THIS BODY IS WITHOUT A HEAD:

THE DILEMMA OF FREE WILL AND SOCIAL COHESION IN POST-CIVIL WAR
ENGLAND

By Sheena Jary, B.A. (Hons.), M.A.

A Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree Doctor of Philosophy

## Abstract

This dissertation examines how the chaotic social space of post-civil war England inspired new ideas of the ideal social structure and its ability to create social and political stability. Focusing on three non-fiction prose tracts, Margaret Cavendish's *Worlds Olio* (1655), Thomas Traherne's *Christian Ethicks* (1675), and Gerrard Winstanley's *Law of Freedom* (1652), I use the concept of "space-making," or "how texts aided readers in *producing* the space in which they understood humanity to be living" (Sauter 47), to engage three distinct perspectives on social cohesion. I situate my study within the larger context of the scientific revolution, and what Michael Sauter calls the "spatial reformation," whereby humanist thinkers embraced Euclidean geometry to "make" space in a manner akin to God.

I argue that, through their writing, Cavendish, Traherne, and Winstanley structure theoretical space to control, guide, or influence how social beings relate to one another and to the state. In doing so they make social space heterogeneous. The authors create theoretical spaces in which alternatives to England's social structure are outlined. These alternatives reflect the subjectivity and interests of the space-maker, and while each author wishes to establish social cohesion in post-civil war England, the spaces they create reveal unique perspectives on social responsibility, free will, and self-preservation, leading readers to question the benefits and drawbacks of social cohesion.

**Acknowledgements**

I have a lot to be grateful for, but let me begin with my parents, Mike and Katherine Jary. You have been endlessly supportive and my greatest cheerleader. I appreciate that you always believe in me. And, of course, I appreciate that you would visit me in Hamilton. I am very luck to have the support of my family. I would also like to thank the Reverend Dr. Lissa Wray Beal. You have been a great source of support, insight, and advice. I am very happy that, at last, we are living in the same province. I would also like to honour the memory of Margaret Jary, my late grandmother; she would have been very proud to know how far I have come. Many thanks to Ian Jary and Hannah Edwards; it is always nice to come home for Christmas to see you. And now we have Ellie Jary: this book will serve as some light bedtime reading for this bright little girl!

I would also like to thank Ilona Forgo-Smith, who has answered my seemingly endless questions with patience and grace. Thank you, Ilona, for so many pleasant conversations over the years. I would be remiss were I not to recognize the role of Antoinette Somo in my personal and professional success. Antoinette has always had my best interests at heart. I appreciate that you have believed in and supported me, Antoinette. You may often work behind the scenes, but you have played a central role in my personal and professional wellbeing and I cannot thank you enough.

I am tremendously grateful to my external examiner, Dr. Gary Kuchar from the University of Victoria. Dr. Kuchar: thank you for taking such an interest in my work. Your enthusiasm and engagement during my defence made the process engaging and enjoyable. I would also like to thank Dr. Peter Walmsley for serving as my third reader. Peter: I appreciated your reflective comments in the revisions process because they pushed me to consider things that were not necessarily on my radar. Many thanks to Dr. Melinda Gough for serving as my second reader. Melinda: you have been such a great cheerleader over the past few years and I have enjoyed working with you immensely. I would also like to thank Dr. Jeffery Donaldson, who chaired my defence. Jeffery, I am looking forward to future conversations on mathematics, poems, and infinity.

Words cannot adequately express how much I appreciate my supervisor, Dr. Mary Silcox. You have kept me anchored and focused, even when that was difficult for me. Working with you has been such an enjoyable experience and I am looking forward to many more tea dates down the road. I am *infinitely* (!) grateful. Happy retirement!

There are many people whom I have not acknowledged here, but I will say that I have built great friendships and established a diverse network of colleagues from across campus. I could not be more pleased with my choice to attend McMaster. Before choosing where to complete my PhD, I could see that McMaster was full of promising opportunities here—and I was not disappointed! I am grateful for the opportunities I have had to diversify my teaching portfolio and share my research.

Many thanks to one and all.

**Table of Contents**

## Introduction

> "Oh God, I could be bounded in a nutshell, and count myself
> a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams"
> (Shakespeare, *Hamlet* II.2.273-75)

In a single motion, the self-proclaimed "martyr of the people" was dead ("Scaffold" 10).

Charles I of England was executed in 1649 for his tyrannical approach to governance that

ultimately led to the English civil wars (1642-1651). In 1651, Thomas Hobbes published

*Leviathan* with a frontispiece,[1] designed by Abraham Bosse, depicting the exiled heir,

Charles II, as a composite of numerous faceless bodies—or a generic representation of

the English people. This image anticipated the Restoration of the Stuart monarchy, and it

is an apt way to begin a discussion on human relationships, social structure, and space in

post-civil war England. The title of this dissertation, "This Body is Without a Head: The

Dilemma of Free Will and Social Cohesion in Post-Civil War England," underscores the

social upheaval caused not only by the civil wars, but also by the execution of the

ordained monarch—God's representative in the physical world. It is difficult to

comprehend the shock the English people must have felt at witnessing the literal head of

God's anointed king—and the figurative head of the English body—severed by its own

hand. England was left, at least temporarily, without a leader, without a head to guide the

nation. The chaos of social instability and the political division that followed civil war

broke the bonds of social hierarchy that governed the relationships between individual

actors. Both Royalists and Parliamentarians believed in their cause—and each party

---

[1] See Appendix 1.

believed that God favoured their cause. In a sense, the body of England self-destructed in its attempt to reconfigure itself as a peaceful, harmonious whole.

The civil wars placed the country in a state of disorder; the people remained divided, and political partisanship fuelled debates over which faction was in the right. Changed power dynamics during the final years of the civil wars and the Interregnum disturbed England's pre-existing social hierarchy. Not only were the royal forests and woods belonging to royalist landowners "turned over to cultivation, either by sequestrators or purchasers," but many noble estates were also confiscated and "sold by Parliament in large blocks" (Hill, *Revolution* 148).[2] The Protectoral Parliament government[3] also held the balance of social and political power during the Interregnum.

---

[2] More recently, David L. Smith and Patrick Little explain that, during the Protectorate, Royalists, Irish Papists, and anyone else who refused to pledge their support to the Protectorate government would either have their lands permanently seized or they would be deemed "disabled" and would be barred from collecting profits made off rent (36). Ann Hughes and Amos Tubb also support the argument that defeated Royalist landowners, who either refused to take an Engagement oath to the commonwealth or who lived in exile, had their lands confiscated, or were unable to make a profit from their lands. See Tubb's "The Engagement Controversy: A Victory for the English Republic," and Hughes' "Gender Trouble: Women's Agency and Gender Relations in the English Revolution." In a different vein, John A. Shedd examines the ways that Royalists, whose lands were confiscated by Parliament to "repay war debts with rents collected from losers' property" (1093), used the "due process of law" upheld by the Indemnity Committee to regain access to their estates and collect rents from their properties while in exile. Despite the fact that the Indemnity Committee was staffed with "radical MPs," Shedd explains that exiled royalists had great success at regaining their property despite Parliament's desire to confiscate lands and rents to pay their debt. The success of the Royalists was due to the "pervasive . . . legalistic mindsets" in the courts (1093). See Shedd's "Legalism over Revolution: The Parliamentary Committee for Indemnity and Property Confiscation Disputes, 1647-1655."

[3] The Rump Parliament (1648-1653) was dissolved by Cromwell in April 1653, at which point England was ruled by Cromwell as a Protectorate until his death in 1658; his son, Richard Cromwell continued the Protectorate government, but was overthrown in 1659 by the army, at which point England returned to its status as a Republic until the Restoration of Charles II in 1660 (also facilitated by the army). See Blair Worden's *The Rump Parliament, 1648-1653* and Worden's *God's Instruments: Political Conduct in the England of Oliver Cromwell*. See also David L. Smith and Patrick Little's *Parliaments and Politics during the Cromwellian Protectorate*.

In his discussion of the gentry and landed gentry of Cromwellian England, Henry French

explains that:

> The centrality of local office to the gentry's self-identity is emphasised by the
> alienation and anger created by their exclusion from power during the civil war
> and the Cromwellian era. At such times, gentry on the wrong side probably
> agreed with Sir John Oglander that, 'If thou hast not Somm Commande in thy
> cowntery, thou will not be esteemed of the Common Sort of people, whoe hath
> more of feare, then love in them.' The deprivation of such supports turned many
> royalist and moderate parliamentarian gentry into political recusants, who focused
> their efforts on protecting their landed interests, social networks and cultural
> capital in the localities. (425)

French's assessment of the changing social dynamics of post-civil war England speaks to

a more general experience belonging to all English people: that the revolution led to

profoundly different experiences of social discord and war, even within one's own class.

After the civil wars, some Royalist gentry, for example, allied themselves with

Parliamentarians in order to preserve their estates and titles (French 425). Class was not

the only source of division during the civil wars and Interregnum, though. While

Cromwell practiced religious tolerance, this only applied to Protestant sects like

Independents and Presbyterians (Worden 137); the Irish Catholics were a different story.

Cromwell is famously known for leading the Conquest in Ireland; part of the goal was to

"settle" and populate Ireland with the intention of stabilizing the post-war settlement by

eradicating papists, securing the safety of Protestant England, and "rebuilding the English

state in Ireland" (Cunningham 832).[4] Religion and the economy certainly fuelled the civil

---

[4] The threat of Catholicism was a concern in England throughout the seventeenth century, so it comes as no
surprise that the Conquest's army grew increasingly violent in their attempt to subdue the "obstinate"
Catholic population (Cunningham 839). Those who opposed Cromwell's army were condemned to death
(831). John Cunningham estimates that at least 80,000 men were executed during the Conquest; moreover,
Cromwell's army "committed a large-scale massacre," although Cromwell's intentions are a subject of
debate. John Morrill, for example, believes Cromwell was "the leading force for moderation," arguing that

wars, but so did the emergence of a "public" for national politics—"one that was not easily controlled"—as Michael Braddick notes (5). "Political rumour, circulating manuscripts, and, increasingly, pamphlets . . . constituted an ongoing framework for future political action" (5), writes Braddick, who also points out that, instead of "seeking origins for the party positions" at the outbreak of the civil wars, we should instead focus on "reconstructing the frames of reference and traditions of interpretation" tied to the escalation of conflict in England, Ireland, and Scotland (5). French explains that the English class system underwent massive changes in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but it was not until 1650 that the "changing social horizons and shifts in the bases of . . . social authority" gained momentum (421). Braddick notes that "the persistence of noble power has been emphasized as part of a broader critique of attempts to link political conflict directly to the effects of changes in social structure" but that this approach remains controversial because the "social history of politics has more recently been written around the history of political communication, and forms of communal and popular politics" (9). It appears that there are two things that these causes of war have in common: diversity in opinion and new opportunities for more people to participate in politics, even if only through discussion.

---

the Act for the Settling of Ireland was signed against Cromwell's wishes by the army's "republican opponents" (205-6). Andrew Marvell's poem, "An Horation Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland" celebrates Cromwell's Conquest in Ireland, referring to Cromwell as "taming" the Irish in one year. Even John Dryden, who praised the Restoration of Charles II, wrote a poem celebrating the life of Cromwell (in "Heroic Stanzas") upon Cromwell's death in 1658. Dryden is an excellent example of someone whose allegiances changed based on the political climate—not because he was bereft of a moral compass, but because his preference was to sustain peace. The type of leader (monarch or lord protector) was less of an issue so long as the nation was stable.

Writing from a twentieth-century Marxist perspective, Christopher Hill underscores the discrepancies that accompanied the belief that the civil wars were God's way of punishing the English people for their conduct.[5] "God regularly showed his approval and disapproval of human actions, particularly those of rulers," writes Hill; the problem, however, "was how to interpret the signs. For many, success seemed evidence of God's support, and failure witnessed to divine disapproval . . . Arguments of this type were naturally used when convenient by both sides as the fortunes of the civil war swayed backwards and forwards" (21). We find support for this statement in an anonymous 1654 tract, which argues that "The first and general cause was the Sins of the People" (*Britania Triumphalis*; a brief history of the Warres in 1654, qtd. in Richardson 3). Much like the practice of attributing a success or failure in war to God's favour or disfavour, human sinfulness as a cause of war is also a subjective interpretation of historical events. Interpreting God's favour or disapproval was just that—interpretive, or subject to bias. Because there was no means of verifying who God favoured, each party believed that the opposing party was at fault and each party believed themselves wronged by the opposing party; both parties could be viewed as right and wrong simultaneously. The problem with this sort of reasoning is that the conflict continues.

---

[5] Hill's historical accounts of the English civil wars and the conflicts that led to and followed the wars are one-sided and favour Marxist readings that are "implicit rather than explicit—underlying assumptions rather than clearly developed arguments . . . he analyzed the civil war solely in terms of social change within England" although "most historians now see the wars of the 1640s and 1650s as embracing the three kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland, so explanations in purely English terms are inadequate" (Miller 502).

With respect to the conflict between Parliamentarians and Royalists, R.C. Richardson writes that,

> in the seventeenth century the historical controversy over the English Revolution was primarily political and constitutional. With the Civil Wars still fresh in their minds, contemporaries on both sides of the political fence vigorously debated the issues which had been defended and fought over in the 1630s and 1640s. Royalists and Parliamentarians both found their historians, who based their rival accounts on the abundant pamphlet literature of the period, on party manifestoes and reports of parliamentary speech, on newspaper evidence, and last but by no means least on their own personal experience and prejudice. (12)

Richardson's final remark on the role of personal experience and prejudice with respect to interpreting the events of the civil wars is integral to this dissertation, because it underscores the presence of subjectivity in shaping how people thought and wrote about what the structure of society should be following the civil wars. The subjectivity of personal experience may lead one writer to believe that order and stability require a restored monarchic structure, while another writer might reject this structure in favour of a desire for representational government.

Social cohesion connotes stability and unity; it suggests that the bonds and relationships between social actors are clearly defined, leading to a harmonious whole—or an aggregate like Bosse's frontispiece for *Leviathan*. Plato's *Gorgias* suggests that social cohesion can in fact be viewed singularly: "We are told on good authority . . . that heaven and earth and their respective inhabitants are held together by the bonds of society and love and order and discipline and righteousness, and that is why the universe is called

an ordered whole or cosmos and not a state of disorder and licence" (117-18).[6] Like the writers I discuss in this dissertation, Margaret Cavendish, Thomas Traherne, and Gerrard Winstanley, Plato writes of an *idealized* social space; moreover, the writers whose work I examine lived through the violence of the civil wars, just as Plato lived and wrote during the Peloponnesian War. The point I am making is that, frequently, philosophical iterations of society—what *could* be, rather than what *is*—are the product of one writer's attempt to design an ideal social space that could supplant the chaos and violence of a war-torn society. In essence, idealized social spaces are raised as well-intended solutions to contemporaneous problems. Social cohesion as the outcome of social reform aimed at stabilizing and regulating human relationships is something that Cavendish, Traherne, and Winstanley have in common, although they aim to achieve cohesion through different means. However, social cohesion—well-intended as it may be—is open to interpretation. Social cohesion may signify stability and order, but the means by which it is achieved vary according to the space-maker's beliefs about social structure.

In addition to the upheaval in social spaces caused by the civil wars and the toppling of kingship in England, a different and crucial influence on people's conceptions of space was spreading—that is, the spatial reformation or geometrization of space (Koyré viii). A primarily scientific movement about how space is to be understood may appear disconnected from my analysis of social space and social cohesion, but it is a significant part of this dissertation's contextual framework, for it affected people's

---

[6] It is worth pointing out that Plato's idealized society ensures that social agents are well-ordered and have no "license"; in other words, their agency and free will are suppressed in Plato's attempt to achieve a harmonious social space.

perceptions of the relationship of human life to the space around them. Alexandre Koyré

explains that the structural patterns of old and new world views changed in the

seventeenth century, and he attributes these changes to

> the destruction of the cosmos and the geometrization of space, that is, the
> substitution for the conception of the world as a finite and well-ordered whole, in
> which the spatial structure embodied a hierarchy of perfection and value, that of
> an indefinite or even infinite universe no longer united by natural subordination,
> but unified only by the identity of its ultimate and basic components and laws;
> and the replacement of the Aristotelian conception of space – a differentiated set
> of innerworldly places – by that of Euclidean geometry[7] – an essentially infinite
> and homogeneous extension – *from now on considered as identical with the real
> space of the world*. (viii; emphasis mine)

Koyré is describing an intellectual movement that Michael Sauter later calls the spatial

reformation (c.1350-1850), or the "thoroughgoing application of geometry's idealized

space to both Heaven and Earth" (22).[8] Koyré argues that Euclidean space (i.e.,

geometric)—which is infinite and homogeneous—became considered by seventeenth-

century early moderns as identical to the real-world space in which human bodies exist.

This revision is not simply the shift from the Ptolemaic concept of the universe (or world

in seventeenth-century terms) to the Copernican system; both of these conceptions of

space focus on astronomy and both maintain the ordered concentric spheres for planets

and stars. Likewise, both the Ptolemaic and Copernican models were *closed* worlds,

meaning that space was not considered infinite or homogeneous space, but instead

maintained clearly divided (concentric) spheres within which heavenly bodies (stars,

---

[7] As a point of reference, Robert Lawlor defines geometry as "the study of spatial order through the measure and relationships of forms" (7).

[8] Idealized space is theoretical and exists within the mind; in essence, it is the combination of imagination and geometry that creates idealized spaces in which matter is ordered. These spaces can manifest in the physical world when the actions of an individual transfer ideal space into real space (i.e., the actualization of idealized space). In other words, this transfer is a thought or idea put into action; the idea begins internally, while the action is executed externally.

planets, etc.) were situated. The main change with the Copernican system is that it places

the sun at the centre of the cosmos (heliocentric), rather than the earth (geocentric). Both

support a hierarchy of ascending perfection and the related theory of correspondences

which was believed to structure all relationships.[9] Starting in the sixteenth century,

however, writers such as Thomas Digges, Giordano Bruno and William Gilbert went so

far as to argue that the universe could be infinite and the stars could be suns (Dreyer 410).

By the middle of the seventeenth century this concept became widely accepted, supported

by thinkers like René Descartes. In place of the earlier Aristotelian structure is

homogeneous space—unstructured, uniform, with no centre. All these theories are human

conceptualizations and therefore mental and social experiences of space—not just the

spaces beyond the earth, but space as we live within it. That experience is understood

entirely through relationships—a change in how space is conceptualized is necessarily a

change in the relationships that define it.

 Sauter explains that, when the final three books of Euclid's *Elements* were

recovered and translated into Latin, early modern thinkers realized that "the new three-

dimensional mode of representation sustained a human perspective on Creation that was,

as it turned out, frighteningly akin to God's view (19).[10] Consequently, "The rise and

---

[9] The theory of correspondences is an "intuited relationship between the macrocosm and the microcosm" (Ulmer 82) and between all levels of all corresponding hierarchies (e.g., monarchs, lions, eagles, and gold all exist at the top of their respective hierarchies), which is another way of encapsulating Plato's Theory of Correspondences "which held that material bodies are transient shadows of immutable divine ones" that helped explain "the conundrums of change" (Horton 98). See Heninger's *The Cosmographical Glass: Renaissance Diagrams of the Universe* for further discussion. In homogeneous space, all planets, stars, and heavenly bodies intermingle—and they also share the same space as God's earthly creation.

[10] The final 3 book of *Elements* mobilize the three-dimensional approach previously reserved for the space of the heavens for the terrestrial world, meaning that the heavens and earth constitute the same space (i.e., homogeneous, geometric space).

diffusion of a fully Euclidean sense of space was, therefore, a first step in what became the thoroughgoing humanization of European thought and culture" (20). Frances Yates also touches upon humanity's newfound perspective on space, noting that the move from the "mediaeval world-picture" whereby "the earth is still at the bottom and at the centre, with next the spheres of the planets in the Chaldean or Ptolemaic order with the sun in the middle," then the "sphere of fixed stars, and then the divine sphere with the angels, and above them, God" was not a change in space, but a change in the way humans conceptualized space (144). Yates explains, "What has changed is Man, now no longer only the pious spectator of God's wonders in the creation, and the worshipper of God himself above the creation, but Man the operator, Man who seeks to draw power from the divine and natural order" (144). Yates discusses this change with reference to Renaissance magic and science, but her point that the changing beliefs about space were products of the human mind is important. The homogeneous space of Euclidean geometry is precisely that: a product of the human mind, or a new way of conceptualizing space in the world.

The collapse of the Aristotelian hierarchy is undisputed by scholars of medieval and early modern science and space,[11] but what has gone unaddressed is the continued presence of hierarchical space in a social, rather than philosophical and scientific context, as exemplified in the select works of Margaret Cavendish, Thomas Traherne, and Gerrard

---

[11] Sauter's and Koyré's description of the rise of homogeneous space and the fall of Aristotelian hierarchy is not a new argument, as we see in Arthur O. Lovejoy's *The Great Chain of Being*, E.M.W. Tillyard's *The Elizabethan World Picture*, and Isabel Rivers's *Classical and Christian Ideas in English Renaissance Poetry*.

Winstanley whose writing I explore in this dissertation.[12] Divinely created space,[13] in general, was widely accepted as theoretical, homogeneous, and uniform. At the very same time, humanmade spaces—like those of post civil-war England—were also changing in response to internal strife and evolving beliefs about proper governance and yet, I argue, these structured social spaces resist homogeneity. Imperfect human beings with finite knowledge simply cannot create uniform homogeneous space, making heterogeneous space a qualifier for humanmade spaces. These co-existing spaces—in the seventeenth century still divinely created (i.e., homogeneous, perfect, infinite) and humanmade spaces (i.e., heterogeneous, divided)—were both reconceptualized in the seventeenth century. While a belief in the infinity and homogenization of space did demonstrably become widespread in mid-seventeenth century England, both Koyré and Sauter argue that this logic extended to seventeenth-century social space. By Sauter's reasoning, human beings now understood themselves as thoroughly occupying the same space as God (Sauter 26) and he supports his claim through focusing on issues such as religion, politics, art, globemaking, interactions between Europeans and non-Europeans, and inventions such as clocks. Stating explicitly that his study of homogeneous space is purely anthropological, he uses homogeneous space to guide his analysis of the cultural implications of geometry and homogeneity. Sauter's claim that space is homogeneous

---

[12] Sauter's and Koyré's description of the rise of homogeneous space and the fall of Aristotelian hierarchy is not a new argument, as we see in Arthur O. Lovejoy's *The Great Chain of Being*, E.M.W. Tillyard's *The Elizabethan World Picture*, and Isabel Rivers's *Classical and Christian Ideas in English Renaissance Poetry*.

[13] I define this in more detail below, but the general premise of divinely created space is that it was created *a priori* to human life; thus, it can be observed and theorized, but it cannot be changed. I use the term "divinely created space" to differentiate from finite humanmade social spaces that are embedded in the terrestrial world.

clearly applies to both the heavens and the earth, hence my interest in social space and its resistance to homogeneity.[14]

Sauter does not explain how homogeneous space is reconciled with the Aristotelian hierarchy that characterizes social space, arguing that secularism took over seventeenth-century thought and implying that there is no need to reconcile these opposing views.[15] The historical context of early modern England, however, does not support Sauter's claim of secularism. The English civil wars are evidence that seventeenth-century England was not secularized.[16] Sauter contends that "homogeneous space becomes . . . the broadest emancipatory phenomena" in the early modern period, for "early modern thinkers not only celebrated geometry but also deployed its idealized space in a way that liberated humanity from both God and His cosmos" (22). But again, Sauter's claim that homogeneous space was broadly emancipatory rests on his assessment that early modern thinkers wished to free themselves from God. The history

---

[14] Another recent study on the relationship between geometry and space is Amir Alexander's *Infinitesimal: How a Mathematical Theory Shape the Modern World* (2015).

[15] Sauter nevertheless devotes an entire chapter to the ways that Hobbes's non-Euclidean geometry served as the foundation for *Leviathan*. Hobbes did not believe space to be homogeneous (Sauter 188), hence the rigid political structure of Leviathan—a structure that could be called heterogeneous based on its various divisions. That a prominent thinker like Hobbes rejects homogeneous space speaks to a weakness in Sauter's claim that early moderns believed **all** space to be homogeneous. Hobbes serves to contradict this claim; however, instead of engaging with this contradiction, Sauter suggests—with no support—that the unpopularity of Hobbes's *Leviathan* in the seventeenth century was the result of the author's rejection of Euclidean geometry (188). The implication is that, had Hobbes embraced Euclidean geometry and its homogeneous space, his political philosophy would have been embraced, rather than criticized.

[16] Sauter cites Hobbes and Locke as examples of secular thinkers (39). Sauter also refers to the "retreat of religious institutions from society" as the result of spatial secularization in early modern Europe, but the English civil wars oppose this claim. Religion played a significant role in the conflict of the civil wars, for example. It is possible that Sauter uses the term "secular" to describe knowledge produced by philosophers with no formal theological training, but he does not clarify how he uses this word. It seems most likely that he understands secularism as the gradual dismissal of God from society, though I would not say this definition applies to seventeenth-century England.

and literature of seventeenth-century England consistently disproves Sauter's claim. While secular thought did creep into English intellectual circles later in the seventeenth century, it was not people who were liberated from God, but rather, scientific and political thought did not hinge entirely upon God as the first mover.

This thesis focuses on three non-fiction prose tracts: Cavendish's *Worlds Olio* (1655), Traherne's *Christian Ethicks* (1675), and Winstanley's *Law of Freedom* (1652). I use the concept of "space-making," or "how texts aided readers in *producing* the space in which they understood humanity to be living" (Sauter 47), to engage with the beliefs and values asserted in these texts. These three authors ideate social structures that they believe would establish social cohesion, had their social structures been adopted for use. The social space of post-civil-war England was not just physically damaged – it was ideologically fractured in its politics, faith, and beliefs about social structure—but the methods with which these three writers aim to return England to a cohesive, orderly society are notably differentiated. One property that all three texts have in common, though, is that they resist homogeneity; these spaces are structured by divisive methods of organizing people and relations.

