

¹⁰ Cf. Yoshinori Yasuda 安田善憲 (1994): 蛇と十字架-東西の風土と宗教 *Hebi to Jūjika – Tōzai no Hūdo to Shūkyō* [‘Serpents and Rosaries – Weathers, Lands, and Religions in the East and West’]. Jinbun Shoin Publishing Company, Tokyo.

¹¹ Cf. Yasuda: *Hebi-to-Jūjika*. And Yasuda asserts that Yuko Ueno began to study the holy functions of serpents in Japanese Shintoist Cultures as one of the pioneers.

¹² Cf. J. Miranda Green (1997): *Exploring the World of Druids*. Thames & Hudson Ltd., et al.