I argue that, through writing—a form of space-making—Cavendish, Traherne, and Winstanley shape their ideal social spaces with structures that control, guide, or influence how social beings relate to one another and to the state. In doing so they make social space heterogeneous, thereby refuting the claim that space is uniform and homogeneous. The authors conceptualize spaces in which alternatives to England's social structure are outlined; these alternatives reflect the subjectivity and experiences of the

space-maker, and while each author wishes to establish social cohesion in post-civil war England, the spaces they create reveal unique perspectives on social responsibility, free will, and self-preservation, leading readers to question the benefits and drawbacks of social cohesion. At the core of each author's social space is a thematic constant: for Cavendish, *order* truncates the free will and self-determination of all commoners, because by controlling the wills of commoners the nobility is free to thrive in an orderly social space; for Traherne, *harmony* reveals the author's idealism, illuminating issues related to self-interest and agency; and for Winstanley, *unity* comes at the cost of total compliance and the loss of individual identity, agency, and free thought. These three authors engage in a form of speculative writing—a means of responding to real social problems by composing what they believed were viable alternatives to their current existence in post-civil war England.

As space-makers, Cavendish, Traherne, and Winstanley mirror what was seen as God's creative capacity, but what they create is a society in their own image, that is, one that mobilizes their own values to forge an ideal society. We therefore see that these space-makers establish a new macrocosmic-microcosmic relationship. Their writing constitutes an ideological microcosm within which individual human beings are ordered, influenced, and interconnected by the macrocosmic ideology of the space-maker. That there could exist many viable alternatives to the current social structure—and that these alternatives exist as distinct from the homogeneous space of the heavens created by God—only reaffirms that spatial homogeneity cannot be viewed as universally true for early modern thinkers. According to Alison Findlay, "each social formation constructs

objective conceptions of space and time sufficient unto its own needs and purposes of material and social reproduction" (170), and while I do not agree that social constructs are created objectively, Findlay's point that conceptualizations of space serve specific needs is apt.

My dissertation aims to begin a conversation about how social space-making transforms empty, imaginary space into heterogeneous spaces that resist the uniformity and sameness attributed to homogeneous space—the dominant concept. We see that humanmade spaces simply cannot be homogeneous; they must be heterogeneous—i.e., spaces of many parts[17]—because as Pascal states, humankind cannot conceive of limitless space, or infinitude (no. 199). A finite mind cannot create a perfectly uniform, infinite space. The moment one believes one understands infinitude, that space becomes finite. The ways people experience space change based on their spatiotemporal position; what is "good" for Cavendish, for example, would not be deemed "good" by Winstanley. By looking at social space-making and the practical use of space to establish an author's version of social cohesion, a paradox is revealed: heterogeneous space accentuates economic and social inequality, and yet it is imperative for the existence of free will and the possibility of having unique lived experiences. Homogeneity promotes the idea that

---

[17] Keith Wrightson's work on social order and class division in early modern England supports my description of society as heterogeneous. He explains that, in the early modern period (Tudor and Stuart reigns), "there were forces active which served to accentuate inequalities and to enhance social and cultural differentiation, and which overlapped in such a way as to intensify the risk of conflict—between landlords and tenants, the 'better sort' and the 'meaner sort,' the 'godly' and the 'ungodly,' the 'polite' and the 'vulgar'" (200).

space and matter are uniform, but this premise is challenged by the heterogeneous nature of humanmade social spaces.

**"Space" and Its Forms**

Space is conceptual and takes many forms, especially in a context in which space could refer to boundary-setting, restricted areas, private property, punitive settings, or even more casually as "personal space" or an expressed need for space.[18] For this dissertation, my references to space are reserved for homogeneous space (i.e., uniform, infinite space created by God), social space (i.e., finite, heterogeneous space created by humans), and mind-space (i.e., mind as space). Space is characterized by the manifestation of material relationships that exist within it, and while space is indiscernible and characterless without matter, matter cannot exist without space—after all, space may be perceived as nothing, but matter cannot exist *nowhere*. Before moving into a synopsis of the larger historical context of the changing beliefs about space, I would first like to specify how I define these three types of space.

The notion of spatial homogeneity began to appear in Europe in the thirteenth century when Arabic translations of the *Elements*—the ancient Greek masterpiece written by Euclid of Alexandria—resurfaced at roughly the same time as Aristotle's corpus (Sauter 9).[19] In approximately 1350, European thinkers began applying Euclid's

---

[18] Technically speaking, space has no form; rather, it is a mental aid that allows the human mind to establish relationships, status, and power dynamics between material things, including people. However, it is difficult to avoid discussing space without reference to form and structure. In essence, space is where matter is situated—and these situations are valuated by human beings, designating some spaces elite and others undesirable.

[19] Sauter notes that "Medieval thinkers had also studied Euclid's greatest work, but they generally concentrated on the planar geometry in the *Elements*' first six books. Early modern thinkers, in contrast,

geometry to the terrestrial world and, in doing so, introduced the concept of spatial

homogeneity—an entirely new approach to understanding God's cosmos that moved

away from the medieval cosmological view that space is fractured and hierarchical (10;

48).[20] Stated plainly, the heavens and the terrestrial world all existed in the same space;

there was no longer a division between immutable and mutable realms. Although initially

used in support of the medieval cosmovision that placed God and the heavens "above" in

an impenetrable and perfect space, leaving humankind "below" in an imperfect space, the

*Elements*' conceptualization of homogeneous space diametrically opposed the biblical

configurations of the cosmos reinforced by notions of Aristotelian space (Sauter 9).[21]

While the Bible "incorporated a hierarchical arrangement of Heaven and Earth," the

*Elements* "denied such a hierarchy through its cultivation of an intrinsically uniform

idealized space," otherwise known as homogeneous space (Sauter 5). Importantly,

geometric, homogeneous space is an infinite, uniform spatial plane; space is the same

everywhere. There is no center or circumference—as Cusanus (qtd. in Danielson 97)[22]

and Pascal (Pascal 60) point out—because it is unending and everlasting; there can be no

---

increasingly studied the entire *Elements*, including especially its final three books, which cover spherical geometry" (2).

[20] The medieval cosmological space places God "above" his creation in a separate, impenetrable space. Humankind had to look upwards to the heavens to situate God, whereas God had to look down to see his creation. With homogeneous space, there was no long an "up" or "down" in space; instead, space was about the relationships between people, an immaterial God, and the other material things in the surrounding world. Fractured space is heterogeneous because it is divided into discrete sections, whereas homogeneous space is unified and all space is considered one.

[21] Aristotelian space is hierarchical and reinforces the early modern Christian view that God was "above" and humankind was "below," and that they inhabited two separate spaces; whereas God inhabited the heavens—a perfect and eternal space—humankind inhabited the finite space of the world—a space infected by sin (Sauter 10; Rabin 92).

[22] See Dennis Richard Danielson's *The Book of the Cosmos: Imagining the Universe from Heraclitus to Hawking*.

centre in a boundless expanse of space. When employed by geometers, homogeneous

space is *idealized*; in essence, geometry is a *tool* that enables the mind to visualize order

between material bodies in theoretical space; after all, space is inconceivable without

material relationships, for it is visibly *nothing* without material relativity. Geometric

space's supposed infinitude is speculative; like infinity, homogeneity is a term that

signifies the absence of understanding. If infinity is understood as forever and

everywhere, no human being can verify this claim, for we are temporally restricted by our

own mortality.[23] Thus, infinity and homogeneity both signify something beyond the

mind's capacity to visualize and comprehend.[24] Homogeneous space is unified and all

space is considered one.

Conversely, heterogeneous space implies the existence of separate spaces that are

in some way divided from other spaces by boundaries, either physical or conceptual.

While homogeneous space is uniform, heterogeneous space is segregated and divided. In

the context of space-making, human beings are incapable of creating homogeneous space

---

[23] This struggle with infinitude is expressed in Pascal's wager, whereby the author uses mathematics to argue that it is bettter to believe in God and be wrong, than to reject God only to learn he—and eternity—is in fact real. Believing in God results in no loss, because—in death—eternity may or may not exist, but the living being has no way to confirm this. Like infinity and homogeneity, eternity is a boundless concept that can only be understood in terms of humankind's finitude or incapacity to know something beyond our intellectual limitations. See Pascal's *Pensées*.

[24] The problem of infinity is arguably related to the fact that human ignorance forms unstable axioms upon which new arguments are founded. As defined by the *OED*, faith is "to give credence to, believe in, trust," a definition supported by the statement that faith brings something into being that did not previously exist. God is accepted as absolutely true by Christians, yet his existence cannot be proven. Arguments about space, matter, and infinity are thus constructed on the foundation of faith, rather than certainty. Were we to consider this from a linguistic point of view, God is a signifier whose "signified" cannot be imagined, understood, or conceived of in any way; thus, a murky signified becomes the new signifier for infinity— another concept that cannot be understood. It is only logical that, when infinity becomes the next signifier in the semiotic chain, it will signify something inconceivable. The foundation for knowledge of space and matter, then, becomes something that the finite mind created, yet fails to understand.

for two reasons: it precedes all human life and it is infinite and cannot be added to. Because heterogeneous space is divided, or fractured, human beings experience space differently depending on their spatiotemporal position.

In her discussion on perspective and social location in early modern thought, Jennifer Nelson notes that space is about "perspective," explaining that "dissimilarity" causes diverse perspectives (7). Dissimilar experiences are the result of one's position in space; each person occupies their own unique position in space, meaning that there is no "universal human experience" (7). Nelson is writing as an art historian using a deconstructive lens to dispute the existence of harmony in the early modern world, and while her argument opposes what has been generally accepted by scholars in the history of science—that Euclidean space caused people to view the world as harmonious because its homogeneity sparked unity (Sauter 24; Koyré 197)—her claim that subjectivity causes people to experience the world differently is a logical way of characterizing heterogeneous social space. Nelson's argument that difference, not uniformity, leads to harmony aligns with the Pythagorean understanding of harmony as consisting of four separate notes forming various ratios, because harmony is established through difference in unison (Hicks 105).[25] Furthermore, the paradox I mention above—that heterogeneity concurrently supports inequality while ensuring the existence of free will—is supported

---

[25] Hicks references an anonymous fourteenth-century manuscript copy of St. Florian's 4th-century manuscript on Pythagorean musical harmony. St. Florian writes, "Music therefore is the science of related multitudes that considers the value of proportions for the concordance of things (*rerum*). For just as arithmetic is the science of multitudes per se, so music is the science of multitudes in relation to each other; just as arithmetic considers the value of numbers, so music [considers] the value of ratios; just as arithmetic [considers] the value of numbers to explain the nature of things, so music [considers the value of numbers] to explain the nature of concordances" (Anonymous 14th-century commentary of St. Florian's 4th-century commentary on Pythagorean music theory).

by Nelson's argument that sustained difference in human experience is a "pre-condition of free will" (10). Said otherwise, if humankind were to be somehow forced to experience the world uniformly, there would be no opposition or opportunity to choose one experience over another, making free will a moot point; at the same time, sustained difference is also the crux of social hierarchy. More pointedly, free will implicates the presence of choice, and choices necessitate material and immaterial differentiation. Without the perspectives born of diverse spaces that create sustained difference, there could be no choice and therefore no free will. Thus, when I refer to homogeneous space as "oppressive," I do so with "sustained difference" in mind. Heterogeneous space allows for difference and distinction, whereas if space and matter are homogeneous, then everyone is forced to experience the world in the same way, making the space oppressive. My perspective on the liberating nature of homogeneous versus heterogeneous space is therefore the opposite of Sauter's, as far as social space is concerned.

In a social context, heterogeneous space can be understood as discrete spaces existing relative to one another, as in a network of interconnected bodies.[26] A social space is divided into parts related to where people live, work, eat, and attend church, among other things. Heterogeneous space can be hierarchical, but the heterogeneity of social space becomes a negative thing only when its parts are configured in a manner that promotes inequality between social actors. Difference and distinction between spaces necessitate neither hierarchy nor stratification; however, human actors within these

---

[26] Heterogeneous spaces can be unified spaces that exist relative to other unified spaces more generally, *or* a designated space divided into parts, as we see in societies.

spaces possess varying degrees of power, and if power is unequally distributed within a differentiated space, it is probable that the space will become hierarchical or stratified.

Having established that the argument for uniform, homogeneous space is countered by the existence of heterogeneous social spaces, I propose a compromise in how I use this terminology. Rather than dwelling solely on the contradiction that social space is necessarily heterogeneous and cannot be considered homogeneous, (thereby calling into question the supposed universality of homogeneous space), I will use "homogeneous space" with reference to divinely created space characterized by perfect material order and unity; ignoring the impossibility of total spatial homogeneity, I will characterize homogeneous spaces as having a total unity between parts, thus allowing order to thrive. Heterogeneous space, then, will refer to humanmade social spaces that are inherently imperfect; these spaces are structured to shape human behaviour and relationships—for both liberating and oppressive reasons.

In both homogeneous and social/heterogeneous spaces, the mind is the source of creation. In the case of homogeneous space, the divine mind is the creator, whereas the human mind is the generative faculty of heterogeneous space. Because the mind is generative and has the capacity to create space, I treat the mind as a space; after all, space cannot be generated from nothing, God's *ex nihilo* Creation notwithstanding. Importantly, the mind—like other imperfect, finite spaces—is heterogeneous, simply because the only mind that could be considered homogeneous is God's mind. The mind's space is used for the contemplative process and the development of knowledge, including knowledge and ideas about space of all sorts. The mind-space is manifest in the literary

products of space-making; its lingering presence is unembodied, despite it being the origin of a social space. Like any other type of space, the mind is indiscernible; we see the trace of an author's mind-space in the spaces they create. The generativity of the mind-space and its capacity to impact positively one's physical existence and eternal life is a central concept in my analysis of Traherne's *Ethicks*.

**The Psychology of Homogeneous Space**

I have already provided an explanation for homogeneous space, but I would like to address some of the psychological implications of spatial homogeneity, especially with reference to infinity. Homogeneous space is infinite, but it was preceded in European thought by "a finite, closed, and hierarchically ordered whole (a whole in which the hierarchy of value determined the hierarchy and structure of being, rising from the dark, heavy and imperfect earth to the higher and higher perfection of the stars and heavenly spheres)" (Koyré 94). The closed world was supplanted by "an indefinite and even infinite universe which is bound together by the identity of its fundamental components and laws, and in which all these components are placed on the same level of being" (94). The homogeneous space of Euclid meant that there was neither "above" or "below," nor and end. It was an infinite, uniform plane of space. In homogeneous space, nothing and no one is inherently "better" or closer to God than another. The homogeneous space of Euclid dismantled Aristotelian hierarchy and destabilized the Great Chain of Being. If the space in which angels and spirits existed were one and the same with the space in which humans and animals existed, then there was no way of separating the immutable from the mutable.

Homogeneous space was infinite in all directions: "it is as if the world system had its center everywhere and its circumference nowhere, for God is its circumference and center, and he is everywhere and nowhere" (Cusanus qtd. in Danielson 97). Newton's physics echoed the musings in Cusanus's *Learned Ignorance.* According to Newton, absolute space (i.e., infinite) has no geometric center (Maudlin 5). Furthermore, Newton argues that God is neither space nor eternity; instead, he insists that space and eternity are the products of his divine will:

> [God] is Eternal and Infinite, Omnipotent and Omniscient; that is, his duration reaches from Eternity to Eternity; his presence from Infinity to Infinity; he governs all things and knows all things that are or can be done. He is not Eternity and Infinity, but Eternal and Infinite; he is not Duration and Space, but he endures and is present. He endures forever, and is everywhere present; and, by existing always and everywhere, he constitutes Duration and Space. Since every particle of Space is always, and every indivisible moment of Duration is everywhere, certainly the Maker and the Lord of all things cannot be never and nowhere. (Newton qtd. in Sauter 26)[27]

Newton's explanation of God's whereabouts is somewhat evasive, because he fails to answer the critical question of God's location. At the same time, the question of where God exists if not in infinite space is unanswerable; the human mind cannot conceive of infinitude and, on a conceptual level, we know that nothing transcends infinitude, making it impossible to decipher God's whereabouts.[28] Homogeneous space erased the division that situated God in perfect space and humankind in imperfect space. If God could exist in the profane space of his creation, where does the early modern Christian situate God?

---

[27] Isaac Newton, *Principia Mathematica.*

[28] Sauter notes that Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) "recognized that philosophy was rooted in homogeneous space," but that this "imposed limits on reason's ability to contemplate the divine" (26), concluding that, "although [Kant] held that one ought to believe in God, he never suggested that one could *locate* Him, either" (27).

This question struck Pascal at his very core. The *Pensées* reveal the author's existential dread of the eternal silence of infinite space (no.199; 61). Pascal, like Cusanus before him, alongside Bruno, Wallis, Leibniz, Newton, and others, was left wondering about the social and spiritual implications of infinite space. Pascal, like Newton, does not believe God *is* the universe but rather that God constitutes the universe; Bruno, on the other hand, equates creator with creation—meaning that Bruno views infinite space as a manifestation of God: by Bruno's reasoning, God and space are the same. Pascal does, however, believe that the universe is the greatest sensible manifestation of divine omnipotence (Hill 46). What Pascal emphasizes in this point is that the universe is filled with the *trace* of God's presence; through the senses, the individual experiences God by experiencing the world. Nonetheless, because God is infinite, just as the universe is infinite, neither is wholly knowable, because "any conception necessarily limits what is, by definition, illimitable" (Hill 46). Stated otherwise, the individual can truly know and understand only *fragments* of the infinitude of homogeneous space. That the individual is limited to understanding fragments of homogeneous space speaks to my earlier point that the space-maker is incapable of creating homogeneous space, because the mind is finite in its generativity and cannot conceive of a perfectly uniform space, for space-makers themselves have a fragmented experience of the world.

The dread Pascal experiences at the prospect of infinite space is partially resolved by his acceptance of human ignorance; nonetheless, he is not comforted by human ignorance:

> [w]hen I see the blind and wretched state of man, when I survey the whole universe in its dumbness and man left to himself without knowing who put him there, what he has come to do, what will become of him when he dies, incapable of knowing anything, I am moved to terror, like a man transported in his sleep to some terrifying desert island, who wakes up quite lost and with no means of escape. (no. 198; 59)

Spatial infinitude evokes existential terror in Pascal. He speaks of the ignorance of humankind as blindness and wretchedness and feels helpless and disoriented. To find oneself situated somewhere in space with no knowledge of how one arrived at that location would be terrifying. Furthermore, Pascal describes humankind as,

> A nothing compared to the infinite, a whole compared to the nothing, a middle point between all and nothing, infinitely remote from an understanding of the extremes [infinity and nothingness]; the end of things and their principles are unattainably hidden from him in impenetrable secrecy. [Humankind] is equally incapable of seeing the nothingness from which he emerges and the infinity in which he is engulfed. (no. 199; 61)

What Pascal expresses is sheer helplessness; even his identity is a source of ignorance, because he neither understands his origin, nor does he understand his destination; he is just "here." At the heart of his anguish, Pascal feels alienated and lost, and this is only made worse by the fact that so much of what he once believed about the world, its order, and the place of human beings relative to God and the heavens was supplanted by spatial infinitude. Homogeneous or Euclidian space signifies magnificent transformation in the field of mathematics, but on a smaller scale it rendered damaging consequences to individual humans.

The nature of homogeneous space was taken up by seventeenth-century thinkers like Newton and Leibniz, who nevertheless conceptualized space differently. Leibniz believed that space and time "are ideal and not actually existing entities," and that "coexisting things are . . . spatially ordered" (Arthur, *Leibniz* 143). For Leibniz, space and

time do not exist independently of matter; space and time "are systems of relations among the things or states they order" (143). Leibniz places emphasis on material relativity, meaning that matter constitutes space. This view is a fundamental component of social space-making, whereby the writers use the blank canvas of space to situate matter relative to other material things; the relative location of matter in space is, in a social context, a means of signifying power. Leibniz's explanation of material relativity in space was neutral; no material body in space was more important than another but, of course, this is in the context of homogeneous space. Descartes, like Leibniz, did not believe that space was "absolute or self-existing," but Leibniz extended his argument to say that matter could be "ordered in homogeneous space through the application of time, a means of measuring succession and simultaneity" (144). Leibniz, however, opposed Newton's "absolute space" because Newton believed that space is an entity in its own right (Arthur, "Space and Relativity" 220).

The nature of space was subject to heated debate, but at the core of this debate is the issue of knowability. Newton's argument that space is infinite is viable, yet his claim that space is self-existing is difficult to prove because we cannot conceive of space in the absence of matter. Space void of matter leads philosophers to debate the nature of nothingness; symbolically, we know what "nothing" signifies—but the issue is that, upon declaring that there is "nothing," we do this only because we are looking for the presence of something material. It is difficult to define "nothing" without acknowledging the absence of matter; thus, matter must exist for "nothing" to signify an absence. Furthermore, God created the world *ex nihilo*, meaning that matter was formed in the

midst of nothingness; when God formed the world in steps, he did so with relativity in mind. Land and water, for example, were significant at the point of creation only because they existed relative to one another; if water had not been created, then land would signify something different. The significance of the question of space, matter, and relativity is integral to my research on social space for two reasons: first, when matter is ordered and arranged, it is assigned a specific status relative to other material things; second, if space is infinite and self-existing as Newton argues, this does in fact confirm the importance of homogeneous space in the scientific revolution, but it also reminds us that the human mind cannot create homogeneous space. There is no way of confirming the existence of infinite, self-existing space, because self-existing space is void of matter; if there is no one to determine whether the self-existing space in fact exists, then it would be impossible to confirm the infinitude of space that we cannot ourselves experience. Instead, homogeneous space is a concept akin to infinity; it cannot be recreated by space-makers because it cannot be comprehended. Heterogeneous space, on the other hand, can be created by the finite mind; the space-maker looks at an aggregate—in this case, the social "body" akin to that on the frontispiece of *Leviathan*—and assigns meaning and status to its parts based on their spatial relativity.

Sauter explains that the rise of homogeneous space and, eventually, the open universe meant that early modern thinkers forfeited the traditional medieval view of the cosmos, one that endorsed Aristotelian spatial hierarchy and space as therefore fractured, positing the heavens as immutable and the created world as mutable. Nonetheless, his focus on the intellectual nature of space, and humankind's newly godlike perspective of

space, fails to acknowledge the importance of human relationships in social space to the study of early modern science. For example, Sauter's remark that, although the "Spatial Reformation was related to that [Protestant] reformation, it was, at once, both a broader and profounder intellectual process" (Sauter 4), speaks to the hierarchy of knowledge within which he situates his findings. Following Sauter's reasoning, spiritual knowledge and social stability are subordinated to intellectualism, but this becomes problematic when we examine the ways that faith-based socio-political reformations changed how people thought about the universe.

**Terms and Themes**

Three prominent themes and their corresponding terminology are woven throughout this dissertation. The first theme, self-interest and space-making, is tied to perspective. [29]

---

[29] Self-interest is a contentious term that was adopted in Smithian economics. For the purposes of this dissertation, I try to remove the negative connotations that have been applied retroactively to Adam Smith's concept of self-interest. Instead, I use "self-interest" with reference to the choices different authors make that serve their own interests. Naturally, there will be negative instances of self-interest, but there are also positive (or neutral/not negative) instances of self-interest at work. In essence, natural law says that people are inclined to seek what is good for them, and this is what I mean when I say "self-interest," although with the added caveat that what is "good" cannot be singularly defined. For example, Thomas Hobbes states that the law of nature "is a precept, or generall Rule, found out by Reason, by which a man is forbidden to do that which is destructive of his life, or taketh away the means of preserving the same [i.e., one's current state of existence]; and to omit that, by which he thinketh it may be best preserved" (XIV). At the same time, John Locke tempers Hobbes' treatment of self-interest by denying selfish self-interest, or the notion that an actor can justify their action because it serves the sole needs of the actor, making other social agents collateral damage (*Second Treatise*). In response to Hobbes, Locke, and Hugo Grotius, Samuel von Pufendorf writes that the human being "studies all manners of ways *his own Preservation*: and that he endeavour to *procure* to himself such things as seem *good* for him, and to *avoid* and *keep off* those that are *mischievous*" (53). Pufendorf's reference to mischievous conduct is a toned-down version of Hobbes's belief that self-interest is the driving passion of human beings. In terms of natural law, what these three writers have in common is a shared understanding that it is natural to pursue what one perceives as good, just as it is unnatural to pursue what one perceives as bad. Self-interest, or the natural tendency to choose what is good for oneself, works on a sliding scale: it can be well balanced, harming neither the self nor others, or it can skew towards selfishness or selflessness. The problem we encounter in Cavendish, Traherne, and Winstanley is that perceptions of "good" and "bad" are relative terms, meaning that the sliding scale of self-interest skews in one direction or another based on the author's interpretation of

Different interests are determined by one's own position in social space, so a wholly unified social space is impossible, or at best unlikely, in a large, stratified population with different privileges, needs, and desires—because competing interests are inevitable. It is most probable that the interests of those with more power will trump the interests of those with less power, meaning that power imbalances between social actors may allow a more powerful party to pursue their interests without limitation; those with less power, particularly labouring commoners, may fulfill some interests, while others are limited by hierarchical social structure.

The theme of self-interest and space-making also provide readers with a lens through which to understand the perceived benefits of the ranking of social actors, i.e., social hierarchy, that is inherent to the Great Chain of Being. Because the Great Chain was understood as an intrinsic part of God's creation, to deviate from this framework may have been viewed as a defection from God's will or design. The Great Chain was a culturally ingrained means of creating, perceiving, and sustaining order in the world, and the seventeenth-century English people witnessed what exactly happens when the Great Chain is broken; the social chaos of the civil wars and the years following the regicide exemplified the consequences of breaking a link in that chain. For people like Cavendish, maintaining the Great Chain of Being was in their best interests because it would, in theory, sustain a sort of social cohesion that benefited those at the top of the hierarchy the most. Arthur Lovejoy notes that

---

good—and this interpretation is a complex process, especially because this process is influenced by one's state of existence and status (e.g., wealthy, comfortable, or impoverished; nobility, clergy, commoner).

> the principles embodied in the cosmological conception of the Chain of Being
> could be used as weapons against social discontent and especially against all
> equalitarian movements. The universe, it was assumed, is the best of systems; any
> other system is good only in so far as it is constructed upon the same principles;
> and the object of Infinite Wisdom which had fashioned it was to attain the
> maximum of variety by means of inequality. (218)

Where self-interest becomes relevant to the Great Chain is in the notion of pursuing or

maintaining the "good." Using Cavendish as an example once more, a social hierarchy

that allocated the most power to the smallest group of people—the nobility—was good,

so she would be acting against her own interests were she, as a space-maker, to pursue a

different social structure. We see in Cavendish's *Olio* that her self-interest is best served

by ensuring the "hierarchic gradation" whereby "each [person] should labour truly 'to do

his duty in that state of life'—whether in the cosmical or social scale"; "to seek to leave

one's place in society is also 'to invert the laws of Order'" (Lovejoy 219).[30] But above

all, the Great Chain allows Cavendish, and others with similarly traditional views, to

justify the belief in class-based excellence. We see from this that deviating from one's so-

called place in the Great Chain was to go against God's Reason and oppose the "laws of

Order," so one's interests were believed to be best served by maintaining the orderly

structure of the Great Chain.[31]

In tandem with self-interest, I also discuss self-love, specifically with reference to

Traherne's *Ethicks*. Traherne acknowledges that self-love is a positive concept and

imperative for social cohesion—or more appropriately, fellowship—though it can be

---

[30] Lovejoy references the Anglican catechism.
[31] Of course, this was not a universal belief. Gerrard Winstanley is only one example of someone who rejected the validity of the Great Chain and its hold on human behaviour.

sullied by covetousness and other sins (Traherne 261). Unchecked self-love can breed

further sin, whereas regulated self-love is an important part of caring for the self while

also loving those surrounding the self. That regulated self-love is an important part of

loving others is encapsulated in the Bible; the second commandment advises Christians to

love their neighbour as they would themselves (Mark 12.31), an imperative that

necessitates self-love. It is expected that one should love oneself, because one is created

by God and therefore inherently good. Even actions such as nourishment and rest are

considered acts of self-love (Ephesians 5.29). At the same time, the Bible recognizes that

self-love can be corrupted by sin (2 Timothy 3.1-5), hence Traherne's emphasis on self-

regulation.

The second theme I address is free will, in terms of self-preservation and space-

making. There are contrasting views on free will in the renaissance, tied to different

Christian sects. Martin Luther and Erasmus, for example, opposed one another, while

non-conformist Richard Baxter's notion of free will aligned more with Erasmus's.

Whereas Luther took the view that there is no free will and that everything is pre-

determined, Erasmus believes the will is free and that pre-determination goes against

biblical teachings.[32] Contemporary terminology would label Luther a determinist,

whereas Erasmus believes in free will and self-determination. Like Erasmus, Baxter, a

contemporary of Traherne's, describes free will in a manner that perfectly encapsulates

Traherne's presentation of free will in *Ethicks*. In dialogue form, Baxter writes, "Your

---

[32] See *Discourse on Free Will: Erasmus and Luther*. Translated by Ernst F. Winter, Continuum, 2002, pp. 21-45.

will is naturally a free, that is, a self-determining faculty, but it is viciously inclined, and backward to do good; and therefore we see, by sad experience, that it hath not a virtuous moral freedom" (483). While both Baxter and Traherne share the same foundation—that the will is naturally free but, because of sin, errs towards harmful and evil behaviour—Traherne holds unwavering faith that humankind can practice free choice responsibly, whereas Baxter does not appear to share that enthusiasm. Nonetheless, the emphasis lies in their shared belief that self-regulation is indeed possible, a view that differs from those expounded by Luther.

Aquinas makes an important distinction about free will, specifically with regards to self-preservation, that will be relevant in this dissertation; he states that pursuing the basic needs of survival is not free will but is rather necessity (549). Aquinas continues this line of reasoning with the argument that, if something is necessary, then it cannot be chosen freely unless one forfeits life—which would be considered a sin (549). The idea that an individual has free will if they can act in their interests by securing food, clothing, and shelter surfaces both in Cavendish's *Olio* and Winstanley's *Freedom*. In the case of Winstanley, his proposed social structure would restrict the free will of *all* people to the basic necessities of life; outside of those necessities, the social structure—supported by a rather sinister punitive system—controls all other aspects of life: marriage, raising a family, worship, and schooling (i.e., training children to become labourers, a practice that underscores Winstanley's own bias that peace is only attainable in the absence of idle bodies). Of special importance to Cavendish's and Winstanley's social philosophies is Aquinas's argument that, when someone is coerced into choosing one option, the

forcefulness of the stronger party is "altogether repugnant to the will. For we call that violent which is against the inclination of a thing" (549). Cavendish and Winstanley both conceptualize social cohesion by establishing carefully structured systems that limit social agents to choosing the lesser of two evils—and this I refer to as an unfair negotiation of choice. When one party is left with two choices, neither of which is "good" or concordant with their interests, then this could be considered an unfair negotiation of choice. I address this in greater detail in my chapters on Cavendish and Winstanley.

Because "determinism" and "compatibilism" are late modern terms applied retrospectively to early modern perspectives on free will, I refrain from using these terms, although I would like to touch on them briefly, so as to establish a larger contextual framework within which I anatomize free will. Determinism is the belief that

> a person cannot in their own power end, hold back, or change their will and desire to do evil, because it still goes on desiring and craving. Even if they should be compelled by force to perform some work against this, the evil will inside them remains an enemy of that which forces it or resists it, and rises in indignation against that power. ... [T]he will cannot change itself or give itself another direction. (Luther 211)

Luther believes that original sin prevents human beings from doing good; in fact, his argument anticipates the sort of warmongering and covetous type of self-interest that we see in Hobbes's *Leviathan*. Whereas Traherne's *Ethicks*, as a whole, negates Luther's argument, we see in Cavendish's *Olio* that her social philosophy assumes that commoners are simply incapable of making rational choices and should therefore be controlled (*Olio* 42).

Compatibilism, on the other hand, suggests that humans have free will while also living a pre-determined existence. As Aquinas explains,

> Not every principle is a first principle. Therefore, although it is of the nature of the voluntary that its principle be within the agent, nevertheless, it is not contrary to the nature of the voluntary act that this intrinsic principle be caused or moved by an extrinsic principle, for it is not of the nature of the voluntary that its intrinsic principle be a first principle. (823)

Aquinas is saying that, while God did put matter into motion in the genesis of the universe, not all actions are directly tied to these first principles, or axioms, upon which later actions and consequences are founded. The intrinsic principle suggests that a voluntary action can originate within the individual, even as they live within the material world that all ties back into the period of creation. God is an extrinsic principle, and he can establish the context in which humankind lives, but human beings have the will to generate actions of their own without being compelled. This sort of generativity that Aquinas attributes to humankind is the foundation for space-making.

Sauter notes that, with the return of Euclidean geometry, human beings could create space in a manner that mirrored God's generativity (24); the space-maker may exist because God created the space for them, but the space-maker does not rely on God to create space of their own. It is important to note, however, that the space-maker, like God, creates space in a way that structures how human beings relate; thus, the space-maker generates a space in their image, or according to their own personal beliefs about what is good and orderly. If the space-maker's social structure had been imposed on the English people, the space-maker would have the capacity to manipulate the free will of those people living within that space.

Although he does not use the term "space-making," R.S. White describes this concept perfectly in his discussion of renaissance literature:

> The Renaissance imaginative writer, in creating fictions, thought of literature as performing the function of God, just as (Aquinas says by way of analogy), God is performing the function of an artist. The writer is controlling deity of a constructed world of human beings who make, obey, and break their own laws within that world, and must stand judged and often condemned by themselves, their fictional peers, readers, and audiences in the universal court of Natural Law. As deity, the writer presupposes a shared moral perspective which enables the reader or audience to exercise the god-like function of discriminating between good and evil. (8).

White's likening of writers to God aligns with Sauter's concept of space-making, but what is intriguing about White's line of reasoning is that he argues that the writer "presupposes a shared moral perspective," allowing the writer to create an imaginary world into which the reader is drawn and invited to discriminate between "good and evil." I point this out because, as I will examine in detail below, space-making is subjective and represents the interests and beliefs of the space-maker—hence the reason that Cavendish, Traherne, and Winstanley ideate three very different social spaces that each views as a vehicle through which social cohesion can be achieved. Space-making affords the author agency to theorize their ideal social space, but sometimes this agency reveals unpleasant beliefs or values that are embedded in the theoretical space.

My third theme concerns human relationships and space-making. Cavendish, Traherne, and Winstanley all create ideal social spaces with structures that influence human relationships—both positively and negatively. Self-regulation is an important mechanism in these authors' social spaces, because the ways in which one relates to others contribute to a shared social experience in society. For example, Traherne sees human relationships as brimming with potentiality; he believes that by loving God, oneself, and creation, all members of society benefit. Traherne encourages readers to

consider their choices before acting, so it is no surprise that we see in *Ethicks* the presence of reciprocity; that is, by loving others in the shared social space, one experiences Felicity in return.

Cavendish alludes to the importance of fulfilling roles and responsibilities in her remark, "[t]hat this Royal Ruler [is] to swear to The People to be Carefull and Loving, as well as The People swear Duty and Fidelity" (*Olio* 205), though her rigid social structure reveals she would likely have little faith in the average individual's judgment and self-regulatory practices. Peace and order, in Cavendish's eyes, cannot be achieved and sustained by trusting people to make the choices that she personally views as socially responsible.[33] With respect to social order and expectations for personal conduct, Cavendish shares some beliefs in common with Hobbes. For example, Cavendish's *Olio* declares that the aristocracy must "breed" within its class (180), echoing an earlier remark made by Hobbes, that "To be descended from conspicuous Parents, is Honourable; because they the more easily attain the aydes, and friends of their Ancestors. On the contrary, to be descended from obscure Parentage, is Dishonourable" (156).[34] Honour is critical to orderly social behaviour, because honourable decisions—according

---

[33] Interestingly, Cavendish's claim in *Olio* that "the poorer sort" are immoral anticipates later arguments about the indispensability of moral responsibility to free will. Scholars like Susan Wolf argue that the capacity to make morally sound decisions is partly constitutive of free will (Wolf qtd. in Clarke, 58), so if we were to examine Cavendish's belief through this lens, she would have a means of justifying the revocation of free will from the supposedly immoral "poorer sort." At the same time, to deny someone free will is to rob them of an inborn right (as per Locke and Samuel Pufendorf) and would be immoral, meaning that Cavendish—by her own reasoning—should have her own free will revoked.

[34] Despite Hobbes's belief that honour is an inborn quality of the upper-class, he states in Chapter XIII that "Nature hath made men so equal, in the faculties of body, and mind . . . (that) when all is reckoned together, the difference between man, and man, is not so considerable, as that one man can thereupon claim himself any benefit." Honour is what Hobbes believes is a "native faculty" to the aristocracy (183) which, given Hobbes's social status, seems rather self-condemnatory.

to Cavendish and Hobbes—benefit all members of society. However, if honour is primarily associated with the English upper-class, that leaves a massive body of people perceived as unable to make honourable, considerate decisions. By this logic, the unhonourable people must be controlled by the state—the absolute monarch. Returning to Cavendish's argument that the "Royal Ruler [is] to swear to The People to be Carefull and Loving" (*Olio* 205), we see that a monarch's commitment to the people is not a gesture of benevolence, love, or responsibility; it is about utility. Akin to Plato's ideal society as described in *Gorgias*, Cavendish's commonwealth remains orderly only when the monarch's commitment to sustaining the kingdom means that they legitimize laws that reduce the agency, or license, of the common people, so as to maintain an orderly nation—an uncompromising leviathan that cannot be undone.

Traherne's *Ethicks* follows a different line of reasoning with respect to how social relationships should be governed. In a vein similar to John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* (1689), Traherne's *Ethicks* respond to Hobbes' cynical *Leviathan*. In *Treatises*, Locke asks: "For who could be free, when every other man's humour might domineer over him?" (128). Locke points out that a lack of self-regulation limits the freedom of others, which parallels Traherne's logic that the sins of one person harm others in the social space. The need for self-regulation is at the core of Traherne's *Ethicks*—a practice that directly opposes a central tenet of Hobbes's *Leviathan*: that people cannot self-regulate.[35] Traherne also rejects Hobbes's argument for love's utility-

---

[35] Traherne openly censures Hobbes's *Leviathan* on several occasions in *Ethicks*. For example, Traherne writes, "Self-love is so far from being the impediment, that it is the cause of our Gratitude, and the only principle that gives us power to do what we ought. For the more we love our selves, the more we love those

function. Hobbes discusses love in the first half of *Leviathan*, making comments like "Good successe is Power; because it maketh reputation of Wisdome, or good fortune; which makes men either feare him, or rely on him. Affability of men already in power, is encrease of Power; because it gaineth love" (151). In this passage, love is associated with power; later, Hobbes presents love as a means to an end: "The finall Cause, End, or Designe of men, (who naturally love Liberty, and Dominion over others,) . . . is the foresight of their own preservation, and of a more contented life thereby" (223). For Hobbes, love is not about charity and selflessness, because his standards presuppose humankind as inherently selfish and driven by power attained through violent, brute warfare; love is about self-preservation at the cost of others—a conviction that *Ethicks* opposes wholeheartedly.

Winstanley's social tracts, especially *Law of Freedom*, vehemently oppose Hobbes's social philosophy, as well. Like Traherne's, Winstanley's social philosophy anticipates Lockean natural law; in fact, the philosophical underpinnings of *Freedom* strongly align with Locke's belief that,

> It is labour, then, which puts the greatest part of value upon land, without which it would scarcely be worth anything; it is to that we owe the greatest part of all its useful products; for all that the straw, bran, bread, of that acre of wheat, is more worth than the product of an acre of as good land which lies waste is all the effect of labour. ... Nature and the earth furnished only the almost worthless materials as in themselves. (123)

---

that are our Benefactors. It is a great mistake in that arrogant *Leviathan*, so far to imprison our love to our selves, as to make it inconsistent with Charity towards others" (261). Other examples are located on pp. 311, 321, 371-72.

Winstanley's view is that, in the absence of those who labour on the land, there would be no means of sustaining the aristocracy; without common labourers, the nobility could not exist. In a sense, social hierarchy is a coercive contract whereby power is concentrated at the top of the hierarchy and trickles downwards, so by the time it reaches the "bottom" of the hierarchy, the power is diluted and non-existent. Servitude characterizes the lower part of the hierarchy, but what is intriguing is that the lower levels of social hierarchy have the potential to wield tremendous power. The top of the hierarchy cannot exist without the bottom; the wealthy/poor dichotomy means that there must be poor people in order for wealthy people to call themselves wealthy, or noble. The commoners' disdain for the nobility, as described in Winstanley's *Freedom*, opposes Hobbes's argument that "without the feare of some coerceive Power," there could be no civil state (185). Fear is a control tactic used to manipulate the behaviour of common citizens, but whereas Hobbes discusses coercive power from a theoretical perspective, Winstanley describes the actual effects of the imbalance and misuse of power on commoners. Winstanley addresses this imbalance directly, pointing out that it is the relationship between "the oppressor and the oppressed" that causes "inward bondages" that occasion "covetousness, pride, hypocrisy, envy, sorrow, fears, desperation, and madness" (296). It is only when the master/slave or oppressor/oppressed dichotomy is deconstructed that a cohesive social space becomes possible. For Winstanley, a cohesive social space would mean that all people have equal access to the land; each person contracts to the collective to share the land, labour, and power, while respecting the rights of others—in theory. In practice, however, Winstanley's commune would have reduced human beings to cogs in the wheel of

economic production. As I discuss in my Winstanley chapter, there is a disconnect between the justification for Winstanley's social structure and the negative implications of the social conditions that this ideology could have produced.

**Seventeenth-Century English Society and Space-Making**

The concept of space in early modern society has received significant scholarly attention in areas related to shared spaces, public and private spaces, and human relationships within these spaces, though scholars have not considered these topics through the lens of space-making, or as a meditative process through which a writer crafts a fully formed social structure that could either replace or repair the existing social structure in post-civil war England. Nevertheless, their analyses illuminate the ways early modern literature uses the written word to convey the significance of relationships in social spaces. What is important about these spaces is that they all structure, guide, and even control how human beings related to one another. These shared social spaces comprise a fairly wide net and include spaces such as the royal society (a space for intellectual exchange);[36] royal courts;[37] domestic spaces, including gardens; spaces governed by law; urban streets and markets; enclosed land; interior space (within the self) and imagined spaces (e.g., utopias); spaces for dialogue; as well as the social structures that influence relationships.

---

[36] See John Morgan, "Science, England's 'Interest,' and Universal Monarchy: The Making of Thomas Sprat's *History of the Royal Society*." *History of Science*, vol. 47, 2009, pp. 27-54; and Tina Skouen and Ryan J. Stark, "Introduction." *Rhetoric and the Early Royal Society: A Sourcebook,* edited by Tina Skouen and Ryan J. Stark. Brill, 2015, pp. 1-52.

[37] Peter Sillitoe, "'Thy State is the more Gracious': Courtly Space and Social Mobility in *Hamlet* and Early Modern Culture." *Shakespeare*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2013, pp. 204-219.

Space-making—whether it focuses on scientific space, as discussed above, or the social space that I will address now—is a function of the mind and imagination. Sauter emphasizes the importance of imagination to human conceptualizations of space, noting that early modern thinkers realized that "the Heavens could be known via a space that was wholly imagined" (201). The mind uses the blank canvas of space to situate and organize matter. Creating space, even if the space is theoretical and remains unimplemented, is a manifestation of power, because by creating spaces humankind is "in a position to dictate [space's] meaning to themselves (to distinguish one place from another) and to others to maintain power and control" (Kermode 4). The cultural production of space, or space-making, is a privileged act, meaning that space as we know it and continue to experience it is the product of those with the authority to "make" space from nothing, just as God created the universe *ex nihilo*. Lloyd Edward Kermode's remark that, "Once a place has been formed, purchased, named, built on, and decorated, it can, for ideological purposes, assert itself as a timeless place, or at least as a place that is consistently different from (and superior to) its surroundings" (4), speaks to the power dynamics of the cultural production of space. I would not say that a space can "assert itself" as something; it would be more accurate to say that an individual or group holding social power can assert that one space is superior to another space, making it distinct and separate from so-called lesser spaces. Space-makers create and codify spaces with specific intentions and interests in mind. This authority extends to society in various ways; space-making pertains to audiences, communities like the Royal Society, prisons, courts, and institutions like parliament and the house of commons. At the same time,

space-making is also a liberatory process, because it lends agency to the writer—even if that agency is limited and the created space is ignored, as is the case with the three authors discussed here. While the author's agency may be limited, their theoretical space is printed and circulated, providing them with the opportunity to articulate their plan for social stability. Moreover, creating a space allows the creator to dictate the meaning of that space to themselves; for someone like Winstanley, who was viewed as a dissenter, being able to dictate space to himself was a means of reaffirming his own beliefs about social structure. By Kermode's reasoning, any space-maker can create a space whose composition is the author's interpretation of "good" or "cohesive." In its essence, space-making is about creating a context for one's own beliefs and values; consequently, the created space reflects the values of its creator and those who identify with the creator, leaving those without the power to create space to endure the ideals of the space-maker, at least in theory.

Space-making inevitably involves structuring and shaping relationships between humans and other humans or material things. Steven Mullaney and Angela Van Haelen explain that space and the public are "a powerful social construction" (1). Space is "an attribute of people, the product of human and especially civil society; it is a term and concept we use, explicitly or implicitly, to talk about how we dwell in the world" (1), a sentiment that aligns with Sauter's argument that unseen spaces can be known through the imaginative faculties of the mind. Mullaney and Van Haelen discuss a "culture's sense of itself in space" by examining public spaces such as "Roman Catholic house churches . . . the salons of sixteenth-century France, and the amphitheatres of Elizabethan

London" as well as "book stalls of Italian cities, [and] in English galleries where new forms of portraiture structured new kinds of visibility" (2). In his analysis of the public space of the theatre, Paul Yachnin posits that the stage creates a public space through discourse, referencing an argument by Michael Warner, who explains that "the social space [was] created by [the] reflexive circulation of discourse," meaning that dialogue and interpersonal engagement was central to the creation of social space (Warner qtd. in Yachnin 82).[38] We see the importance of dialogue in politics, religion, literature, and even reformations in thought, such as the Protestant Reformation, the spatial revolution, and the scientific revolution, all of which can be characterized in part by the presence of dialogue between thinkers.

Dialogue, according to Chloë Houston, is a defining feature of utopian writing, as well. Similar to Warner's comment that the social space is created through discourse, Houston argues that "utopia may be understood as part of a changing discourse of human liberty, arguing that "utopias aspired to improve the forms of their own societies as part of a changing discourse of human perfectibility" (2). Houston's *The Renaissance Utopia: Dialogue, Travel, and the Ideal Society* supports my discussion of social reform through newly developed social structure, but there are two critical distinctions between my thesis and her research that should be addressed. First, Houston remarks that utopias frequently include "descriptions of journeys undertaken to reach [the] ideal society" (3), but the three authors examined in my dissertation create spaces that are (fictively) located in England in the seventeenth-century. Cavendish, Traherne, and Winstanley create and

---

[38] See Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*. Zone Books, 2002, p.90.

tweak social structures that are immediately actionable; their spatiotemporal location is anchored in England, whereas utopias, by definition, are often located outside of time and in "no place" (Houston 2). In short, Cavendish, Traherne, and Winstanley outline social structures that could be adopted immediately by their contemporaries. Second, the social spaces created or restructured by Cavendish, Traherne, and Winstanley do not require translation in order to move from the literary-imaginary world to the 'here and now' of post-civil war England. In her discussion of Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1626), Houston states that the scientific model of Salomon's House was translated, or reconceptualized into the model for empiricism in England—and eventually, the Royal Society (3), but this level of interpretation is unnecessary when it comes to the social structures outlined by Cavendish, Traherne, and Winstanley. Houston's focus also differs from mine in that she pays close attention to the ways that dialogue is used as "a serious attempt at achieving and describing" social reform (7). By contrast, my focus is on how language is used by space-makers in the attempt to achieve social cohesion, but I discuss social reform with reference to the larger scientific and anthropological context of the spatial reformation. Importantly, I examine how social structure resists homogeneity and, in doing so, either inhibits or enables free will and self-preservation.

Robert Appelbaum also discusses utopian politics in seventeenth-century England, arguing that "the impulse to join together the eye and the I, to exert a mastery over a world of one's own invention, to assert at once the originary power of the self and the new look of the rationalized society the self is capable of imagining" is a "paradigmatic structure" of modernity (9). Appelbaum remarks that utopias

> try to articulate systems of sociality through which individuals may
> become more free, but they do so by imagining social totalities through
> which freedom itself becomes an object of disciplinary supervision; they
> try to articulate systems through which individuals may be more united
> with one another, but they do so by imagining totalities where stratification is all
> the more rigidly encoded. (10)

Appelbaum's comment closely corresponds with the arguments I make about the

potential outcomes of the created and/or revised social structures of Cavendish and

Winstanley, but my research differs from Appelbaum's in that I am examining social

structure with the intention of drawing conclusions both about ideal social spaces *and*

how these ideal spaces are evidence that spatial homogeneity simply cannot apply to

social space. Furthermore, my research on Winstanley's *Law of Freedom* examines the

downside of attempting to homogenize social space. In addition to this, Traherne's plan

for social reform is not totalitarian and does not aim to forcibly unite people. In essence, I

am looking at the ways that two different conceptualizations of space (heterogeneous and

homogeneous) demonstrate how, despite the rapid intellectual advances of the

seventeenth century, the Aristotelian hierarchy still governs social space—though, as we

see in Winstanley's *Freedom*, not without causing serious social inequality.

Mary B. Campbell examines human relationships with "invisible worlds," using

Cavendish's *Blazing World* as an example of an "interior space" that is "narratable"

(181). This interior space hosts its own social space with a network of relationships, but it

is imaginary and serves as a means to explore "new worlds" (181). Campbell also

references the invisible worlds of Robert Hooke's *Micrographia* (1665), which

Cavendish criticized heavily in *Blazing World*. Campbell emphasizes the growing

practice of experiencing space through "experiments," a term that signifies "experience."

The experience of space via the imagination is something we see in Francis Godwin's *Man in the Moone* (1638), another example used by Campbell to examine new ways of experiencing unknown spaces in the seventeenth century. Similarly, Brycchan Carey posits that Godwin's *Man in the Moone* constitutes "Literary representations of the moon . . . [that] allowed authors a figurative space in which both to critique and to applaud Atlantic exploration, discovery, and colonization" (167). According to Carey, early modern "moon voyage narratives" not only made comparisons between "new worlds" and the existing one; they also "served a political function, engaging critically with colonial policy and practice while at the same time imaginatively opening up the prospect of genuine Moon voyaging technologies" (167). Carey's analysis of moon voyage narratives exemplifies the point I make above that space is understood through relationships; there is always a human element involved in the conceptualization of space, because space is the manifestation of minds. Frédérique Aït-Touati's *Fictions of the Cosmos: Science and Literature in the Seventeenth Century* also emphasizes the human element of conceptualizing space; his monograph examines in detail how literary fiction functions as a record of human beings engaging with ways of conceptualizing space.

Social actors can exercise power by conceptualizing space and relationships in news ways as, for example, in the ways they exercise agency in the transformation of a place to a designated space. According to Amanda J. Flather in her study of early modern households, "A place is transformed into a space by the social actors who constitute it through everyday use" (345). She agrees with Hannah Moore that "meanings are not

inherent in the organization of . . . space, but must be invoked through the activities of

social actors" (8).[39] While I concur that social space is constituted by the daily human

interactions within it, I do question the validity of Moore's remark that meaning is not

inherent in the organization of space. I push back against the claim that the organization

of a space has no inherent meaning, because spaces are organized in a specific way for a

purpose—an argument that aligns with Henri Lefebvre's remark that, "(Social) space is a

(social) product. ... [T]he space thus produced also serves as a tool of thought and of

action. ... [I]n addition to being a means of production it is also a means of control, and

hence of domination, of power" (26). The social space and the structure that shapes

human interactions is produced with specific goals in mind.[40] Lefebvre's theory of social

space posits space as a construct of human generativity, and these spaces align with

values and beliefs, supporting my argument that space-makers produce alternative social

spaces infused with their own personal values and interpretations of what order and

stability should look like. Moore rejects the notion that spatial organization has inherent

---

[39] See Hannah Moore, *Space, Text, and Gender: An Anthropological Study of the Marakwet of Kenya*, Cambridge UP, 1986. Although this comment about meanings not being inherent to the organization of space is from an anthropological study of space in Africa, Flather uses it to discuss early modern domestic space.

[40] Emma K. Atwood also discusses Lefebvre's "spatial epistemology" with reference to imagination; following Lefebvre, she argues that the status of a space is a "mental thing" or "mental place," thus establishing the mind as a location in which imaginative processes are generated. See Atwood, Emma K. "'All Places Are Alike': Marlowe's *Edward II* and English Spatial Imagination." *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, vol. 43, no. 1, 2013, pp. 49-70. Similarly, Erin Webster also identifies the mind as a generative space, referencing Milton's famous line from *Paradise Lost*: "The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven" (I.253-55). What is interesting about Satan's remark here is that the lines immediately preceding these ones suggest that Satan refers to the mind as an unchanging place that is impermeable by time: "hail horrors, hail / infernal world, and thou profoundest Hell / Receive thy new possessor: one who brings / A mind not to be changed by place or time" (I.251-52). That Milton makes Satan's mind outside time suggests that Milton, like Traherne, did not view space as wholly homogeneous, for if it were, nothing would be outside time—and if something is outside time, then it is outside of the created world.

meaning, but this claim is negated by the fact that human-produced spaces "serve as a tool of thought and action," acting as "a means of control" and domination of the stronger over the weaker. Space produced as a *tool* necessitates intention; the productive process is also shaped by the space-maker's/producer's values, so their intention is motived by the values they view as meaningful. As such, the social spaces produced by space-makers are meaningful, for their structures are value-laden and intentionally employed to assert power over others by mediating relationships through the imposition of conventions and laws. Even if the space is constructed through collective action, the structure of the space represents the interests and needs of the collective body.[41] In the process of organizing a social space, human relations also accord power and status to certain spaces, or sections of spaces.

Power and status[42] are constant themes in scholarship on early modern social spaces. Charmain Mansell's engagement with domestic space reveals more interesting power dynamics in private but shared social spaces.[43] In noble households,[44] there were "two separate systems of power" underpinning patriarchal order: "rank and gender—

---

[41] I want to emphasize that organization necessitates intentionality, so the organization of social space must be intentional; the composition of a social space, on the other hand, does not imply intentionality.

[42] For more on the ways that space is manipulated to establish social status, see H.R. French, "Social Status, Localism, and the 'Middle Sort of People' in England, 1620-1750." *Past and Present*, no. 166, 2000, pp. 66-99. See also Keith Wrightson, "The Social Order of Early Modern England: Three Approaches." *The World We Have Gained: Histories of Population and Social Structure*, edited by Lloyd Bonfield, Oxford UP, 1986, pp. 177-202.

[43] For more on private and shared spaces, see Attie Bootle, "Enclosure Polemics and the Garden in the 1650s." *SEL*, vol. 51, no. 1, 2011, pp. 135-157.

[44] For more on domestic spaces, see Catherine Alexander, "The Garden as Occasional Domestic Space." *Signs*, vol. 27, no. 3, 2002, pp. 857-871. Alexander discusses how the privatization, or enclosure of agricultural lands made it more difficult for commoners to make a living, yet Alexander points out that in the 1650s there was a series of husbandry tracts focused on the benefits of enclosed lands to higher quality crops.

which played out simultaneously within the servant-employing household" (24). Within the noble household, the master's power was the dominant force, although the ways the servants experienced the master's dominance depended on their gender.[45] Outside of the home, however, the urban street space and marketplace were havens for servants because they were communities of people with shared lived experiences. The urban streets were a place where one could spread information quickly without the interference of a master; it also gave servants anonymity while "voicing criticism" against powerful people, allowing them to "retreat into the heart of the mob to avoid identification" (27). Because the urban streets were not inhabited by powerful social actors, they became a space in which the often-powerless exercised freedom of speech.

At the same time, the marketplace has been documented as a space used for humiliation and displays of institutional power. Mansell considers urban streets and marketplaces as spaces where servants could speak freely about their masters, but Dave Postles points out that these spaces were places of "negotiation—not only commercial, but social. [They were also places] of conflict, in this case perhaps commercial, but also social conflict" (41).[46] The marketplace was a space in which "personal and private conflict were acted out . . . and vengeance was enacted" (42) through corporal punishment, like the stocks and pillory—a means of punishing petty crimes through

[45] For more on space and gender, see Alison Findlay, "Relative Values: Gendering Time and Space." *Renaissance and Reformation*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2012, pp. 167-183.
[46] For more on human relationships in the marketplace, see Jean E. Howard, "Shakespeare and the Consequences of Early Capitalism." *Shakespeare-Jahrbuch*, no. 150, 2014, pp. 30-45.

public humiliation (53).[47] While Mansell's depiction of the urban streets and

marketplaces as space in which servants could subvert the power dynamics of the

household still stands, Postles's account of the marketplace is a reminder that, even

among servants and commoners, conflicts related to power dynamics still existed. People

were also brought to the marketplace to be shamed for negative behaviours—ones that

may have been legal but were still viewed as wrong (Postles 42). While this space may

have given agency to servants and commoners of both genders, women were still inferior

to their male counterparts. As I argue in my Cavendish chapter, the level of free will and

agency one holds is contingent upon one's socio-economic status, but Postles's study also

reveals that free will and agency are contingent upon gender as well. The intersections of

gender and social status reveal an additional hierarchy in the social space: a male

commoner may have limited free will based on his social status, but a female commoner

faces both class and gender-based discrimination that limit free will and agency to a far

greater extent than their male counterparts experienced.

Although I have designated science and philosophy of the spatial reformation as

the larger context of my research, Aviva Rothman presents valuable insight into the

intersection of society and science in early modern Europe. Science and society are

inseparable because the former depends on the latter; what I mean by this is that the field

---

[47] For more on punishment in the marketplace, see R.A. Houston, "People, Space, and Law in Late Medieval and Early Modern Britain and Ireland." *Past and Present*, no. 230, 2016, pp. 47-89. Houston discusses how the "law is one instrument of government: a discourse of authority central to claiming, peopling, exploiting, and keeping spaces," so as to maintain order.

of science is a product of human societies.[48] Science is a methodology through which

human beings understand the world; it is also a field that necessitates human engagement

and the sharing of knowledge that is tested through debate and reproduction. In other

words, science does not exist independently of human beings and societies, something

that Johannes Kepler, the "father" of the scientific revolution, recognized. Rothman

explains that he was interested in harmony in the social sphere "in the midst of the

cacophonous devastation" of the Thirty Years' War and the "fires of civil war . . . raging

in Germany" because he believed that studies in musical harmony could solve "the

problems plaguing the world" (2).[49] Kepler "came to emphasize harmony in a very

different sense" than traditional views, arguing that there is no "one way of life, and one

approach to religious truth [that] was clearly and inarguably better than another" (6). For

Kepler, "following God's harmonic model came to mean . . . accepting the peaceful

coexistence of diverse perspectives—in particular, diverse religious views—within one

larger community" (6). In *The Harmony of the World* (1619), Kepler "used harmony to

understand the cultural and social possibilities available to him" because it "was linked to

the state—since, that is, the ideal form of the social order was expected to mirror the

---

[48] For more on spaces related to intellectual engagement, specifically related to science, see Robert S. Westman, *The Copernican Question: Prognostication, Skepticism, and Celestial Order*. U of California P, 2011; Westman discusses how the concept of space is used with reference to "meeting sites" for human interaction; he directs readers' attention to spaces such as royal courts and universities, noting the importance of these spaces for the cultivation of science. See also Amos Funkenstein, *Theology and the Scientific Imagination: From the Middle Ages to the Seventeenth Century*. Princeton UP, 1986, as well as John Spencer Hill, *Infinity, Space, and Time: Christian Humanism and Renaissance Literature*. McGill-Queen's UP, 1997 and Andrew Hicks, *Composing the World: Harmony in the Medieval Platonic Cosmos*. Oxford UP, 2017.

[49] Kepler does engage with the idea of the harmony of the spheres, but he believed that the concept of harmony could be better applied to the social spaces of Europe, for there was "no corner of the world where the seeds of war are not dispersed and growing" (1).

divinely established natural order" (Rothman 13). Despite Kepler's belief that a harmonious society is accepting of more than one "way of life," he still maintained that "political harmony entailed both unity and a clear and well-established hierarchy. Each part must do only its own work and must obey the part controlling it—otherwise, discord and political illness would inevitably follow" (15).

Kepler was a Copernican, so while he supported the view that decentralized the earth, making the sun the center of the universe, he sought to maintain social order in the same way that the Copernican universe did. Because the Copernican universe was a closed universe, it could be arranged in an orderly and harmonious fashion; the heavenly bodies achieved harmony through their differences relative to one another. It was difference in unison. Nevertheless, Kepler dedicated his *Harmony of the World* to James I of England, "whom Kepler believed was best suited to apply its lessons to the most pressing harmony of all: the harmony of church and state" (4). If, in the heavens above, the Copernican model placed the sun at the center, then in the world below James I was the metonymic sun with the power to establish harmony in the worldly realm. We see repeated comparisons in early modern literature between the monarch and the sun precisely because science and society influence one another; human societies are integral to the production and exchange of scientific knowledge. The notion of the king as the life-providing sun is evidence that scientific discourses permeate and shape discourses on the structure of society. There is an undeniable connection between scientific space and social space, particularly with respect to power and kingship, making it difficult to say whether heliocentrism was influenced by pre-existing social structures that placed the

monarch at the center of the social space, or if the new philosophy of heliocentrism justified the belief in the monarch's centralized power. In this scenario, it is impossible to say whether science influenced society, or society influenced science.

Angus Fletcher interrogates kingly centrism in *Time, Space, and Motion in the Age of Shakespeare*. In his consideration of "the human yearning for fixed cynosures," he explains that "In England . . . 'divine right' theory argues for the single chosen ruler, while through its magical staging the court masque is designed to reaffirm the political centrism of the Tudor and Stuart monarchies" (3-4). Fletcher questions whether the long-term political instability of England was the consequence of the "human yearning" to fix "cynosures" at the conceptual center of society. One way to contemplate this idea is the monarchic tradition, whereby the monarch is at the top of the hierarchy—but symbolically, they are the center of everything. Power is concentrated in the center, but Fletcher suggests that the collective belief that validates "political centrism," or the concentration of power in the monarch, may in fact be the source of civil chaos (4). Stated otherwise, Fletcher entertains the idea that the monarch and the monarchic institution may be the source of many social problems, rather than the solution. If we were to think of social hierarchy in a similar way as heliocentrism, the monarch would be at the center and would be the life-sustaining force; those closest to the center are closest to the monarch and are also influenced more strongly than those who occupy the 'outer rings,' or lower rungs of the social hierarchy.[50] If the monarch, like the sun, has the

---

[50] Imagistically, the bird's eye view of a social hierarchy—as depicted by a triangular structure—would flatten this structure, making the top of the hierarchy the center of a heliocentric structure, with each level

greatest influence (or gravitational force), this means that power (or mass, in the case of the sun) is consolidated in the center—the monarch.

What these examinations of space have in common is human relationships and the corresponding dimensions of power, order, and identity that govern these relationships. There has yet to be discussion by early modern scholars about the ways that space-making—a solution-oriented style of writing—and social structure resist homogenization and subsequently problematize the universality of homogeneous space. My study aims to show how Cavendish, Traherne, and Winstanley employ writing to create theoretical social spaces that are presented to readers as credible remedies for the social chaos they witnessed in post civil-war England. Thus, in the case of the three space-makers of interest in this dissertation, space-making—or the production of alternative social structures for a nation in disarray—is a solution-oriented style of writing, for it is through writing and the circulation of their texts that Cavendish, Traherne, and Winstanley produce what they believe are viable solutions to their current state of affairs.

Space-making is utilitarian in nature; it is a function of the author, and it serves a purpose—that is, to arrange matter, to establish or deconstruct perceptions of order, and to valuate certain material things—including humans—as more or less important than others based on their situation in social space. The space-maker assumes their model is the most virtuous, fair, or logical; the belief that their system would bring maximum benefits to other members of society justifies (to the space-maker) their social structure.

---

of the social structure comprising a ring around the sun. The bottom of the hierarchy, then, would be farthest from the center.

An alternative social structure is self-justified in its genesis; by drafting a solution to the social upheaval in post-civil war England, the very creation of an alternative space underscores the space-maker's belief that a reconfiguration of social structure is merited. If something is posed as a solution, its author likely believes that the solution benefits those who live in that society. This act of self-justification is inextricable from subjectivity and therefore from self-interest, because space-making is the product of one individual whose social location shapes their understanding of necessity, self-preservation, and the "common good."

As we move through the body chapters of this dissertation, I want to make clear my methodological approach. I have already discussed the ways that different (imagined) social spaces are shaped by subjective experience, and I recognize that as a reader, my interpretation of texts is prone to some bias despite my efforts to remain neutral. Because social cohesion, like free will, is understood differently by the three authors in this study, there is considerable room for interpretation on my end; for this reason, I take a reader-response approach to these social structures in order to speculate about the possible outcomes, problems, and shortfalls of the three social structures, while also acknowledging the possibility for alternate readings of the primary texts. I aim to embrace difference and view it as a fruitful source of new ideas and conversation. My analysis assesses the viability of a social system, commenting on the merits and demerits of a given social structure in terms of the likelihood of such a system being adopted, as well as its sustainability had it been adopted and normalized. My analysis of viability and sustainability aims to reveal ways that free will, choice, social relationships, and self-

interest operate in these spaces. Stated plainly, I am examining how theoretical

applications of space would produce social cohesion as perceived by each author's

representation of free will, social relationships, and self-interest.

**CHAPTER 1: Spatially Contingent Free Will:**
**Heterogeneity and Sustained Difference in Cavendish's *The Worlds Olio***

**Introduction**

The spatial reformation saw the annihilation of space as a transcendental signifier. What was once attributed to God alone was being renegotiated and repurposed as early modern thinkers transitioned from the medieval conception of a closed cosmos to an open and infinite universe. In a social setting, space became a means of shaping and ordering human interactions and relationships, but whereas the infinite, homogeneous space of geometry applied to the cosmos of God's creation, humanmade space—such as social space—was heterogeneous; its function (i.e., to structure human relationships and shared spaces) made it fractured and divided, for it was created by subjective, finite minds to regulate social behaviour.[51] As we see in Margaret Cavendish's *Worlds Olio*, published in 1655, social space was created to structure and manipulate interactions with the goal of re-establishing social cohesion in post-civil war England.

Cavendish (1623-1673) lived a life embroiled in political conflict. Only a child when Charles I ascended to the throne in 1625, Cavendish witnessed political struggles between Parliament and the King that began early in Charles's reign—and only worsened in time. Charles's royal absolutism divided him from the people and pitted him against Parliament which, on several occasions, was prorogued so as to allow the King

---

[51] I want to point out that when I use terms like "fractured" and "divided" with reference to social space, I am not critiquing the space-maker or their social structure. I use these words to state what is unavoidably true: that finite human minds cannot create perfect, infinite spaces; of necessity, humanmade spaces have distinguishable parts, hence my application of the terms "fractured" and "divided."

unimpeded authority. Charles's seemingly detached relationship with the English people

caused resentment—especially in situations like the battle of La Rochelle, in which

Englishmen were slaughtered by Louis XIII's Catholic army in 1628. Furthermore,

Charles was quickly running out of money; unable to support Protestant armies fighting

against Catholics in continental Europe, he introduced "forced loans" and unfair taxes

like "ship money" that fuelled the discontent of the people (Ackroyd 153). Charles

"believed in order above all things" and his goal was to reduce the Church and nation to

"uniformity" (Ackroyd 155), a sentiment that exhibits the King's short-sightedness. A

nation divided by power struggles and religious conflict cannot be uniform—or

homogenized. In 1640—two conflict-laden years preceding the civil wars—Cavendish

began to serve in the court of Queen Henrietta Maria (Cunning 2). Though Cavendish did

not publish her first book until 1653, it appears that she, unlike Charles I, understood that

a nation divided could not be uniform, nor could it be completely united in its political

and religious beliefs. Social divisiveness permeates Cavendish's *Worlds Olio*, and while

"olio" signifies a miscellaneous collection of things, almost all of the entries have one

overarching theme in common: civil war. True to her scientific methodology of careful

observation of a subject, the entries in *Olio* are conceived through the lens of someone

whose adult life was filled by violence, regicide, exile, separation from family, and plots

to overthrow the restored monarch, Charles II. In *Olio* we see a collection of issues

ranging from child rearing, to education, gender roles, and politics, alongside issues

related to natural philosophy—and almost all of these are, when combined, antecedents

of civil war. The structure of *Olio* appears non-existent, almost as if Cavendish was

journaling in response to conversations of which she had been a part; however, upon

closer analysis, the aspects of social space she describes—like the examples listed

above—serve as individual building blocks for her ideal social structure. The primary

drive behind her analysis of these building blocks is arguably more about fear than

political ideology. For Cavendish, an absolute monarchy is the *outcome* of well-ordered,

hierarchically-arranged building blocks; an orderly society free of civil war must be

hierarchical, not uniform, by Cavendish's logic. In other words, if the building blocks of

family, child-rearing, and education have internal order, then society as a 'whole'

structure will be orderly as a consequence.[52] Unlike Traherne, who focuses on the

individual's choice to self-regulate, Cavendish's concern is with systematizing social

relationships in various groups (family, friends, workplace).

In *Olio*, Cavendish does not ideate an alternative social structure in the way that

Traherne and Winstanley do; instead, she wishes to maintain the monarchic structure, but

she attempts to do this by looking at the anatomy of society—i.e., its parts or components

that comprise the whole social body. Space-making in *Olio* is not about creating

something new, but rather about analyzing something old in the hopes of renewing it.

Interestingly, Cavendish's *Olio* devotes considerable time to understanding human

nature. The attention Cavendish gives to understanding the causes of civil war stands in

marked contrast to Charles's *Eikon Basilike* (1649), which only defends the King's self-

righteousness. Again, Cavendish's conceptualization of an orderly society is systematic,

---

[52] Just as Cavendish refers to the aggregate of parts in Nature as a whole, or complete body, so too does she liken the parts of society to parts of a whole human body (*Grounds* I.3).

so she pays attention to its various "parts"—its building blocks, as opposed to Charles'

meditations which are not systematic or solution-oriented. Cavendish analyzes each of

the topics in *Olio* that she believes contribute to social order (to which I will refer

hereafter using the analogy of building blocks), carefully assessing the finer details of

social cohesion. Only when internal order exists among the building blocks can there by

social cohesion in the 'whole' body of society.

The primary focus of *Olio* is on issues related to social space and human

interaction and, interestingly, many of the building blocks Cavendish deconstructs for

analysis are somehow linked to civil war. For example, the building block entitled, "Of

the Senses and Brain," discusses the various types of human brains:

> The brain is like unto Common-wealths, for Some brains that are well tempered,
> are like Those Common-wealths, that are justly and peaceably governed, and live
> in Their own bounds: other braines that are hotly tempered, are like Those
> common-wealths that make wars upon Their neighbours; others again that are
> unevenly tempered, are like Those that are incombred with civil wars amongst
> Themselves; a cold brain is like Those Nations that are so lazy, as They will use
> no industry to The improving of Their Country, so a brain may be compared to
> several soyls, as Some are rich in mines and quarries, others pleasant and fruitful,
> Some brains are barren and insipid Some will be improved with change of tillage
> or working. (*Olio* 20)

Cavendish's likening of different brains to different states of a commonwealth is but one

example of how civil war permeates her thought in *World Olio*—almost to the point that

her tone is anxious. Hot-tempered brains disrupt social cohesion, just as warring

commonwealths disrupt relationships—both in a given society and between two

neighbouring societies.

In *Olio*, social structure is meant to be causal in that it would limit the agency and free choice of its actors based on their social position, leading social actors to behave in ways specific to the spaces they occupy. Cavendish's social space is neither harmonious nor continuous but is rather fragmented; it relies heavily upon the traditional belief that all human beings are born into a predefined social role that dictates one's so-called purpose in the larger socio-economic network (Boyle 166), thereby placing severe limitations on individual agency and self-determination. As I mention in the Introduction to this thesis, perspective and personal experience factor into an author's space-making endeavours. Cavendish's experience of escaping civil war and returning to a nation destroyed by war shapes how she imagines an orderly, stable society.[53] In *Olio*, Cavendish advocates for an absolute monarchy characterized by rigid social structure; her social philosophy appears deterministic, though the process of space-making implies a level of social constructivism. The disconnect between a deterministic understanding of social structure and a constructivist approach to social cohesion reveals what makes *Olio* so unique. The divisive social hierarchy so closely connected to the Great Chain of Being is the effect of well-ordered building blocks. *Olio* does not simply reiterate an absolutist political philosophy; the originality of the tract lies in Cavendish's attention to the seemingly inconsequential topics that constitute the building blocks of social cohesion. The majority of the building blocks of cohesion are presented as catalysts for war; if a given block is internally disordered, or at war within itself, it can disintegrate the desired

---

[53] Margaret Cavendish (née Lucas) departed from England for France in 1644, married William Cavendish in 1645, travelled from Antwerp to England in 1651 to petition parliament for income on William's seized estates (the petition was denied), and finally returned to England in 1660 at the Restoration of Charles II. See Anne M. Thell's "Brief Chronology" in *Grounds of Natural Philosophy*.

state of social cohesion. Order and cohesion are the focus of *Olio*, but there is a trade-off for a well-ordered society: limitations placed on free will.

Cavendish's treatment of free will is a contentious topic for scholars, some of whom argue that her understanding of free will is similar to that of Thomas Hobbes, but that—unlike Hobbes—Cavendish believed that the human will is free, not necessitated (Detlefsen, "Reason" 182); yet, if all people have free will, then the element of choice would negate her essentialist argument that "poor and mean-born men" are of lower "qualitie" than the upper classes because poor people could choose to be of better "qualitie" simply by making rational, virtuous choices (*Olio* 51). At the same time, other critics claim that Cavendish's politics do not reflect Hobbesian absolutism but are instead a "revolutionary" new way to conceive of the individual's relationship to the cosmos (Walters 139). Still others argue that Cavendish cannot possibly advocate free will due to her inequitable treatment of women (Boyle 166);[54] or that she is a determinist, which would dispute the claim that Cavendish believes the will acts voluntarily (Mendelson 32).

---

[54] Cavendish's approach to gender equality is complicated. Scholars such as Lisa Sarasohn and Sarah Hutton argue that Cavendish is a "feminist," but they appear not to have factored in her explanation of this inequality in *Olio*. In the Preface to Book 1 of *Olio*, Cavendish explains that, in the Garden of Eden, men "usurped a Supremacy to Themselves, although we were made equal by Nature" (n.p.)—which could be read as a proto-feminist argument. She also uses "we" and "us" with reference to those subordinated to men. She argues, men have kept a "tyrannical government . . . so that **we** could never come to be free, but rather more and more enslaved, using **us** either like Children, Fools, or Subjects, that is, to flatter or threaten **us**, to allure or **force us** to obey, and will not let **us** divide The World equally with Them, as to Govern and Command, to direct and Dispose as They do; which Slavery hath so dejected **our** spirits, as **we** are become so stupid, that Beasts are but a Degree below us, and Men use us but a Degree above Beasts" (n.p.; emphasis mine). It is difficult to say whether Cavendish resents or accepts gender inequality when, at creation, female supremacy was usurped and women were subordinated by men and, through historical mistreatment, became "stupid."

In response to David Cunning's "(no) true disorders" theory,"[55] an argument that engages the issue of free will in Nature, Deborah Boyle questions whether Cavendish's depiction of the motion of nature's parts implies that the parts' actions are voluntary or pre-determined, noting that scholars tend mostly to agree that Cavendish is a "libertarian," suggesting that Cavendish believed that Nature's parts move freely (34). Boyle criticizes Sara Mendelson's argument that free will and determinism can co-exist—a compatibilist argument that Cunning supports as well (35); however, Boyle cautions readers that "reading Cavendish as so deeply inconsistent and confused should be a last resort" and that "while it is true . . . that there are texts in Cavendish's works that lean toward determinism as well as some that suggest libertarianism, we should look first for a way to reconcile these texts" (34). Cavendish's treatment of free will has been subject to anachronistic classifications, like libertarianism; in their endeavor to determine a single definition of Cavendish's doctrine of free will—or to settle arguments by claiming the opposing philosophies of determinism and free will can coincide organically—scholars have bypassed the importance of contradiction and discrepancy in the philosophies of free will in Cavendish's writing.

With respect to Cavendish's natural philosophy, Sara Hutton points out that "while acknowledging that her science and philosophy do not fit with the mainstream as

---

[55] Cunning and Boyle have debated whether or not Cavendish believes there can be true disorders in Nature. Whereas Boyle argues that Cavendish believes there are true disorders (i.e., events that were unintended and destructive), Cunning argues that Cavendish does not believe there can be "true" disorders in Nature. Cunning's position is well-supported by textual evidence taken from Cavendish's tracts on Nature, and while Boyle also cites textual evidence, she tends to choose examples that are open to wide interpretation. As I discuss throughout this chapter, Cavendish viewed Nature as orderly, self-regulated, poised, intentional, and balanced, and I favour Cunning's argument over Boyle's for this reason.

defined by twentieth-century history of science and philosophy," Cavendish's admirers "have claimed for her pride of place in a separate, female tradition" (421). This conclusion is grossly paternalistic because it suggests that Cavendish makes no real contribution to the history of science, so she is instead acknowledged patronizingly as an eccentric woman whose failed attempt at entering the male intellectual arena should be recognized for effort and feminine zeal.[56] While Cavendish is in fact dismissed by twentieth and twenty-first-century scientists, as Hutton notes (420), scientists as well as literary scholars and philosophers have failed to recognize Cavendish's significant contribution to the history of space and its intersection with free will—both in Nature and in human societies.

The range of scholarly interpretations of Cavendish's philosophy of free will culminates in the fact that there is no definitive or consistent articulation of free will guiding her approach to natural and social philosophy.[57] Scholarly discussion of

[56] Feminist arguments about Cavendish are frequently self-defeating because they presuppose that Cavendish's natural philosophy is irrelevant to the history of science—and it appears that one of the reasons her writing is discounted for its value to western intellectual history is because she does not think in "black and white," or dichotomous terms. The notion of so-called valid knowledge being either one thing or another is symptomatic of western positivism, a lens through which some Cavendish scholars determine the value of her intellectual contribution. However, the spatial reformation was a scientific and mathematical movement that intersected with philosophy and theology, so arguments that downplay Cavendish's intellectual contribution to a male-dominated intellectual sphere, and instead celebrate her as a feminist (which is anachronistic and simply incorrect), are akin to a "runner up" prize, which not only patronizes Cavendish but neglects to consider her importance in the history of space in the western world. See Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution*; Sarah Hutton, "In Dialogue with Thomas Hobbes: Margaret Cavendish's Natural Philosophy"; Lisa Sarasohn, "A Science Turned Upside Down: Feminism and the Natural Philosophy of Margaret Cavendish"; John Rogers, *The Matter of Revolution: Science, Poetry and Politics in the Age of Milton*; Eileen O'Neill, "Introduction" to *Observations upon Experimental Philosophy*; and Eric Lewis, "The Legacy of Margaret Cavendish."
[57] Cavendish's natural philosophy argues that matter has free will and "self-motion" (*Grounds* 1.II), but in her social philosophy free will is often limited according to one's social location or identity (e.g., gender, social status).

Cavendish's treatment of free will is divided—even fragmented—because analyses of her work attempt to make sense of the contradictions in Cavendish's treatment of free will, but there is no need to settle on a single definition of free will to characterize Cavendish's corpus. That the differences in Cavendish's treatments of free will correspond to whether she is engaging in either her natural or social philosophies suggests a solution to the problem of her seemingly fragmented or divided metaphysics. My intention is not to argue that Cavendish is for or against free will; instead, my argument is predicated on the fact that Cavendish holds two seemingly opposite views of free will—both of which are valid when we take into account the conventions that structure and regulate relationships in spaces like Nature and society.

I argue that Cavendish's plural conceptualizations of free will exemplify the contingent nature of space in the praxis of free will. Cavendish's social and natural philosophies maintain two opposing views on free will simultaneously, because her multi-genre corpus addresses free will according to the *type* of space in which it is manifest; specifically, I argue that Cavendish's presentation of free will manifests differently according to how the space is structured or conceptualized. We see unimpeded free will in *Grounds of Natural Philosophy* (a natural society) and impeded free will in *Olio* (a humanmade society). The conflicting versions of free will we see in Cavendish's writing are spatially contingent;[58] in other words, the level of free will accessible to material beings (both humans and non-humans) depends on the type of space they

---

[58] Spaces contingent on experience include cities, buildings, kingdoms, nations, societies, and any other context in which human experience is brought into perspective by its surroundings. The mind is also a space, by this logic.

occupy. The space of Nature places few limitations on free will, while the social space discussed in *Olio* regulates human actions and significantly limits their free will. Furthermore, the free will accessible to a human being in the social space works on a sliding scale; that is, the nobility are generally afforded a higher degree of free will in *Olio* than those of the English lower-class. Thus, parts of Nature—a unified, homogeneous space—experience unlimited free will, while the human "parts" of society are permitted to exercise free will by degrees based on their social status.

For the purposes of this argument, my analysis focuses on the social philosophy expounded in *Olio*, illuminated by contrast with *Grounds*. I have chosen *Olio* over her more popular socio-political commentaries[59] because it is non-fiction prose, and we therefore have every reason to believe that the opinions in *Olio* are Cavendish's own. For example, in *Blazing World*, Cavendish writes that the "statesmen" were asked "why they had so few laws," to which they answered "that many laws made many divisions, which most commonly did breed factions, and at last break out into open wars" (164); however, these words are written in a fictional context and spoken not by the Empress but by other politicians.[60] There is no way of saying whether Cavendish believes the words she attributes to the fictional statesmen, whereas in *Olio* there are no dialogues or conversations, only commentaries written in the first-person. Scholars have tended to ground their arguments about Cavendish's social beliefs in a combined analysis of her plays, imaginary correspondences, and fictional worlds; but even within these works,

---

[59] For example, *Sociable Letters* (1664) or *The Blazing World* (1666).
[60] Furthermore, the statesmen declare that a commonwealth "was like a monster with many heads," which contrasts with Cavendish's argument in favour of a commonwealth with "one head" in *Olio* (205).

contradictory statements make it difficult to discern the author's perspective from those

adopted by her imaginary characters.[61] In fact, *Olio* is an outlier in Cavendish's corpus,

because it is composed with the same factual tone employed in her natural philosophy

tracts, but is primarily concerned with the internal order of the building blocks of social

cohesion. Although the bulk of my analysis focuses on Cavendish's social philosophy, I

refer to the *Grounds* in my discussion of spatially contingent free will as a point of

contrast. My analysis progresses from a general explanation of spatial typology—or,

[61] Comparing the authorial voice in *Olio* with some of Cavendish's plays proves this point. For example, in *Bell in Campo* (1662) the Reformation Army goes to battle with the Factious Army; the Commander of the Reformation Army decides to bring his wife, who readily accepts. When Captain Whissell asks his wife to accompany him, she replies "Alas Husband I am so tender, that I am apt to catch cold if the least puff of wind do but blow upon me" (II.5), which contrasts with Captain Russell's defiant wife, who responds: "What with a Knapsack behind me as your Trull? Not I, for I will not disquiet my rest with inconveniences, nor divert my pleasures with troubles, nor be affrighted with the roring Cannons, nor indanger my life with every Potgun, nor be frozen up with Cold, nor stew'd to a gelly with heat, nor be powdered up with dust, until I come to be as dry as a Neats-tongue; besides, I will not venture my Complexion to the wroth of the Sun, which will tan be like a Sheeps skin" (II.5). Seigneur Valeroso's wife, on the other hand, accuses her husband of having a mistress, because he worries for her safety and wants her to remain at home. The responses of these women also contrast with Lady Victoria's insistence on gender equality: "I.3: Lady Victoria: "I have intelligence that the Army of Reformations begins to slag, wherefore now or never is the time to prove the course of our Sex, to get liberty and freedome from the Female Slavery, and to make our selves equal with men: for shall Men only sit in Honours chair, and Women stand as waiters by? Shall only Men in Triumphant Chariots ride, and Women run as Captives by? Shall only Men be Conquerors, and women Slaves? Shall only Men live by Fame, and women dy in Oblivion?" (Part 2: I.3). Cavendish portrays an array of women in the play, ranging from heroic to suspicious and fragile, so it is difficult to say what Cavendish believes with respect to female agency and gender equality, at least in her dramatic works.

While there are discrepancies between her dramatic and fiction works and *Olio*, another play—*The Female Academy* (1662)—supports my claim that Cavendish holds the traditional view that certain people are honourable based solely upon their status at birth. This perspective is consistently present in *Olio*. The play opens with two "Antient Ladies," who are discussing the proper education for daughters. One lady remarks: "If you would have your Daughter virtuously and wisely educated, you must put her into the Female Academy," but "if your Daughter were not of honourable Birth, they would not receive her, for they take in none but those of antient Descent, as also rich, for it is a place of charges" (I.1), which clearly speaks to Cavendish's belief that class and social status are assigned at birth, rather than through merit. At the same time, in *Olio* Cavendish states explicitly that "it is dangerous to put young Women to board Schools" ("Of Gentlewomen" 61), which reminds readers that to look for ideological continuity across Cavendish's corpus would be misguided.

more plainly, the "type" of space[62]—and its relationship to free will, into an explication

of spatially contingent free will *across* the spaces of Nature and society. I then discuss

how spatially contingent free will also applies to heterogeneous social space.

The terminology I use—unless stated otherwise—is chronologically accurate; by

this, I mean that I do not apply terms such as "libertarianism" or "occasionalism" to

Cavendish's philosophy, because these terms are anachronistic, and they complicate the

discussion of free will unnecessarily. It is to be expected that, when we use contemporary

terms to qualify modern interpretations of an historical belief, there will be

contradictions. Given the abundance of existent contradictions in Cavendish's corpus, I

do not intend to complicate matters further.[63]

Critical to our understanding of spatial contingency is the distinction between

divine (homogeneous) and secular (social-heterogeneous) spaces. In Cavendish's terms,

natural space was created by God, whereas secular spaces like societies and nations are

humanmade and imperfect. Cavendish confirms this in her *Philosophical Letters* (1664)

where, in an imaginary correspondence, she writes that "Nature doth not rule God, nor

---

[62] By "type" of space, I mean either humanmade social space or divinely created natural space (Nature, as portrayed in *Grounds*).

[63] Such unnecessary complications can be seen in the "no true disorders" debate. In *A Well-Ordered Universe*, Deborah Boyle argues that there are "true disorders" in nature, by which she means that decay and illness in nature's works, for example, signify a disorder in Nature's harmonic system. David Cunning, on the other hand, argues that Cavendish does not believe that disorder exists in Nature, but rather that "there are events that run counter to our parochial expectations and concerns" (qtd. in Boyle, 25). Coinciding with Cunning's argument is Lisa Walter's argument that Nature "does not actually defy a prescribed teleological order" (qtd. in Boyle 25). The true disorders argument only adds confusion to Cavendish scholarship, especially because Cavendish presents a definitive solution in *Olio*; she explains that it is humankind who have created disorder in the world. She explains that Nature's creations are "purely made," "orderly," and virtuous, but that it is man's actions that produce "vice" and "evil effects" ("Power of Natural Works" 162).

Man Nature, nor Politick Government Man; for the Effect cannot rule the Cause, but the Cause doth rule the Effect" (XIII). Cavendish understands that a government is the product of human agency; she also states that humans do not rule Nature, which therefore makes humans the effect of Nature, just as Nature is the effect of God. Nature is governed by a specific set of rules; within the terrestrial world, however, exist social spaces governed by rules and expectations determined by those who occupy and produce these spaces.

This chapter focuses on the consequences of humanmade social space for free will—the problems of which are abundant in Cavendish's discussion of social space in *Olio*. Both Traherne and Cavendish recognize that free will is God-given, but while we will see that Traherne discusses how free will can be mobilized to achieve the needs of the self *and* society, Cavendish immediately seeks to curtail free will in the social space. Written while its author was exiled in France, *Olio* is an example of space-making, but whereas most space-making creates new space, Cavendish's space-making endeavours preserve the monarchic tradition by examining the smaller issues—the building blocks— of social cohesion. Cavendish's articulation of the ideal social space uses divisive rhetoric in a similar way to Charles I's *Eikon Basilike* and Milton's *Eikonoklastes*, but whereas Charles I and Milton used language that inevitably weakened social structure and deepened socio-political chaos, Cavendish's divisive rhetoric aims to achieve order from chaos.

Scholars have come to no consensus on Cavendish's overarching philosophy of free will, but when reading her natural philosophy in tandem with her social philosophy,

it appears as though free will manifests differently in the social space than it does in

Nature.[64] By approaching Cavendish's conception of free will as spatially contingent, we

are better positioned to determine whether Cavendish's treatment of free will is in fact

inconsistent or flawed.[65] For Cavendish, social harmony is acquired through

heterogeneity—it is difference in unison. Cavendish's conception of social harmony is

born of what Nelson describes as "sustained difference," a term referring to early modern

thinkers and a state of mind that embraces dissimilarity (4).[66] Sustained difference

implies the presence of heterogeneous space, a structure characterized by the

relationships and juxtaposition of distinct parts. The sustained difference in *Olio* leads to

social inequality and limitations placed on the free will of social actors deemed by

Cavendish as irrational; yet, at the same time, sustained difference is what Nelson would

argue is a precondition of free will.[67] For Nelson, sustained difference means that the

---

[64] In *Olio*, Cavendish recognizes that human beings are unpredictable, making free will and agency difficult to control; Nature's parts, on the other hand, self-regulate with the goal of maintaining the "whole" or the united body of many parts. In *Grounds*, Cavendish argues that Nature's parts, though they have free will, do not deviate from fulfilling their specific "role," implying that the interests of each individual part are best served by maintaining the stability of the "whole" (*Grounds* 2.I).

[65] Regardless of how we approach free will in Cavendish, her social philosophy would uphold a sinister brand of free will; she may not suggest that nonsensical people have their ears clipped, like More's *Utopia*, but she comes close.

[66] For example, Nelson says that—in the context of globe-making and time pieces: the more measurements one was able to take, the more discrepancies one would find" (42). European thinkers were attempting to understand the cosmos through mathematics, but the dissimilarities between geographical and cosmological observations reminded them that no human invention could grant them a complete understanding of God's creation. Dissimilarity underscored God's infinitude. Importantly, Nelson explains that humans were meant to "negotiate worldly discrepancy in order to honour God (51). The "data" or measurements of the world did not correspond with the "standardizing regulations of mathematical theory," which underscores "material and practical knowledge's centrality to theoretical formulations of knowledge in early modern Europe" (51). In other words, western epistemology has inherent discrepancies, because it was a collection of subjective understandings of the world.

[67] Harmony is the unity of different sounds; likewise, social harmony allows what appears to be conflict yet, in the context of an imperfect system in which free will is exercised (to various degrees), conflict/difference can bring harmony and this harmony is the body politick. If there were no conflict or difference between subjective beings, then harmony would not exist, because without difference there is no subjectivity.

early modern thinker lived in a world of contradictions and discrepancies and could adopt any number of perspectives on a given concept without having to conform to a single idea; in fact, Nelson argues that thinkers such as Desiderius Erasmus, Philip Melanchthon, and Georg Hartmann[68] maintained personal philosophies with respect to religion, science, and free will that were riddled with internal discrepancies. If we use sustained difference as a lens to examine the internal discrepancies that scholars have identified in Cavendish's corpus—specifically with regards to free will—then we are better positioned to question whether Cavendish's inconsistent treatment of free will is the product of a disorganized mind or is in fact intentional and logical. In *Olio* and *Grounds*, Cavendish focuses heavily on human-to-human relationships and non-human-to-non-human relationships. The reason free will is not limited in Nature, as it is in her well-ordered social space, is because of sin. Whereas Nature's parts fulfill their duties in sustaining the wellbeing of the "whole" body composite, society's parts—i.e., sinful human beings—are influenced by pride, vanity, and wisdom—among other things. As such, the choices of sinful human beings may not contribute to the wellbeing of the whole society; rather, sinful behaviour is steeping in selfishness and prioritizes the individual actor over the well-ordered, stable "whole," or society.

**Accepting Discrepancies in Articulations of Free Will**

---

[68] Melanchthon was a German Lutheran reformer known for introducing "religious pluralism" into European culture; a colleague of Luther, Melanchthon "established Lutheranism as a textually authorized and coherent alternative to the Christianity of the Roman church" (Nelson 23). Hartmann was a German engineer known for creating sundials, which "required attention to worldly discrepancy" (52).

Scholarship attempting to reconcile Cavendish's opposing ideas on free will inadvertently suppresses dissimilarity in the name of homogeneity or uniformity (Nelson 10); eliminating dissimilarity, or sustained difference, in an attempt to find unity is unnecessary and counter-productive because contrasting treatments of free will underscore its spatially contingent nature. In *Disharmony of the Spheres* (2019), Nelson suggests that, during the period coined by Michael Sauter as the spatial reformation, plural forms of reality emerged as "another important mode of human orientation to the world" (19). In fact, Nelson argues that fragmentation is a "precondition" of reality, which is composed of "mutually conflicting modes" (10).[69] Cavendish simultaneously maintains two different views on free will that change according to the structure and function of a given space; she believes that Nature is a united whole whose parts form one homogeneous body,[70] but the social space produced in *Olio* is necessarily heterogeneous because Cavendish's perspective on social cohesion hinges upon social inequality and status differentials.[71] I will return shortly to discussing the importance of sustained difference to Cavendish's social hierarchy. What I wish to emphasize here is

---

[69] Nelson explains that difference and discrepancy associated with subjectivity was an important part of free will, because the alternative would be a "forcibly harmonized" world (60). For example, the goal of the standardization of time in the 19th century was to create an instrument that would be "common to all people" (74). Time becomes a commodity, which is foundational to capitalism and the "neo-liberal world" that Nelson believes to be the product of the forced harmonization of people, culture, and beliefs (74).

[70] In the context of Cavendish's corpus, homogeneity describes Nature, because of her belief that all the parts of Nature are equally important and therefore have equal free will—and that every part chooses to behave in a manner that sustains the "whole." For example, in *Grounds*, Cavendish explains that,

> Though every Self-moving Part, or Corporeal Motion, have free-will to move after what manner they please; yet, by reason there can be no Single Parts, several Parts unite in one Action, and so there must be united Actions: for, though every particular Part may divide from particular Parts; yet those that divide from some, are necessitated to join with other Parts, at the same point of time of division; and at that very same time, is their uniting or joining. (1.vi).

[71] In my thesis Introduction, I explained that I would use "homogeneous" to describe the total unity of matter in space, and "heterogeneous" to describe differentiation in matter. I also stated that homogeneous space is divinely created, while heterogeneous space is not.

that Cavendish's articulation of free will changes between her natural and social

philosophies, and that free will is therefore contingent upon the type of space in which it

is manifest. The discrepancies in her treatment of free will need not be approached as

problems to be solved; rather, these discrepancies are symptomatic of sustained

difference, or a plural reality, as antecedents of free will due to the presence of free

choice. Rather than homogenizing the product of Cavendish's space-making endeavours,

we should consider the importance of dissimilarity to free will during the spatial

reformation, especially in the context of society and human relationships in the

seventeenth century. Cavendish writes that,

> as society in The whole causeth peace, plenty, and security; so society in parts
> which is siding, and factious, causeth poverty, discord, war, and ruine; but I treat
> not The society of The whole body, which is a Common-wealth, but of The
> societie of particulars, as of neighbours, acquaintance, and familiars, which
> unlesse They be well chosen, bring more inconveniences Then benefit. (*Olio*, "Of
> Society" 31)

By emphasizing that a society "in parts" is factious, thereby leading to poverty, discord,

and war, Cavendish depicts social structure as inherently heterogeneous; the

commonwealth may be a whole body, but it is a body of parts that can grow factious and

endanger the commonwealth if social relationships are discordant. As such, neighbours,

acquaintances, and friends should be "well chosen" in order to avoid discord and

maintain order; in doing so, the heterogeneous body of many parts would, in theory,

function like the parts of Nature, thereby ensuring the harmonious interaction and

coincidence of different parts or "particulars." Cavendish's belief that "factious" parts

disturb the whole speaks to her approach as a space-maker: she analyzes the building

blocks to find "peace" and "plenty."

In her account of society's parts, we can see that Cavendish's social space necessitates heterogeneity, because the hierarchy that governs the factious parts of society relies on power differentials that, by Cavendish's logic, steer the commonwealth away from chaos and civil war. For Cavendish the ideal commonwealth is

> to be composed of Nobility, Gentry, Burgesses, and Pezants, in which are comprized Souldiery, Merchantry, Artificers, Labourers, Commanders, Officers, Masters, Servants, Magistrates, Divines, Lawyers, &c. This Commonwealth to be governed by one Head or Governour, as a King, for one Head is sufficient for one Body: for several Heads breed several Opinions, and several Opinions breed Disputations, and Disputations Factions, and Factions breed Wars, and Wars bring Ruin and Desolation: for it is more safe to be governed, though by a Foolish Head, than a Factious Heart. (*Olio*, "Inventory of Judgements Commonwealth" 205)

Cavendish makes clear that the differences upon which a society is predicated relate to roles—like trades, class and economic status, gender, and religion, among other things. I argue neither for nor against the presence of unimpeded free will in Cavendish; instead, I propose a third way that strikes a balance between those arguments that create oppositional binaries where none are present.

Cavendish's version of order—both in nature and society—focuses on the individual roles of the various "parts," or building blocks, and how these parts function to create and sustain a harmonious "whole," or body. It is through difference that we locate harmony in Cavendish's work. Cavendish explains:

> It seems to me a thing above Nature, that Men are not always in War one against The other, and that Some Estates live in peace, . . . yet They meet all in Ambitious Desires; and naturaly Self-love seeks and strives for Preheminency & Command, which all cannot have, & yet submit and obey, which is strange: But say Some, it is Love that Makes, Unites, and Keeps a Common-wealth in Peace; no saies another, it is Fear, . . . But say They, all things naturally incline to Peace and Unity, and that War is unnatural, because it tends to Destruction . . . all things are subject to War, yet The Causes are different that provoke Them to it; But

74

> Nature would have wanted work, if she had made all things to continue, and nothing to decay; for Death is as natural as Life; but it seems to be Natures great Art to make all things subject to War, and yet live in Peace, as not to make an utter Destruction. (*Olio*, "Of Natural Wars" 162)

For Cavendish, an ideal and orderly society is not one in a state of constant war, or "every man against every man," as argued in *Leviathan* (185); nor can it operate by the standards of self-regulation outlined by Traherne in *Ethicks* because, for Cavendish, people—especially the "poorer" sort (*Olio*, "Of Riches and Poverty" 42)—need to be governed in all aspects of life ranging from faith to marriage and childrearing ("Of the Breeding of Children" 60). What is interesting, however, is that Cavendish strongly believes that Nature can teach humans how to live; she writes,

> I bend my self to study nature; and though nature is too specious [*sic*] to be known, yet she is so free as to teach, for every straw, or grain of dust, is a natural tutor, to instruct my sense and reason, and every particular rational creature is a sufficient School to study in. ("Epistle")

Cavendish, like Hobbes, believes that "reason" is the sole "precept" of Natural Law, a system that "declares unto us the ways of peace" (Hobbes 1.XVI). For Cavendish, Nature extends to human beings the "reason" required to "observe her effects, and imaginations, and to conjecture of her ways" ("Epistle"). Thus, by studying Nature, humans and humanmade societies can function peacefully as a whole—something we see in Cavendish's *Grounds* (I.4). At the same time, Cavendish's description of matter in Nature posits that "Matter can be neither more or less than Matter; yet there may be degrees of Matter, as *more pure* and *less pure*" (I.3), an observation that shows up in *Olio*: "The poorer *sort* generally never standeth upon The honour of speaking The truth, or keeping Their word; for They lie at the watch, to steal what They can get" ("Of Riches" 42; emphasis mine); moreover, Cavendish believes that "poor and mean-born

men are leaches that suck in The wealth of The kingdom" ("Of the Favour of Princes"

51). The "poorer sort" of people are contrasted against the "better sort" of people, who

are educated in "Schools or Courts" and have "sweter [*sic*] discourse" and "aspiring

thought, which produce noble qualities and honourable actions" ("Of Vulgar Discourse"

17). In fact, Cavendish refers to the "poorer sort" as having "meager Souls, and barren

Brains" ("Noble Souls, Strong Bodies"). It is this distinction between social beings—the

"poorer sort" and the "better sort"—that Cavendish uses to justify the application of laws

and customs with the goal of achieving social cohesion. If the "poorer sort" have

limitations placed on their free will, so as not to "infect one another" because of a

"disorderly educated"[72] mind then, by Cavendish's reasoning, there is less likely to be

conflict, thus allowing the English people to avoid renewed civil war ("Liberty" 74).[73]

 Resounding in *Olio* is a question posed by twentieth-century philosopher Isaiah

Berlin: "How is men's desire for liberty to be reconciled with the need for authority?"

(30). Hobbes encounters this same problem; writing on covenants, he asks: "For what

benefit is it to a man, that any thing be promised, or given unto him, if he that giveth, or

promiseth, performeth not, or retaineth still the right of taking back what he hath given?"

(1.XVI). The issue at hand is trust but, given the violence and feelings of betrayal

---

[72] By "disorderly educated," Cavendish means "poorly educated."

[73] There are contradictions in *Olio* regarding free will. Cavendish frequently explains the need for order through regulating the behaviours of the self and others (i.e., those who have no "reason," or rational thought to self-regulate), but she also recognizes that it is tyranny for one person to "torture" the "Mind upon The Rack of Imagination . . . giving no freedom to The Thoughts, Words, or Actions" ("On Boldness"). I do not know that these contradictions can be wholly sorted out, but we do learn one important piece of information: that Cavendish understands the complexity of free will, while also understanding that an orderly society requires that individuals "transfer" some free will, as Hobbes argues, to the state in exchange for a stable society (XVI.3). I attribute the confusion we encounter in Cavendish's explication of free will in *social space* to her own realization that unlimited free will is impossible in a governed society.

between Royalists and Parliamentarians in the civil wars, it is understandable that

Hobbes, like Cavendish, is skeptical. Berlin's and Hobbes's questions encapsulate the

issue of self-interest, something that Cavendish addresses in her comment on

"preheminency." A self-interested individual who cares only for their own interests is

difficult to trust; however, if social order is the goal, there must be trust and reciprocity

between all members of society, because trust is the foundation for good social

relationships.

A heterogeneous society is diverse, meaning that self-interest varies according to

need and status. Conflict is inevitable in social space; at the same time, conflict also

means that free will is at play, because two or more people are acting upon individual

needs, rendering yet more complex the already oppositional relationship between liberty

and authority. In the case of Cavendish, liberty and authority are not balanced, because

her social philosophy emphasizes compliance to authority at the cost of liberty—though it

is important to note that it is commoners who resign the greatest amount of liberty,

because they are born into less honourable stations ("Of Riches" 42). According to

Cavendish, there must be one "head" for one "body" of many parts (*Olio*, "Inventory of

Judgements Commonwealth" 205); by this analogy, the head has free will to self-

determine,[74] while also regulating the ways in which the body can exercise its limited

free will. Nature, on the other hand, is self-governed and its sole design—apparent in its

individual parts and its body as a whole—is self-preservation and harmony:

> Nature being poised, there must of necessity be Irregularities, as well as
> Regularities, both of the Rational and Sensitive parts; but when the Rational are

---

[74] Bear in mind that Cavendish published *Worlds Olio* after the regicide.

> Irregular, and the Sensitive Regular, the Sensitive endeavour to rectifie the Errors of the Rational. And if the Sensitive be Irregular, and the Rational Regular, the Rational do endeavour to rectifie the Errors of the Sensitive: for, the particular parts of a Society, are very much assistant to each other . . . the Hands endeavour to assist any part in distress; the Leggs will run, the Eyes will watch, the Ears will listen, for any advantage to the Society. (Cavendish, *Grounds* 5.xiv)[75]

Here, Cavendish discusses how the parts of Nature constitute one continuous body balanced by the contrast between regularity and irregularity. Not only does Cavendish's Nature maintain an internal balance and harmony, but its parts also cooperate and work in tandem with each other, so as to sustain that internal balance—which is "advantageous" to the society. "Nature is but one united material Body" (*Grounds* 1.iii), argues Cavendish, whose conception of Nature is arguably a prototype for the ideal society— especially given the author's belief that Nature can teach people how to live harmoniously. Nature's ability to maintain internal order eliminates confusion; after all, "where Unity is not, Order cannot be" (*Grounds* 1.iv). For Cavendish, nature models free will in its most perfect form, because its self-regulatory actions indicate that its individual parts voluntarily behave in the best interests of the larger body; each part is a building block of Nature's body, so it is essential that each part fulfill its specific duties (e.g., grass grows, rain falls, etc.). Cavendish even goes so far as to distinguish "beasts" from "man," explaining that,

> ONE Man may know what Imagination another Man hath, by The relation of Discourse; but Man cannot know what Imaginations Beasts have, because They can give no relation to Mans Understanding, for want of Discourse: wherefore Beasts may have, for all any Man knows, as strange and as fantastical Humours, Imaginations, and Opinions, as Men, and as clear Speculations; and Beasts are as busy, and as full of Action, as Men; although not in useless Actions, *yet it is in The prudent part*, for The subsistence of Life for Themselves, and Their Young;

---

[75] Note that her use of "society" here is in reference to a human body—a collective sum of its parts.

> being provident and industrious Thereunto, and *not like Man, wasting The time with idle Disputes, tormenting Themselves to no purpose*. ("Of Imagination of Man and Beast"; emphasis mine)

The key distinction Cavendish makes is that beasts—who may have similar intellectual capacities as humans—are prudent and do not waste their time with idle and purposeless disputes. More plainly, beasts' prudence is what enables self-regulation; by contrast, humans are imprudent based on their lack of self-regulation and their tendency to fall into conflict.

Self-regulation on a societal level would mean that all parts agree on how each should behave; no part is greater or more worthy than another, because each brings unique value. Society, however, cannot self-regulate in this way because self-interest is unique to human beings in a material society, thus leading to inequality; therefore, when self-interest is present, there can be no single, unified idea of how society should operate. Cavendish's explanation of Nature's parts is consistent with the philosophical doctrine of mechanism[76] and is not unique to Cavendish, but when members of her ideal society are expected to regulate their behaviour for the greater good, or the "public-weal" (*Olio*, "Of Marriage" 80), we encounter serious problems related to free will. Nature is a body of equally important parts, but according to Cavendish, society cannot be orderly without a hierarchical structure that valuates its "parts" based on their social status.

---

[76] With reference to John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689), the *OED* defines mechanism philosophy as "The opinion or doctrine that all natural (esp. biological or mental) phenomena can be explained with reference to mechanical or chemical processes." Natural wholes, like Nature, are believed to function like machines—although I would emphasize that Nature as a whole body preceded machines.

Free will in Nature manifests differently than free will in society. Cavendish's mechanistic philosophy makes sense with respect to the free will of parts and their role in preserving the material whole, but society does not operate this way—though *Olio* certainly tries to turn society into an orderly, large-scale machine. Nature's parts are considered equal, and each plays a unique role in ensuring Nature's internal harmony. The composition of social space in *Olio*, however, is hierarchical, and the way Cavendish imposes order on this social space suggests that she views social cohesion as akin to a self-sustaining machine. Consequently, if society is structured hierarchically with the expectation that it would function as a cohesive whole, or machine, we encounter some problems. Because all "parts" of the social "machine" are diverse and *unequal*, they have different needs and interests; as such, the collective parts of the social aggregate will fulfill their own needs and interests, even if that means acting against the interests of the mechanistic whole. Cavendish attempts to reconcile this problem by placing severe limitations on free will.

Cavendish describes England's social hierarchy as being composed of various social roles, like "pezants," governed by a "single head" for the single "body" of the commonwealth (*Olio*, "Inventory of Judgements" 205). State authority rests upon this single head—the monarch; though the absolute sovereign, in Cavendish's view, prevents the commonwealth from falling into civil war and desolation, the institution of the monarchy maintains rigid class hierarchy. Cavendish presents a marvellous allegory that captures her beliefs about proper governance and social structure:

> The several Brains of men are like to several Governments, or Kingdomes; The Monarchical Brain, is, where Reason rules as sole King, and is inthron'd in The

> Chair of Wisedom, which keeps The Vulgar Thoughts in Peace and Obedience, not daring to rise up in Rebellious Passions; but The Aristocratical Brain, is, where Some Few, but strong Opinions govern all The Thoughts; These Governors Most commonly are Tyrannical, executing Their Authority by Obstinacy; but in The Republike Brain There is no certain Government, nor setled Governour; for The Power lies among The Vulgar Thoughts, who are alwaies Placing and Displacing. ("Allegory 14")

The analogy of different brains is something that Cavendish returns to on several

occasions. In this case, the monarch is the most superior and powerful brain, for it sits on

the chair of wisdom and quells rebellious passions; the monarch is presented as having

total control—but this sentiment is likely more hopeful than realistic. Interestingly, the

aristocratical brain governs thoughts as well, but Cavendish underscores the aristocracy's

strong opinions, which she may have viewed as fuel for civil war. The republic brain

does not have a monarch in the chair of wisdom, but instead spreads authority across a

body of people who, by Cavendish's logic, are not fit to participate in governance.

Cavendish's theory of sovereignty necessarily requires that power is concentrated in the

"brain" of the monarch, though she concedes that the aristocracy also have a role in

governance. The body of people forming the republic are not compared to brains, but

rather to "Vulgar Thoughts," or people who, "if by chance They set up Reason or Truth,

They fare no better; for The inconstant Multitude of Rude and Illiterate Thoughts

displaces Them again, and offtimes executes Them upon The Scaffold of Injustice, with

The sword of Falshood" ("Allegory 14"). It is clear that Cavendish assigns "reason" or

intelligence based on one's place in the social hierarchy. Intelligence and classes become

categories—or distinct building blocks—that require different levels of intervention

based on the level of reason they possess. The inherent inequality in Cavendish's social

hierarchy is unsurprising given her social position, but the rigid social structure of *Olio* does tell us more about free will as a spatially contingent concept. Nature has its divisions and subdivisions, but so does society; the difference is that societal roles are attached to status and privilege and thus set the stage for inequality, or a faulty public-weal that maximizes the free will of the aristocracy at the expense of commoners.

Cavendish believes that the free will of the poor must be regulated because "the poorer sort" are dishonourable; she explains that

> Necessity and poverty teacheth to dissemble, flatter, and shark for Their advantage, and lively-hood: and long custom makes it a habit, and habit is a second nature; for what Poverty breeds Many times proveth base, and unworthy, being necessitated to quit honour or life, where Most commonly life is chosen first. ("On Riches and Poverty" 42)

Cavendish's inventory of the personality traits of the "poorer sort" is presented as universally true of all poor people; in fact, Cavendish's assessment of the poor argues that dissemblance, flattery, and sharking is a "second-nature." To Cavendish, to be poor is to surrender one's honour in order to acquire the necessities of life.[77] By contrast, the "rich-man [has] no wants to necessitate him, but lives at plenty, which keeps him not onely from that which is base, but perswades to things that are Noble" ("On Riches and Poverty" 42). By Cavendish's reasoning, the poor are driven by desire for material goods and, because excessive pursuit of material things is irrational since it leads to sin and social degeneration, the poor are therefore irrational and unable to make choices mindful

---

[77] That the poor would develop the skills of dissembling, flattery, and sharking as a "second-nature" suggests that their primary nature—at birth—is the same as any other person, because dissembling and sharking are learned behaviours; however, this contradicts Cavendish's argument that people are born into the social status of their parents ("Of Marriage"). If one's parents must be noble to have an honourable birth, then the same must be true of their parents—and the same of the parents of the parents, etc.; thus, to be born noble, by Cavendish's logic in this specific passage, suggests that noble lineage has always existed, and that only specific people are born into this category.

of the public-weal and, consequently, an orderly commonwealth (*Olio*, "Of Riches and

Poverty" 42).[78] The wealthy, on the other hand, are not driven by desire, for they want for

nothing. The wealthy are therefore capable of making the mindful decisions that the poor

are not because, by Cavendish's reasoning, the wealthy desire nothing; their minds are

satisfied, unlike those of commoners, whose continual desire for wealth and power makes

them, in Cavendish's eyes, covetous and thus untrustworthy.[79] Though Cavendish

believes that the nobility are best positioned to make pro-social choices, she places

considerable emphasis on the absolute sovereignty of the monarch. In fact, Cavendish

refers to the state as a body that to function must have only one head ("Inventory of

Judgements Commonwealth" 205) or else be at risk of civil war, aligning her social

philosophy with Hobbes's political philosophy. Like Hobbes, who argues that "without a

common Power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called Warre .

. . and such a warre as is of every man, against every man" (91), Cavendish believes that

---

[78] Both in *Olio* and *Grounds of Natural Philosophy*, Cavendish speaks of "sensitive" and "rational" parts, applying both to bodies and souls. In these two works, the sensitive parts are inferior to the rational parts. In a social setting, Cavendish describes the people without an education as "dul-blocks" that can only experience "sensual pleasures" ("Of Moderation"), but she adds that the poor can have a "natural education" via the "senses" ("Epistle"). Based on Cavendish's subordination of sensitive parts (i.e., the corporeal senses) to rational parts, and her attribution of a natural education via the senses to the poor, I would argue that "rational parts" associated with the mind are attributed to the upper classes, assigning to the lower classes the default designation of non-rational, or sensitive, parts. To "speak rationally," Cavendish explains, is to "ask proper questions, or to answer directly to what he is questioned in, for reason is to clear the understanding and to untie The knots that clear The truth" ("The Four Discourses"). It becomes clear that Cavendish looks at knowledge as a two-tiered system, whereby the upper classes are trained to be rational (and thus superior), while the lower classes are trained by the senses and habitual activities. On the other hand, Cavendish's *Observations upon Experimental Philosophy* (1666) praises the use of the senses in gaining practical knowledge, so we see additional contradictions in Cavendish's understanding of the different types of knowledge.

[79] I discuss the issue of desire, covetousness, and class in greater detail later in the chapter. However, it is worth noting that, although Cavendish argues that the nobility are best positioned to make choices to the benefit of the commonwealth, she contradicts herself in a generalized claim that, in humankind, "the minde is not satisfied though it had all, but requires more, so The minde is like eternity, always running, but never comes to an end" (*Olio*, "Of the Vastness of Desires" 40).

war is a natural outcome of human association. In the same vein as Hobbes, she remarks that human beings are "subject to War upon one another" because "meeting in Contrarieties, must needs Dispute when They meet, and are never quieted untill one part get The upper hand" ("Of Natural Wars" 162). Likewise, "all things are subject to War," writes Cavendish as she continues to argue that "so Many Men" and "so Many Minds . . . meet all in Ambitious Desires; and naturaly Self-love seeks and strives for preheminency & Command" ("Of Natural Wars" 162). At the core of this mentality—that desire for power and material gain, as well as discordant opinions and beliefs are causes of war—is the notion that moral integrity is key to social stability. Those who are rational, educated, and meritorious have greater moral integrity by Cavendish's standards. Moreover, Cavendish states explicitly that the upper classes are not overcome by desire and self-love in the ways that commoners are, a premise that reaffirms my argument that Cavendish's solution to containing the overly desirous and covetous commoners is to limit their free will.

**Spatial Typology and Free Will**

Cavendish is unequivocal about what I refer to as the hierarchy of spaces. God created Nature, and humankind is the product of Nature's generativity; but above all, Cavendish emphasizes that **"**Man [is] The chief Work of Nature" (*Olio*, "Of Augury" 175). As the chief work of nature, humankind generates societies designed to structure and influence human relationships which, when regulated, would lead to the same sort of harmony that Cavendish portrays in her natural philosophy. But whereas Nature creates a perfect space

of order and harmony, the spaces created by human beings are immediately corrupt because space-making is a human function and represents only select, finite perspectives.

Cavendish yearns for order and harmony in the social space of post-civil war England and, although her intention to craft a space that would fulfill these needs is well-intended, she still faces the problem of balancing free will and authority. She justifies her belief that free will in the social space should be curtailed, arguing that "Nature hath given that Faculty to Man to do Some things when he will, but not in all, as, he may ruin and destroy that he cannot build, or renew" (*Olio*, "Of Chymistry" 176). When read against her argument that "The Brain of a man is The Globe of The Earth, and Knowledge is The Sun that gives The light Therein; Understanding is The Moon, that changeth according as it receives light from The Sun of Knowledge" (*Olio*, "Allegory 3" 96), we can see that Cavendish attributes to humankind the same generativity that she attributes to Nature. However, she uses this same metaphor to justify the argument that some brains are less fertile than others, writing: "all Brains are not fertile alike," and some brains are inhabited by "Wild Beasts, as Ruff and Rude Bears" (*Olio* 55). The fact that Cavendish discusses human agency under the title, "Of Augury," suggests that she fears that the less "fertile" or irrational brains will cause real damage to social cohesion. Cavendish recognizes the generativity of all human beings, but questions the outcome of generativity, especially in those she views as intellectually limited.

I have mentioned above that Cavendish's natural space is homogeneous because it is a unified body of many parts, all of which work together in unison to compose one

united whole; in other words, no part deviates from its socially prescribed purpose[80] or

role and, while all parts play distinct roles, Nature is still treated as a single, unified body

in Cavendish's natural philosophy.[81] I have also stated that Cavendish's idealized society

is intrinsically heterogeneous by nature, because her social space is characterized by a

rigid hierarchy designed to maintain order. At this point, we may note the affiliations

between nature/homogeneous space and society/heterogeneous space, but we have yet to

examine the varying aspects of these spaces vis-à-vis free will. I will focus primarily on

heterogeneous space and the implications it has for free will in the social space. It is

important to note, however, that it is only when we read *across* the spaces created by

Cavendish that her philosophy of free will appears inconsistent.

**The Logic of Social Space**

I have argued that free will is spatially contingent between Nature and society, yet if we

were to mobilize this concept to focus on social space alone, free will still remains

---

[80] It is important to remember that Cavendish refers to Nature as a society. She also believes that all parts of Nature have agency, although some parts are more reliant on other parts. As such, there are socially-prescribed roles, just as we see in society. Further, socially-prescribed roles are not determined by a single leader or prescriber; instead, these roles are maintained systemically and, when unchallenged, are often adopted unconsciously by social actors. Cavendish's depiction of how natural societies operate is almost identical to how she depicts human societies.

[81] In theory, society functions in the same way as Nature, but for Cavendish, human societies—although treated as a singular body—highlight the importance of the elite while minimizing the importance of the lower class, which is in marked contrast to her treatment of Nature. The unequal treatment of human beings creates social imbalance, hence the presence of chaos, disorder, and conflict. Nature, on the other hand, weighs all parts equally, so there is no imbalance. Cavendish critics David Cunning and Deborah Boyle debate the presence or absence of disorder in nature at length. Neither critic is able to offer a flawless and definitive answer as to whether disorder exists in nature, or if the concept of disorder—as Cunning argues—is a by-product of human logic. The (no) true disorders theory hinges upon the idea that human beings cannot comprehend all of Nature's functions and therefore cannot say if a part willfully deviates from its perceived purpose. This debate is circuitous, simply because one cannot say with absolute certainty that, for example, the death of something in nature constitutes a "disorder." This death may be a part of a natural cycle and, if that cycle ends in the death of some material entity, there is no way of saying if the cycle leading to that death is faulty or natural.

contingent; society is heterogeneous and is composed of separate—sometimes

conflicting—spaces.[82] Even by removing natural space from the discussion, free will in

society remains spatially contingent because power imbalances are embedded in her

hierarchical society. Importantly, the centrality of hierarchy in Cavendish's social

philosophy implies that the greater one's social status, the greater one's range of free

will; said otherwise, economic inequality plays a central role in determining the degree to

which one can make freely willed choices with limited external interference in

Cavendish's ideal social structure. In *Olio*, inequality fuels Cavendish's construction of

an orderly social space; in fact, Cavendish ensures the prevalence of inequality by

constructing an ideal social space founded upon the belief that when "every man [is]

living in his degree, envy is abated, pride abated, luxury abated, neighbourly love and

kindnesse bred and peace kept," and this is because "every one thrives in his qualitie, and

grows rich by frugality, and riches beget care, care begets fear: and modest fear keeps

peace" (*Olio*, "Cause of Rebellion" 51). Living to one's "degree" underscores

Cavendish's understanding of England's socio-economic structure; however, when she

argues that,

> every man living not according to Their qualitie, will in short time think his
> quality according to his expence, which must needs make a disorder, where There
> is an inequalitie of degrees, and not in expence: for The rate of The expence must
> be set at The degree of The person ("Cause of Rebellion" 51),

readers become increasingly aware of the importance of class, or status, to Cavendish's

social philosophy. We see that all persons must live according to their inherent "qualitie"

---

[82] For example, sectarianism and church space, or parliament and House of Commons.

and the fact that one's quality cannot be improved by one's financial situation or choices underscores the dangers Cavendish identifies in social mobility. For Cavendish, one's nature is pre-determined and fixed, so self-determination is void by her reasoning. "For when a Noble man seeth an inferior person in as good, or better equipage Then himself, it begets envy, and envy causeth murmur, murmur faction, faction rebellion," writes Cavendish, as she attempts to explicate the dangers of social mobility ("Cause of Rebellion" 51). According to Cavendish, an inferior person is born as such, just as a monarch is divinely selected (Sarasohn 110); the "place" into which one is born determines one's quality and degree of freedom or agency. This static social model goes so far as to claim that when the "inferior sort" liv[e] at The rate of The nobler sort [it] begets pride, pride ambition, ambition faction, faction rebellion" ("Cause of Rebellion" 51). A rigid social hierarchy that divides the "inferior" sort from the nobility would, by Cavendish's logic, ensure that no one is "tempted to live above Their abilities even with Their equals, thus striving to out-brave one another" ("Cause of Rebellion" 51). Cavendish's approach to social cohesion applies even to "breeding" offspring: "The Cause why There be so Many Unhappy Marriages, is in The unequal Matches; and The fault is in The Parents not breeding Their Children according to Their Quality, or Estates" ("Of Marriage" 80). She even goes so far as to suggest that when ill-bred children mature, they are of two minds because they have lowered their minds to their economic misfortune and consequently resent their parents; they live in a constant state of regret upon realizing that their parents are not social equals, leading them to the unfortunate realization that their perceived lowly status is likely permanent ("Of Marriage" 80).

Cavendish's solution to ill-breeding, then, is to limit the free will of potential partners. Within Cavendish's social hierarchy, free will is contingent upon fortune, breeding, and status, because each figurative level of the hierarchy is meant not simply to define a person's socio-economic function, but to contain social actors in the appropriate "space." Again, since Cavendish's social space is stratified and hierarchical, consequently determining the amount of unimpeded free will one can exercise, we see that free will is contingent upon the "place" prescribed to certain people based on their status and supposedly inherent merit.[83] Furthermore, the importance of assigning certain people to specific "places" in the social hierarchy is evidence that the Aristotelian hierarchy that Sauter claims has collapsed is wholly present in conceptualizations of social space.

Before examining Cavendish's practice of space-making, let us first consider how the cultural production of social space looks from a more general perspective. Cavendish believed that space was created for matter and could be manipulated and shaped by and for matter; she explains that: "there cannot be Matter without Place, nor Place without Matter; so that Matter, Figure, or Place, is but one thing: for, it is as impossible for One Body to have Two Places, as for One Place to have Two Bodies; neither can there be Place, without Body" (*Grounds* I.1). Although Cavendish comments on "place," space is the broader context within which we can locate a specific place. Place and matter thus become co-dependent in Cavendish's philosophy of Nature and of society, because

---

[83] The centrality of the family unit to social cohesion is something both Cavendish and Winstanley share in common. Both authors view families as units—almost as if they are miniature societies—so if each unit strikes an internal balance and maintains internal harmony, it is more likely that society will remain peaceful and cohesive.

without one there cannot exist the other.[84] With respect to social space, human beings

pre-exist organized societies, suggesting that space must be structured to organize the

corresponding matter. Without this structure England would be in a state of anarchy,

because the boundaries that determine one's place would exist no longer.[85] The notion

that space must always be occupied underscores the homogeneous nature of Cavendish's

natural philosophy; but, when it comes to her social philosophy, social space is also

"filled" by human bodies and the material goods they produce.[86] In fact, one could argue

that it is human bodies that constitute social space—a sentiment that affirms the existence

of Aristotelian hierarchy in social space; after all, social space and structure are pointless

when there are no lives to govern. Cavendish's hierarchy of spaces credits Nature for the

existence of human beings; humankind—as distinct from Nature—creates its own

societies, which means that social space must be occupied by human matter in order for it

to be called a society distinct from Nature. This hierarchy of spaces includes the

demarcation of social space from Nature. Social space is a human construct, and in the

---

[84] This sentiment is indicative of Cavendish's move away from atomism, because in her Natural philosophy she denies the existence of voids and argues that all space is occupied by matter. A void signifies empty space, which does not coincide with her natural philosophy, nor does it coincide with her social hierarchy. Space must always be occupied; after all, space is defined in a context relative to adjacent matter. Cavendish argues that there can be no empty spaces, because that would constitute a void. In 1653, Cavendish advocates for the presence of an infinite void in *Poems and Fancies*; but, fifteen years later in *Grounds*, she denies the possibility of voids, because all space must be filled with or occupied by matter.
[85] This would be a homogeneous social space, as we see in Winstanley's *Law of Freedom* (1652).
[86] Interestingly, we see two different strands of Aristotelianism here: in her natural philosophy, Cavendish treats space almost as if it is a series of containers into which matter moves—and there can be no empty containers; on the other hand, her rigid social structure upholds the Aristotelian (and neo-Platonic) spatial hierarchy that Michael Sauter and Alexandre Koyré, among others, argue was supplanted by homogeneous Euclidean space.

case of *Olio*, we are approaching space as a cultural production via literary text. But what does space-making involve in the context of post-civil war England?

Cavendish believes that it is inequality between subjects that leads to civil unrest, so her social structure aims to organize people in a way that reduces the potential for conflict. For Cavendish, the inequality that causes civil war is driven by desire, which causes individuals to try to gain the "upper-hand" over other social actors ("Of Natural Wars" 162); however, she advocates for an inequality that sustains the rigid social hierarchy she believes is imperative to an orderly commonwealth. Nature's parts, on the other hand, do not quarrel among themselves, nor do they try to gain the "upper-hand" over other parts of Nature, allowing the space of Nature to remain unified and orderly.

Within *Olio* there exists a two-tiered system of equality, whereby the inequality symptomatic of a rigid social hierarchy is positive because it regulates the behaviours of the "poorer sort." The inequality between the "nobler sort" and the "poorer sort" caused by desire and financial disparity is viewed as a danger to social order if classes of people are not divided from other classes—as if to say that the poor would contaminate the integrity of the aristocracy if they were not segregated. For Cavendish, inequality is dangerous when the lower-classes attempt to mimic the lifestyles of the nobility, because this action is believed to incite shame and anger in the nobility whose status she believes should not be challenged. Thus, for Cavendish, inequality is not inequitable, because it is a reflection of the naturally determined social hierarchy. That she faithfully believes that the lower classes are inferior and would disrupt social order by moving out of their 'rightful' place on the social hierarchy suggests that Cavendish's *Olio* reiterates the

traditional aristocratic social structure. Self-interest is at work in Cavendish's understanding of society, because to deviate from traditional belief in the Great Chain of Being would destabilize not only social hierarchy, but also Cavendish's own place in that hierarchy. The goal of *Olio*, then, is not to present a new social structure, but rather to deconstruct that structure into separate building blocks that she identifies as the components of social structure. While *Olio* appears to be a somewhat random account of Cavendish's beliefs, it is quite systematic in its practice of diagnosing problems through a meta-analysis of the various building blocks of social structure. Her approach is quite logical in this regard, because she recognizes that social cohesion is established only on a strong foundation; thus, strong building blocks lead to social cohesion and order.

     *Olio* reinforces and promotes inequality, but worthy of notice is the presence of fear in maintaining order via inequality. Cavendish proclaims that "Fear makes Carefulness, and is a Watch-Tower for a Mans Safety. Fear makes Order, Order makes Strength, and Strength maintains power; for a Body out of Order is weak, and is subject to be overcome [*sic*]" ("Of Natural Fears" 147). This statement is indicative of Cavendish's own sentiments towards the chaos and upheaval of the civil wars that forced her and the Stuart Court into exile in France. Cavendish fears disorder because it destabilizes the social structure that solidifies her social position; thus, her attempt to invoke fear in her readers can be viewed as an attempt to safeguard the English people by keeping the body politic strong and invulnerable.

     Equally possible is that Cavendish reveals her own fear of civil war in *Olio*. Regardless, her move to inspire fear in others illuminates the internalized fear that

permeates her attempt to strengthen the body politic; her fear would have resulted in

limitations placed on free will, especially for the commoners whose so-called irrational

and desirous minds required the most control. Cavendish's ideal commonwealth limits

the agency of the lower classes and would inevitably have had negative implications vis-

à-vis the fulfillment of individual interests; after all, reduced agency and limited free will

make acting in one's best interests difficult at best. Nonetheless, reduced agency in the

"poorer sort" allows the concentration of power and agency to remain in the noble ranks.

Cavendish's interests are best served by stabilizing the social hierarchy, but it is

important to remember that she likely viewed her social structure as in the best interests

of all English people, despite its reception by today's readers.

The concept and definition of "interest" evolved rapidly during the seventeenth

century, so placing Cavendish's space-making within the context of this anthropological

shift is a helpful way of accounting for her rigid social structure. In his analysis of the

economic framework of seventeenth-century England, Roger Backhouse comments that,

> [i]n the late sixteenth century "interest" was synonymous with "reasons of state," and was seen as lying in between passion and rationality. In England, during the Civil war, the concept of interest began to be applied not simply to the national interest but to individuals and groups within the nation. (110)

Criticism of Cavendish's inconsistent treatment of free will fails to account for the reality

that, in mid-seventeenth-century England, the cultural production of space and the degree

to which citizens might exercise free will were complicated by ideological changes;

philosophies of human nature, ability, and potential were rapidly developing, but social

practices were asynchronous with philosophical evolution. In *Olio*, we can see that

Cavendish struggles with the notion of interest and self-love; she believes that self-love is

positive in moderation, but negative in its extreme: "it is so partially Covetous, that it

desires more than all, and is contented with nothing, which makes it Many times grow

Furious, even to The ruin of its own Monarchy" (*Olio*, "Of Self-Love"). Whereas positive

self-love "is The ground from whence springs all Indeavours and Industry, Noble

Qualities, Honorable Actions, Friendships, Charity, and Piety, and is The cause of all

Passions, Affections Vices and Virtues," negative, or corrupt self-love "is The Tyrant

which makes The State of The Mind unhappy," and unhappy people are at risk of

becoming factious ("Of Self-Love" 145). Cavendish recognizes that self-love is

important in moderation, hence her belief that it should be regulated by reason ("Of Self-

Love" 145). Reason, she believes, is a quality of the educated nobility, for it is through

the careful training of gentlewomen and gentlemen that reason—a learned capacity—can

"govern Their passions . . . to rule Their unsatiable or distempered appetites with

temperance, to teach Them noble principles" ("Of Gentlewomen" 61). What Cavendish

describes is moderation—a prominent theme in *Olio* related to self-regulation and human

interaction; however, the ability to self-regulate was natural only to the "superior" ranks

of society who could afford a gentlewoman's or gentleman's education. Consequently,

human societies—according to Cavendish—were simply unable to sustain a harmonious

balance, because self-regulation was not a universal quality in human beings; once again,

the "poorer sort" were the people who supposedly needed rigid social hierarchy the most.

In *Grounds*, Cavendish comments on the balance that sustains Nature as a unified

whole, writing that "only, by their close conjunction and near relation, [Nature's parts]

unite in one and the same actions" (2.iii),[87] followed by the assertion that "several sorts, kinds, and differences of Particulars, causes Order, by reason it causes Distinctions: for, if all Creatures were alike, it would cause a Confusion" (2.x). At the same time, Cavendish notes the difference between self-love amongst Nature's and society's parts. Nature's parts have a well-balanced self-love because of the absence of individual self-interest; society's parts, on the other hand, cannot maintain a well-balanced self-love, because human beings naturally have varied interests, and these interests are infrequently aligned with the interests of other people in that society. In Nature, differences may not be unified, but they can still be harmonious, because harmony is difference in unison; it is a scale of difference and unity that, together, create a single tune. Nature's various parts may be distinct from one another, but it is only through their differences and cooperation that order and harmony are achieved. Nature's parts, like society's, are distinct, but what unifies Nature as a single body at peace within itself is that the parts have no individual self-interest. Nature's parts gain nothing from deviating from their prescribed role. This logic works for Nature, but when applied to fragmented social space, distinction is used to create order *at the cost of limited degrees of freedom* (i.e., degrees of freedom are relative to one's social status). Nature is a homogeneous body, despite its infinity of parts, because it is united as one (i.e., all parts cooperate to create unity because it is in their best interests and they have not considered other options), whereas society is a collection of different, but related parts—but it is from their differences that conflict and

---

[87] Disagreement must happen in order for agreement to occur; likewise, disharmony must exist in order for harmony to exist.

disorder arise. Unlike Nature's parts, social actors, or 'society's parts,' can in fact benefit from deviating from their role or 'function' in society.

The structure Cavendish wishes to impose on English society resembles her version of Nature's structure. Using Nature as a blueprint for an ideal society is an idealistic goal, because the self-love of human matter is easily corruptible by self-interest or corrupt self-love, whereas the self-love of non-human matter is devoted to the common preservation of Nature's collective body. If the self-interest of individual humans were to strike a balance between the needs of the self and those of the greater society, or public weal, then an idealized society could, in theory, prevail. This ideal—that the individual self-interest of every person could align itself with the interests of the public weal—is unrealistic in a social setting, and Cavendish recognizes this problem.

In *Olio*, Cavendish does not take the risk of allowing people to define their own interests; instead, she approaches social order from the perspective of national interest. In no uncertain terms, Cavendish depicts the "poorer sort" as self-interested thieves and liars whose immorality would lead to social chaos; in the same breath, she also claims that "merit" characterizes the true born gentry, which is, of course, a *post hoc* argument: merit is affiliated with actions, behaviours, and choices, so it does not follow that the true gentry can be born into a position in which merit precedes morality. I also want to emphasize that Cavendish argues that the merit of true born gentry lives in the government of justice; what Cavendish is saying is that true born gentry are rational and prudent enough to define their own interests *and* balance these interests justly relative to the needs of the state. The division of the "poorer sort" from nobility is but one example

of how Cavendish uses space to contain and divide groups of people, thereby fortifying the unequal, heterogeneous status of her ideal society.

The construction of social space, as Martina Low explains it, must take into consideration "structures as rules and resources that are recursively incorporated in institutions" (137). Furthermore, "institutionalized spaces secure the orderly cooperation of people. They provide security in action, but also restrict the possibilities of action" (141). Cavendish does not "secure" the cooperation of the people, because she fails to provide security for the interests of all members of society. Her vision necessitates cooperation for it to succeed; it does not, however, secure such cooperation.

Cavendish uses space to divide people; in fact, her social model is one that promotes free will, but only after the elite space-makers have the opportunity to determine the needs and interests of the public weal. When a society is founded upon morals and ideology that both favour and are upheld (and created) by the elite—the very people who hold the privilege of producing space through their writing—and disfavour the uneducated masses, free will immediately becomes contingent upon the place one occupies on the social hierarchy. The tenuous relationship between free will and authority affords power to the educated elite, because they dominate the social process of creating shared spaces governed by culturally determined institutions; thus, when Low says that "the constitution of space itself has to be understood as a social process" (50), we must recognize that in Cavendish's social space, the social process is mediated by affluent social actors. In a sense, the social process is usurped by lawmakers and monarchs who craft and are embedded in a social structure whose institutions of governance, law, and

97

economy represent the best interests of the upper classes and monarchy.[88] Yet, at the

same time, no one exists outside of the social process; its actors shape the process and the

process shapes the actors. It seems fitting to recall a statement commonly attributed to

Louis XIV of France: "*L'état, c'est moi*";[89] though the various parts of the state body are

not directly controlled by the monarch, they still compose the body that legitimates their

authority as "the state." Cavendish and Hobbes refer to Charles I and II respectively as

heads of the English body—the commonwealth (*Olio*, "Inventory of Judgements

Commonwealth" 205).[90] This commonwealth is the body that generates space and

regulates social structure. The elite—the royal family and aristocracy—therefore become

the state (i.e., the "rational parts" with agency) and the lower classes becomes the

inanimate appendages (i.e., the "sensitive parts" with limited agency) that act at the

behest of the body.[91]

---

[88] The monarch crafting power while also being embedded in the system that provides them with that power invokes spatial imagery; it is a circuitous process that is exclusive and, in theory, continuous and unbreakable. The 'circle of power' protects the monarch and ensures the longevity of the monarchy.

[89] Attributed to Louis XIV, though not verifiable. The principle still applies to this argument.

[90] The notion of one head (the sovereign) for one body (the commonwealth) is called the body politic, recalling the frontispiece for Hobbes's *Leviathan*.

[91] In *Grounds*, Cavendish explains that the "sensitive" and "less pure" material parts of Nature are the "Labouring Parts," which are inanimate and can only act at the behest of the animate parts—or the rational and pure matter (I.5). The "inanimate" (I.3; Cavendish uses this word to describe parts of Nature that rely on the ensouled bodies in Nature, i.e., the rational, thinking parts) parts are a burden that weighs down the rational parts, yet Cavendish acknowledges they cannot be separated. The inanimate parts are not self-moving like the rational parts, but the rational parts cannot labour like the crude inanimate parts can; they exist relationally and interdependently as a body. This analogy supports my point that there can be no elite upper class without a lower class against which they differentiate themselves. Social and political power only exists by the differentiation of roles and statuses; for power to exist, there must be someone over whom power is exercised.

The inner workings of Cavendish's natural philosophy are arguably the model by which her ideal society is created.[92] God creates the cosmos in which Nature resides, Nature produces humankind, and humankind imitates Nature. The mind is central to social order, because it is in this internal space that social actors make choices about how to behave and engage with other social beings exterior to them. For Cavendish, the mind is generative and subjective, and it has the capacity to guide the actor to behave morally under the right conditions—that is, when the mind is educated, disciplined, and rational. It is here that we see the major distinction that makes Cavendish's theory of free will spatially contingent: the diverse body of parts in Nature work in unison with the shared goal of self-preservation, but this is not the case in society. If we were to think about Nature as a "state," then all of her parts act in synchronization with the state. Were we to apply the same logic to Cavendish's social space as depicted in *Olio*, we would quickly notice that, while Cavendish's goal for the commonwealth is long-term preservation, the commonwealth cannot be preserved when its constituents fail to maintain order at the individual or familial level. If the building block of families is void of internal harmony, then this 'broken' block detracts from social order.

When we read Cavendish's natural and social philosophies side-by-side, we are reminded of the differences between theory and practice; after all, her natural space is the

---

[92] Her natural and social philosophies are so tightly interconnected that it is sometimes challenging to determine which is which, or if what she is saying applies to both. There are instances in *Grounds of Natural Philosophy* where Cavendish will break into a brief commentary on human societies in the midst of her analysis of Nature. In 1.xv of *Grounds*, for example, Cavendish is referring to the varying strengths of nature's parts, but it could easily be read as a comment on her social hierarchy, wherein power and freedom to act unimpeded rely on one's place in the class hierarchy; the strong are most powerful and dominate the upper hierarchy, whereas the lower hierarchy is often exploited by more powerful actors.

"real" and perfect model, while her social space is a detailed plan for restoring a monarchic government. Yet even in theory, Cavendish's idealized social space is imperfect, because she cannot escape the reality that humankind is imperfect and will thus create imperfect spaces that foster immoral behaviour. Space-making is a process that is inherently self-interested and subjective, so the created spaces tend to represent only one perspective, because the generation of space is the product of one's social position and lived experience. By heavily regulating social interaction, Cavendish aims to resolve the perceived imperfections of society with a rigid structure that reveals her personal biases and interests; unfortunately, the trade-off is restricted free will.

**Spatially Contingent Free Will and Spatial Typology**

I have argued in my preceding section that free will for humans is spatially contingent in *Olio*, because the free will at work in Cavendish's natural philosophy differs from that of her social philosophy. To complicate matters further, Cavendish's goal for her ideal society is order and, for Cavendish, order is the direct result of a rigid social structure that is divided and heterogeneous. Rigid social structure makes homogeneous space impossible, because it accentuates differences between the diverse social actors who constitute that space. In other words, homogeneous space is emancipatory (an all-encompassing claim made by Sauter) only in certain contexts; if Cavendish were to

homogenize society, it would indeed eliminate hierarchy and inequality, but it would

destroy individual identity, freedom of choice, and free will.[93]

Nelson takes a different approach to free will in the early modern period, arguing

instead that it is *heterogeneous* space that is emancipatory; she argues that early moderns

sought actively to preserve sustained difference, which implicates heterogeneity, or

plurality and *diversity*, as central to early modern thought (Nelson 7; 124; emphasis

mine). Importantly, Nelson's argument that space was not experienced as uniform—a

property of homogeneous space—is based on perspectival variance tied to one's

spatiotemporality. Nelson argues that individual reality is experienced differently

according to perspective and spatiotemporal location, as well as ideological orientation

(7; 9); she refers to this modal reality as transrealism,[94] or the notion that reality is

fragmented and may be experienced differently by an individual or a group, based on the

fact that early modern European thinkers existed in "radically different, contradictory

contexts" (10).[95] The contradictory or plural contexts in early modern Europe to which

---

[93] Homogenizing social space erases the differences that define our individual identities, as well as our beliefs, values, and interests. Sauter admits in his conclusion that there are sinister effects that follow the European attempt to homogenize the world—namely, colonialism.

[94] Transrealism is a concept Nelson borrows from artist Micha Cárdenas, who coined the term transreality to describe the postmodern human experience as fragmented and to argue that the human experience of art allows people to cross the boundaries of various realities. Nelson uses this term to argue that fragmentation, instead of being the *result* of postmodern theory, is a precondition of reality. Nelson's application of the term to early modern European thought is meant to emphasize that this was a time of substantial ideological and technological change and that early modern thinkers experienced various modes of reality which, despite how often these modes clashed, constitute sustained difference as a positive attribute. Nelson argues that early modern thinkers were not obsessively trying to homogenize experience; on the contrary, they were attempting to preserve the richness of diversity and choice, which are necessary to the exercising of free will.

[95] One example of contradictory contexts to which Nelson regularly refers is Christian faith; for example, the Catholic Church banned the Copernican model of the universe, yet Isaac Newton's theory of gravity was also related to the principles of Protestant faith and a Galilean interpretation of the universe. Although both Catholicism and Protestantism are Christian sects and share the same ontological history, their social and intellectual contexts varied by the type of Christianity to which one ascribed. David Cressy points out

Nelson refers are the various ideological and intellectual changes of the period, including the construction of globes and time pieces, but this sense of plurality applies equally well to the ideological and intellectual changes of Cavendish's England. In the context of *Olio*, the radically different, contradictory contexts are the result of changing socio-political, religious, and philosophical interests, all of which fuelled the English civil wars. Interestingly, Cavendish divides social space from the space of Nature by creating two separate theoretical frameworks: one to account for Nature's motions and the other to account for the motions, or behaviours, of human actors fuelled by autonomous self-interest. Cavendish's dual concepts of free will are not self-contradictory; rather, they represent the author's own understanding of the philosophical discrepancies that occur in the two vastly different spaces of Nature and society. In Nature, free will is unimpeded and each part possesses the autonomy to act freely;[96] in society free will is impeded by laws and customs, so individual autonomy is present but limited. In Nature, the regulatory function lies in the hands of its individual parts, but in society regulation lies in the hands of the monarch resting on the "chair of wisdom"; thus, free will in human and non-human matter is contingent upon the type of space it occupies. In Nature, all parts have free will because these parts can self-regulate, while in society there is a

---

that the Catholic rejection of Copernicanism may have encouraged Protestant thinkers to accept the Copernican model. See David Cressy's chapter "Early Modern Space Travel" in *Literature in the Age of Celestial Discovery from Copernicus to Flamsteed*; Michael Sauter's *Spatial Reformation* (2019); and Robert Merton's *Science, Technology and Society in Seventeenth-Century England* (1938).

[96] Cavendish does insist that these parts have the free will to act as they wish but underscores the premise that they have no reason to do so because they rely on the animate, rational parts (*Grounds* I.3).

governing body to regulate human behaviour to ensure—as much as possible—that individual actors do not compromise societal order and cohesion.

The liberating effects of homogeneous space apply, without a doubt, to Cavendish's natural space. In Cavendish's depiction of Nature as one united body whose constituents act in the best interests of the entire body, we see the collective nature of this "society"—as Cavendish describes it. Each of the parts is serving its own best interests by fulfilling its "role" as one part of a larger whole, but in contributing to the collective interest of the aggregate body, it also fulfills its own needs.[97] Thus, in the homogeneous space of Cavendish's Nature, there are countlessly many different parts, but it is their "choice" to act in the best interests of the aggregate whole; after all, the death of the whole leads to the destruction of the parts. The difference between Cavendish's natural space and her social space lies herein: corrupt self-interest does not "infect" the constituents of Nature, for it is a defect reserved for humankind born into sin. Boyle notes that Cavendish makes "a distinction between 'pure' and 'corrupted' forms of self-love" (134); whereas "Pure self-love gives rise to the desire to be recognized for good deeds, or 'fame,' corrupt self-love simply pursues public recognition by any means, even vice, which Cavendish calls 'infamy'" (118). Cavendish's argument about self-love in

---

[97] An argument can be made that Nature's parts are in fact fulfilling their self-interest by pursuing collective interest because the maintenance of the body of Nature is the priority; each part exists relative to others and therefore requires this association to exist as that specific part. Cavendish refers to Nature's parts as a society, just as she does with human societies; in both societies, the "parts" have the choice to perform their prescribed role. But whereas Nature's parts are concerned solely with self-preservation, humans (i.e., parts) are not concerned solely with basic self-preservation. The self-interest of human actors is not merely about self-preservation. Instead, the needs and best interests of social actors vary according to their social position, which means that person *a*'s best interests clash with the best interests of person *b*, leading them into conflict. The notion that self-preservation is informed by self-interest and is therefore dependent on one's social position is something I discuss in greater detail in my Winstanley chapter.

societies arises in *Grounds*, but it becomes difficult to separate her commentary on nature

from her social philosophy, because she tends often to combine both spaces in her

analysis of matter in general, which can make her philosophy of free will look as though

it is internally conflicted. Cavendish states that:

> Although Nature hath made every thing Good, if it be rightly placed, yet she hath
> given her Works power of misplacing Themselves, which produceth Evil Effects:
> for that which corrupts Nature, as it were, is The disordered mixture. But of all
> her Works, Man hath entangled her waies The Most by his Arts, which makes
> Nature seem Vicious, when Most commonly, Mans Curiosity causeth his Pain.
> But There is nothing that is purely made, and orderly set, by Nature, that hath not
> a Virtue in it; but by her Creatures mis-applyings, produceth a Vice. (*Olio*,
> "Natural Works" 162)

This passage uses the umbrella term of Nature's "works" to describe both human and

non-human matter, and Cavendish suggests that these material parts have the "power" to

deviate from the roles Nature intended, leading to corruption; at this point, it is unclear

whether she is talking about human or non-human matter, or both. Cavendish proceeds to

argue that when matter misplaces itself it can produce "evil effects," but it becomes clear

that Cavendish identifies self-interested human beings as the source of disorder, sin, and

corruption. Concluding the passage is her remark that all of Nature's parts have inherent

virtue, but it is through their "misapplyings" that vice arises. I say that it is difficult to

discern whether Cavendish identifies humankind as the sole disturber of order, because

she begins the passage with a reference to all of Nature's parts; yet, it appears that she

believes humans are primarily at fault for Nature's perceived evil effects because human

beings are "curious."[98] Boyle clarifies this argument by pointing out that "for Cavendish,

---

[98] This curiosity is a form of contrast: it allows the individual to look at the current state of *x* and contrast it
with what *could* be. In essence, this is the "choice to do otherwise" that is central to discussions of free will
in the seventeenth century. See the Introduction to this thesis for a more detailed explanation.

there is an important disanalogy between humans and the other parts of the natural world. Humans possess a desire for fame, a desire that is simply not present in other creatures, and, because of this, humans are much more likely than other creatures not to behave as they ought" (118). Boyle also argues that Cavendish "thinks self-love is a more complicated passion in humans than in other creatures" (125), which supports my argument that free will is only impeded in social space due to corrupt self-love. If corrupt self-love is combined with free will, there would be inevitable chaos—but we only see this in Cavendish's depiction of humanmade spaces. Whereas Nature's parts aim to sustain its internal order through its "poyse" or "balance" and "passionate love" (*Grounds* I.xiv), human beings tend to act according to their individual desires and personal interests.[99] Cavendish explains that "nature hath given men Those vast desires, as They can keep in no limits" and that "The minde is not satisfied though it had all, but requires more, so The minde is like eternity, always running, but never comes to an end" (*Olio*, "Of the Vastness of Desires" 40), thereby contrasting humankind's selfishness and covetousness with Nature's cooperative association of parts, noting that "though every Corporeal Motion, or Self-moving Part, hath its own motion; yet, by their Association, they all agree in proper actions, as actions proper to their Compositions" (*Grounds* II.i). Directly addressing the problem of self-love, Cavendish writes that the "unhappy" mind, characterized by endless desire, "is so partially [i.e., selfishly] Covetous, that it desires

---

[99] Furthermore, an action that one believes to be harmless can in fact harm someone else without the knowledge of the original actor. Finite human minds are incapable of seeing the "big" or "entire" picture, so even an innocent action may indirectly harm someone else.

more than all, and is contented with nothing, which makes it Many times grow Furious,

even to The ruin of its own Monarchy" ("Of Self-Love" 145).

Although Nature's parts share the same level of autonomy as their human

counterparts in the social space, it is the latter that causes disorder, stemming directly

from corrupt self-love mobilized by free will and agency. Cavendish argues, "Nature is

intire in her self, as being only Material, and as being but one United Body; also, poysing

all her Actions by Opposites; 'tis impossible to be any ways in Extreams, or to have a

Confusion" (*Grounds* III.i); in other words, Nature's parts sustain an internal balance so

as to avoid confusion and disorder, but this cannot be said of human societies.

Returning to the self-regulation of human actors in *Olio*, we gain perspective on

why order is so important to Cavendish; it is important enough to limit the free will of

people she views as unreasonable. In the passage below, Cavendish describes the dangers

of corrupt behaviour in a fearful tone:

> There be three sorts of Robbers, as first, Those that take away our goods; as plate, money, jewels, corn, cattle, and The like. The second are murtherers, that take away life. The third are factious persons, which are not onely The cause of The taking away our goods, which we call movable, and our lives, but our religion, our frends, our laws, our liberties, and peace; For a factious man makes a commotion, which commotion raiseth civil wars, and civil war is a division in The bowels, or heart of The State, as to divide commands from obedience, obedience from commands, rending and breaking affections, raising of passions, so as a factious man is a humane Devil, seeking whom he can devour, insinuating himself into favour with every man, that he may The better stir up Their spirits to fury, presenting Them with grievances to catch in discontent, speaking always in Cyphers and characters, as if it were a dangerous time, and that They lived under a Tyrannical government. (*Olio*, "Robbers" 42)

Cavendish's experience of the English civil wars infuses this sentiment; her indignation

over the loss of financial goods, religion, human life, and liberty is a response to the "evil

deeds" of corrupt self-love. Factious people are the reason that Cavendish delves into her meta-analysis of the building blocks of social cohesion. While her analysis of the 'building blocks' of society and cohesion necessitates social inequality, it seems logical that—given the publication date of *Olio* (1655)—Cavendish desperately seeks social order because of the lack of stability in her own life. Interestingly, it would not be unreasonable to wonder if Cavendish's detailed analysis of the social building blocks was, for herself, a means of finding stability and order. Cavendish identifies three types of robbers: those who take away goods, murderers, and factious people; these villains are 'takers,' and it is the factious who take away stability and order. Despite the shock contemporary readers of *Olio* might feel, it is also important to consider what motivated Cavendish to write; her state of mind, although we cannot qualify it in retrospect, is the generative source that makes her a space-maker.

Thirteen years following the publication of *Olio*, Cavendish released *Grounds*—a mature articulation of her philosophical views, and one that is notably free of the anxious tension we see in the consistent civil war references in *Olio*. Cavendish's production of natural space in *Grounds* is much simpler than her social space-making endeavours; Nature is not factious, nor does it go to war with itself, a move that would be wholly self-defeating. Nature provides a safe and secure space for all parts to exist in a state of harmony made possible by cooperation. Nature's parts exhibit altruistic self-interest:

> Though every Self-moving Part, or Corporeal Motion, have free-will to move after what manner they please; yet, by reason there can be no Single Parts, several Parts unite in one Action, and so there must be united Actions: for, though every particular Part may divide from particular Parts; yet those that divide from some,

> are necessitated to join with other Parts, at the same point of time is division; and at the very same time, is their uniting or joining. (*Grounds* I.vi).

The actions of Nature's parts are freely willed; Nature is a society composed of single parts that unite with one common goal: self-preservation.[100] Whereas Nature's parts are required to exist in some form of bodily society, human beings are not. Humans can live as a part of a society but, within this society, there are various affiliations ranging from intellectual and political to religious and economic. What is so unique about Cavendish's social space and philosophy is that she argues that "since union is The bond of society, The discourse should always tend to peace, and not to discord" (*Olio*, "Discourses" 15), and yet while she argues for the *idea* of unity, she promotes division:

> The reason why The Vulgar hath not such varieties of discourse, is not onely because They have not read, or hard, or seen so much of The world, as The better sort hath: but because They have not so Many several words for several things, for that language, which is Most copious, wit flourishes Most in for fancy in Poetry without expression of words is but dead, for that makes a Language full to have Many several words for one thing or sense, and though The vulgar is born and bred with such a Language, yet very seldom with variety and choice being imployed in The course affairs of The world, and not bred in Schools or Courts, where are The Most significant, choicest, and plentifullest expressions, which make The better sort, not onely have finer and sweter discourse but fill Them ful of high and aspiring thoughts, which produce noble qualities, and honourable actions. ("Vulgar Discourse" 17)

The pronounced distinction between the vulgar and uneducated classes and the educated "better sort" in this quotation is not simply a wider vocabulary, but also about aspiration, noble qualities, and honourable actions. This distinction in no way fosters social unity; instead, it reinforces the supposedly innate differences between the wealthy and the poor.

---

[100] Self-preservation normally applies to an individual self, but in the case of Nature's preservation, self-preservation and common preservation can be used interchangeably, because the body of Nature is a single whole that could be understood as an individual entity, *or* an aggregate of parts devoted to common preservation.

Consequently, free will becomes contingent upon one's fixed place in the social space. Still, Nelson argues that "[t]he inability to insist on a single option among, or derive a single option from, a plurality . . . results in freedom. Disharmony is one way of describing the conditions that generate such a liberating human inability" (124). We are therefore left with another contradiction—this time between Sauter and Nelson. Sauter claims that homogeneous space was broadly emancipatory, but this appears only to be true with respect to Nature. Nelson, on the other hand, claims that the condition of social actors was the opposite of homogeneous; there was no single way to think about and experience the world, and one could reasonably believe two opposing ideas at the same time without being incorrect. This sort of sustained difference (i.e., the ways in which an individual would allow perspectives that appear oppositional to co-exist in consciousness) is what Nelson believes is the antecedent of free will, because plurality allowed for freedom of choice and promoted disconformity. If neither Nelson's nor Sauter's theory of free will and space can account for Cavendish's version of free will, then we return once again to spatially contingent free will in her writings.

**Conclusion**

I have compared two of Cavendish's texts—one related to social philosophy and the other related to natural philosophy. Although it is common practice for Cavendish scholars to establish arguments by drawing upon a hodgepodge analysis of Cavendish's various works and genres of fiction and natural philosophy, I reject this methodology. Nelson argues that "[t]o force assimilation on what is different would be violence" (131); this logic applies well to Cavendish's corpus. To develop a single argument that accounts

for the manifestation of free will in the numerous spaces Cavendish produced over a

period of decades is unreasonable. Cavendish was a prolific space-maker and each space

is governed by context-dependent rules. In *Convent of Pleasure* (1668), women create

their own community that nourishes their own needs; this space does not require

behavioural guidelines for engaging in conversation with men, nor does it make women

subordinate to men, as is the case in *Olio*.[101] In a similar vein, the material beings in

Cavendish's *Observations upon Experimental Philosophy* (1666) behave differently than

human matter in *Worlds Olio*; likewise, in Cavendish's *Poems and Fancies* (1653), non-

human matter behaves differently than the non-human matter in *Grounds of Natural

Philosophy*.[102] Cavendish's philosophical views, like those of any of her contemporaries,

change through time, complicating assimilatory readings of free will that take a single

stance based on generalized abstractions. The sheer volume of Cavendish's space-making

endeavours precludes generalized arguments about her treatment of free will. By reading

Sauter and Nelson against Cavendish's most mature work in natural philosophy and her

non-fiction idealized society in *Olio*, we find ourselves in the position to reassess existing

beliefs pertaining to Cavendish's concepts of free will. When we read *Grounds* and *Olio*

through the lens of spatially contingent free will, it becomes clear that the inconsistencies

over which many scholars have argued are indicative not of the author's disordered

---

[101] In *Olio*, Cavendish states that "an honest Wifes care is to please her Husband" ("On Painting" 84).
[102] The difference here is that in *Poems and Fancies*, Cavendish entertained the existence of spatial voids, which she rejected in her mature works on natural philosophy. The absence of a spatial void implies two things: first, that non-human matter has agency (i.e., it cannot simply be sucked into an infinite void against its will), and second, that matter constitutes space, so space cannot exist apart from matter—hence her rejection of voids.

thinking, but rather of the complex nature of spatial typology and its role in determining the degree to which free will is manifest in a given space.

**CHAPTER 2: Renegotiating the Great Chain of Being:**
**The Mind-Space and Social Reform in Traherne's *Christian Ethicks***


**Introduction**

The premise that space is homogeneous was gaining acceptance in seventeenth-century

England, as we can see in the work of Isaac Newton (Sauter 8), Thomas Hobbes

(Alexander 183), John Wallis (230), and others.[103] We see clear indications in Thomas

Traherne's *Centuries of Meditations* and *Dobell Poems* (both only in manuscript form

until published in 1908) that he believed space is infinite, which corresponds with

seventeenth-century scientific views about spatial homogeneity. There is no evidence,

however, to suggest that Traherne embraced Euclidean notions of space, and his

*Christian Ethicks* (1675) is evidence against the argument that all space is homogeneous

and uniform. *Christian Ethicks* focuses primarily on social space, which he presents as

heterogeneous and distinct from divinely created space. He states explicitly in *Ethicks*

that the sinful space occupied by God's fallen people is "finite" and must be separate

from divine space, for with "the least subtraction of the smallest Part, Infinity is lost, and

so is Eternity" (*Ethicks* 73).

Readers of *Ethicks* are made well aware of Traherne's dual, indeed triple

conceptions of space—one that is divine, homogeneous and infinite; one that is human,

social and heterogeneous; and one that is each individual's soul, mind, and imagination:

---

[103] Isaac Newton's *Principia* rested on the premise that space is infinite and homogeneous (Sauter 7-8); Hobbes and Wallis were embroiled in a heated debate concerned with infinite space and the problem of material divisibility (Alexander 19); and Cavendish's earlier belief in vacuums and voids changes in her mature natural philosophy tracts, which signifies her belief that space is homogeneous, making the presence of vacuums or voids impossible (See *Grounds of Natural Philosophy*, 1668).

> *Command thy Soul to go to India, and sooner than thou canst bid it, it will be there. ... Command it to flie into Heaven, and it will need no wings, neither shall any thing hinder it . . . And if thou wilt even break through the Whole, and see those things that are without the World (if there be anything without)* [if the World be confined][104] *thou maist. Behold how great Power, how great swiftness thou hast! Canst thou do all these things, and cannot GOD?* (226)

Marks' commentary on this quote highlights "man, the miracle of creation [who] possessed such marvelous powers," noting, however, that "the stupendous capacity of man's imagination was only an auxiliary to his potential moral greatness" (xliii). In other words, the imagination could only fulfill its "stupendous capacity" when it was directed by moral greatness. What Traherne describes here is the ability of the soul to experience nonlocal space, but the soul's experiences cannot be articulated without the imagination—and imagination is rooted in the mind and an essential part of space-making. As I mention above, Traherne believes divine, homogeneous space is necessarily separate from and coincident with social, heterogeneous space; however, the soul is able to bridge the divide between the two spaces. Carol Marks notes that, in seventeenth-century England, "scientific discoveries confirmed older theories of God's immanence and eternity. New spatial conceptions of the universe provoked renewed examination of the percipient soul" (xlii). This chapter expands on Marks's point that space was being *reimagined*, proposing that the reconceptualization of space also applies to humanmade spaces like society. In *Ethicks,* Traherne focuses primarily on the space occupied by physical human beings, but the passage above unearths an important piece of information: the ways in which human beings negotiated and interpreted space were

---

[104] Carol Marks, who edited *Christian Ethicks*, does not indicate whether the square brackets are her insertion or Traherne's.

changing and expanding. In the above quotation, Traherne describes the ability of the

soul to move beyond the space occupied by the body, and he addresses the soul's, or

spirit's, own space and mobility in his remark that "The Spiritual Room of the Mind is

Transcendent to Time and Place, because all Time and Place are contained therein" (73).

What makes *Ethicks* so intriguing is that, while Traherne insists that infinite divine space

cannot mix with the finite space of the fallen world, the felicitous soul can experience

union with God, meaning that the soul can be present in both the fallen world and divine

space.

The goal of *Ethicks* is to "elevate the *Soul* . . . inform the Judgement . . . enrich

the Mind, and guide Men . . . in the way of *Vertue,*" thus leading the soul to experience

"Felicity"[105] or union with God (*Ethicks* 3). For Traherne, the immaterial soul can

experience the infinity of the divine, but this soul is also bound to the material body and,

as such, the soul's Felicity influences the tangible behaviour of its corresponding body in

the social space, meaning that human-to-human interactions are improved by the soul's

experience of Felicity. I will discuss Felicity in greater detail throughout this chapter, but

for now we can understand this concept to mean "the *Perfect Fruition of a Perfect Soul,*

*acting in perfect Life by Perfect Virtue*" (*Ethicks* 19).[106] The experience of Felicity is not

external or transient: it is an experience that becomes stronger with each virtuous action.

---

[105] I capitalize "Felicity" to remain consistent with Traherne's use of the word.
[106] Fruition and Felicity are hard to differentiate, but for the purposes of this chapter, I will use "fruition" with reference to the process of spiritual betterment that leads one to a state of Felicity, which is the soul's joy over its apprehension and experience of God's love. Fruition, then, is the process of spiritual betterment, while Felicity is the outcome of it.

The final product of fruition is a perfect soul ready to unite with God in eternity, but the *process* of fruition is Traherne's main concern in *Ethicks*.

Scholars have tended to view *Ethicks* narrowly,[107] as if its sole endeavour is to teach readers how to achieve individual happiness and the Felicity that ensues. They fail to recognize the importance Traherne attributes to human relationships and the collective social body in one's preparation for eternal life. One's actions do not occur in a vacuum; they occur relative to other people, hence my position that *Ethicks* is focused both on individual spiritual betterment *and* social cohesion, the latter being a consequence of the former. Traherne believes that the soul can experience Felicity through its relationship with God and, importantly, that the soul's Felicity also improves one's physical existence in the material world. It follows that the Felicitous soul, which inspires the mind to guide the body to behave lovingly towards God's creation, is an essential ingredient of social cohesion.

The soul's ability to transcend the finite space of the fallen world is what makes social cohesion possible: "THE End is that which crowns the Work; [it is] that which inspires the Soul with Desire, and Desire with a quick and vigorous Industry," writes Traherne, as he explains that the human desire for eternal union with God (i.e., the "End") inspires the soul and fuels industrious, virtuous behaviour on earth (13). The end inspires the soul towards a lifelong process of fruition—a process that is fuelled by love for God and his creation. Anyone who desires eternal life must live intentionally, not "at

---

[107] For example, Balakier, Colie, Cefalu, and Kiefer, all of whom treat Felicity as an isolated, individualistic process disconnected from other human beings.

random," and industriousness is intentional (3). Moreover, this industrious approach to worldly living is logical: "REASON, which is the formal Essence of the Soul of Man, guides Him to . . . prefer the Better, above the Worse," for "he that prefers the worse above the Better acts against Nature" (3). By this logic, Reason is what sparks industriousness and guides the individual to a better end; if an individual identifies the "End" as divine union in eternity, the likelihood of that individual behaving in a pro-social[108] manner is significantly higher than for someone who lives "at random."

This process of fruition, of achieving perfection—both of oneself and of those surrounding that actor—creates harmony, because the virtuous conduct of self-regulated individuals contributes to social cohesion[109]—or the collective perfection of the social space. Traherne does not write explicitly on social cohesion,[110] but we can see in *Ethicks* that it occurs as a by-product of virtuous self-conduct that impacts the whole, or the social body. He recognizes that individual behaviours occur *relative* to other social

---

[108] By pro-social, I simply mean behaviours that contribute to social cohesion.

[109] For the purposes of this chapter, I define social cohesion as the perfection of the material world through virtuous conduct, self-determined pro-social choices, self-regulation, love, and a general appreciation of the value of God's creation. More standard definitions are: "Social cohesion is defined as the willingness of members of a society to cooperate with each other in order to survive and prosper. Willingness to cooperate means they freely choose to form partnerships and have a reasonable chance of realizing goals, because others are willing to cooperate and share the fruits of their endeavours equitably" (Stanley 5); and "Social cohesion refers to the extent of connectedness and solidarity among groups in society. It identifies two main dimensions: the sense of belonging to a community and the relationships among members within the community itself" (Manca 6026).

[110] Traherne uses the word "fellowship" with reference to one's relationship with God (*Centuries* I.5), though this would also apply to relationships with fellow Christians. I am using the term "social cohesion" rather than "fellowship" because of a significant difference in how each inflects relationships between human beings in the social space. Fellowship suggests intentionality; according to the *OED*, fellowship suggests reciprocation between two or more parties: "To enter into companionship or alliance *with* someone else; (of two or more people) to enter into fellowship *together*." I, however, am arguing that social cohesion is the *by-product* of virtuous and loving behaviour on behalf of an individual. *Ethicks* focuses on the individual, but fellowship focuses on interpersonal relationships.

beings, to God, and to God's creation, underscoring the importance of self-determination to social cohesion. For Traherne, virtuous conduct is a conscious choice, not a natural tendency (Traherne, *Ethicks* 175). His aspiration to guide people to virtue and Felicity underscores the importance of harmony between God and the souls of human beings to Traherne's conception of space.

The infinite (and homogeneous) space of the divine *coincides* with the space of sinful human beings, but the soul has the tremendous capacity to be present in both spaces. Coinciding spaces are relational, yet still distinguishable from one another; in the case of heterogeneous and homogeneous spaces, these spaces exist side-by-side as distinct. Experiences of divine union fill the mind and body with love, making the body's actions virtuous and loving. The humanmade space of society is, of course, heterogeneous and distinguishable from God's infinite space; these two spaces coincide, but the felicitous soul bridges the gap between humanmade and divine spaces, establishing a dialogic relationship between heterogeneous and homogeneous spaces. Traherne makes it clear that the heavens cannot be penetrated by a sinful human being; instead, only the purified soul can move between these two spaces to bridge the divide. While divine and social spaces cannot be wholly unified and uniform (i.e., they cannot be homogenized and conceptualized as a single space), the felicitous soul can still achieve union with God despite the division of spaces. At Creation, the body was given a soul— and the origin of this soul is God, hence the soul's ability to "flie into Heaven" without detracting from God's perfection and infinitude. In other words, the soul can move *across* and into various spaces beyond the body to unite with God's omnipotent soul because the

origin of the soul is God, while the origin of the body is the material world. Space itself, however, is not united and homogeneous: that characterization belongs to perfect divine space.

Traherne's attribution of creative, godlike power to the human mind underscores two critical components of his space-making: the ability to "see" the world from God's perspective via imagination, as well as the capacity to create space in the physical world that best prepares the soul for its end: eternal union. The act of space-making is an imaginative process that coincides with existing spatial structures like the Great Chain of Being. We have seen that Cavendish believed one's position on the cosmic hierarchy pre-determined one's essence and ability; Traherne, on the other hand, believed that all human beings have the ability for spiritual elevation, even while they maintain their worldly hierarchical status (232). Traherne viewed all parts of the Great Chain as equally important in God's eyes—each "link" played an important role in maintaining the "whole," or the body constituted as the "Kingdom of God" (Traherne, *Ethicks* 53); he asserts that God exists within all human beings (73), an assertion consistent with the belief that the Great Chain represented "the Absolute's own infinite 'super-abundance,' and by implication, therefore, as inevitably extending to all possible things" (Lovejoy 68). Both Cavendish and Traherne believed that "the world had a clear intelligible unity of structure" (Lovejoy 101), but whereas Cavendish believed that social structure could only be sustained by limiting the free will of the lower classes, Traherne was convinced that all people should enjoy free will. His desire was to teach people to behave virtuously,

thereby reducing the sinful behaviours that followed poor individual regulation of free will.

I argue that *Ethicks*'s goal of teaching readers how to achieve Felicity through fruition has the indirect effect of promoting social cohesion. Traherne promotes harmony not only within the social space but also between the spaces of the material world and eternity. This harmony between spaces can be understood as a spatial continuum, or the soul's ability to bridge the gap between divine, homogeneous space and the heterogeneous space of God's fallen people. The separate spaces of society and eternity remain discrete and are *not* united as one space; rather, eternal space and social space are brought into dialogue via the mind-space[111] that is connected both to one's soul (an extension of eternity) and one's body (a manifestation of the physical world). Traherne recognizes that self-determined actions have the potential to detract from or contribute to social cohesion, so his goal is to teach readers that, by behaving in a manner that weighs the interests of the self against the interests of others, one continues to perfect one's own soul, preparing it for eternal union with God. In other words, eternal life is the product of one's behaviour towards God's creation during one's mortal existence *and* of one's spiritual relationship with God. When one behaves virtuously and honours God, the mind-space is infused with Felicity. The Felicity associated with behaving virtuously towards other human beings contributes to social cohesion, and social cohesion also

---

[111] I will refer to the space of the mind, or the "spiritual room of the mind" as the "mind-space."

increases one's Felicity. Felicity must be actively sought after; it is the product of a series of choices to love God *and* his Creation.

In the first section of this chapter, I discuss the relationship between Felicity and social cohesion. Specifically, I examine the centrality of Felicity to the *Ethicks*' social philosophy. Felicity is both a product and cause of love in society; when more people are behaving lovingly, it is more likely that social cohesion improves. Second, I will examine the significant relationship between the earth and the heavens, two coinciding spaces that come together through the relationships between the individual, God, and his creation. I then discuss how social cohesion can be strengthened by spatial continua, or the connection between the perfect, divine space and the imperfect created space occupied by humankind through the space or conduit of the mind. Traherne believes the human being is "the Golden clasp whereby Things Material and Spiritual are United" (104), thereby placing the individual—and by implication, the mind—as the threshold between the material world and the immaterial world of the divine. After this, I look at how the body, mind, and soul navigate space in order to establish spatial continua between individuals and God. I then discuss how *Ethicks* is akin to a "how-to" manual that attempts to reach a broad audience by explaining Felicity and the process of fruition in practical terms. I conclude the chapter with discussion of how relationships can either unify or divide spaces, noting that the space of the mind plays a crucial role in establishing harmony between the two coinciding spaces: the perfect space of the divine and the imperfect space occupied by God's creation.

***Ethicks* in Context**

Before discussing the ways in which Traherne's social philosophy is related to the spatial reformation, I want to situate my argument in the larger context of Traherne scholarship; but first, I will begin with a brief introduction to *Ethicks*.

*Christian Ethicks* was published posthumously in 1675 by Traherne's brother, Phillip (Marks xi). Marks explains that the seventeenth century is known as "the century of ethics" (xxv), situating *Ethicks* in the genre of religious writing that "offers guides to morality" (xxv). The "practical Christian of the Restoration," explains Marks, "demanded not a philosophy of morals thought out anew, but rather a guide to conduct" (xxvi). *Ethicks* falls into this category: the practical guide to moral behaviour. Marks points out that while sin was a popular topic among moral philosophers in the seventeenth century (xxx), Traherne states openly that he focuses on the virtues rather than sin. *Ethicks* does not condemn readers for their sinfulness, but instead exhorts them to overcome their sinful nature.

Traherne's treatment of ethics distinguishes him from writers like Henry More, Ralph Cudworth, Richard Cumberland, and William Colvill, in that *Christian Ethicks* has tremendous social implications due to the emphasis placed on "duties to self, neighbour, and God" (Marks xxxiv).[112] In other words, the practicality of *Ethicks* is what makes it unique. James Balakier argues that *Ethicks* is "the only book of its kind published in English until Henry More's 'archetypally academic' *Enchiridion Ethicum* (1668) was

---

[112] Marks references these writers for their prominent ethical tracts, all of which were designed for academic audiences. Ralph Cudworth, a friend of More's, also wrote an ethical tract that had numerous crossovers with More's *Enchiridion Ethicum*, but it was not published until the early 18th century.

translated from Latin in 1690" (111-112; Marks qtd. in Balakier xv-xxxiii), and although

More's *Enchiridion* was translated into English, making it more accessible to lay readers,

it was a text composed for academic consumption. Traherne's focus on social duty and

unyielding human potential reveals Christian humanist undertones, especially with

respect to social reform (Todd 174). It was accessible to the average reader and was

meant for general consumption.

There is very little scholarship that focuses primarily on *Christian Ethicks*.

Instead, scholars tend to focus primarily on Traherne's poetry and his meditations in

*Centuries of Meditations*, rather than *Ethicks*. In terms of Traherne's poetry and

meditations, there has been much debate over the sources that inspired and guided

Traherne's beliefs. While some insist that Traherne is a Neo-Platonic Christian mystic

with Scholastic influences,[113] others have argued that Traherne is "a Neo-Scholastic who

makes use of Neo-Platonic imagery and concepts, not a Platonist who sometimes invokes

Scholastic terminology" (Cefalu 249). James J. Balakier argues that "despite its utilitarian

purpose, the *Christian Ethicks* is fundamentally a Neo-Platonic treatise" (117). In the

effort to distinguish whether Traherne is primarily Neo-Platonic or Aristotelian, Marks

strikes a balance, remarking that "Though Neo-Platonic in philosophy, Traherne's

*Christian Ethicks* owes all of its technical language and many of its assumptions to the

formal training in Aristotelianism he received as a student" at Oxford (xv). Marks's

argument is a compelling way to reconcile the presence of Neo-Platonic and Aristotelian

---

[113] See A.L. Clements, *The Mystical Poetry of Thomas Traherne*, 1969.

philosophy in *Ethicks*.[114] That Traherne used the language of Aristotelian ethics to espouse Platonic ideas (Marks xxii) reveals a level of tension in *Ethicks* that may speak to the intellectual atmosphere in the 1670s and 80s, a period of rapid change in science, theology, politics, and moral philosophy that pitted certain schools of thought against others.

Another point of contention for Traherne scholars is that of Felicity. Whereas some scholars believe that Traherne views Felicity "from the perspective of a balanced state of love of one's self, others, and God" or that the felicitous soul "contains God and the whole world" (Seeterman 85; Leishman qtd. in Balakier 207),[115] others argue that Traherne's understanding of Felicity derives from the Latin word *fēlīcitātem*, signifying "happiness or intense bliss, though it carries the additional senses of good fortune, prosperity" (Balakier 7-8).[116] Balakier argues that Traherne's conceptualization of ethics remains the same between *Centuries* and *Ethicks* (114), but his point that ethics teach us to live "among" humans, so as to live "Happily in the World" (Traherne qtd. in Balakier 114)[117] is missing something. While his definition holds merit, it does not do justice to an essential ingredient of Felicity: fellowship, or the experience of "intense bliss" *with* others. Balakier portrays Traherne's understanding of ethics as relating solely to the

---

[114] Marks explains that students at Oxford were compelled to attend weekly lectures on moral philosophy, all of which was rooted in Aristotelianism. Further, Marks tells readers that Aristotelian moral philosophy (ethics) was systematic and structured, but was confined to the worldly, or the 'bounds of life,' as René Rapin remarks. Plato's ethics, on the other hand, were not systematic or structured (Rapin describes Plato's ethics as "grievously deficient in method"), but often viewed as more "noble and elevated" (xvi).

[115] Leishman, J.B. *The Metaphysical Poets: Donne, Herbert, Vaughan, and Traherne*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1934.

[116] The adaptation of the Latin term *fēlīcitātem* was used by Francis Bacon in *The Advancement of Learning*, but was introduced into English in a line from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: "Absent thee from felicity a while" (5.2.347). See Balakier 7-8.

[117] Traherne, *Centuries*, (III.45).

individual's well-being which, I believe, misses the mark in the context of *Ethicks*. *Centuries* are Traherne's meditations; their primary function is not to teach others how to co-exist. *Ethicks*, however, places greater emphasis on the practical aspects of life that make the soul felicitous—namely, one's conduct towards others. Balakier also posits Felicity as the "organizing form" of Traherne's thought (6), which corresponds well to its use in *Ethicks* because, as I will argue, *Ethicks* offers readers a sort of 'how-to' guide to Felicity.

**Felicity and Social Cohesion**

Felicity is a central tenet of Traherne's social philosophy, and it figures significantly into his understanding of social relationships. Traherne's unwavering enthusiasm for Felicity as a transformative force that connects the individual human with other humans *and* God is one way that his ideal society differs from Hobbes's. Hobbes views self-love as a negative aspect of human nature and a detriment to society, because he views it as a means of self-preservation at any cost.[118] In contrast, Traherne writes,

> Self-love is so far from being the impediment, that it is the cause of our Gratitude, and the only principle that gives us power to do what we ought. For the more we love our selves, the more we love those that are our Benefactors. It is a great mistake in that arrogant *Leviathan*, so far to imprison our love to our selves, as to make it inconsistent with Charity towards others. (261)

Traherne vehemently opposes Hobbes's perspective on human nature, because it is void of benevolence. So strongly does Traherne oppose Hobbes's reductive treatment of self-love and self-preservation that he continues, arguing that,

> Preservation is the first, but the weakest and the low'st principle in nature. We feel it first, and must preserve ourselves, that we may continue to enjoy other

---

[118] Self-preservation is the first law of Nature (Hobbes XIV).

> things: but at the bottom it is the love of other things that is the ground of this principle of Self-preservation. And if you divide the last from the first, it is the poorest Principle in the World . . . Does not man deserve to be burnt as an enemy to all the World, that would turn all men into Knaves and Cowards, and destroy that only principle which delivers them from being Mercenary Slaves and Villains; which is *the Love of others!* (261-62)

Traherne distinguishes his understanding of self-preservation from that of Hobbes by focusing on the relationship between self-preservation and love; love is about the preservation of souls—of others and of the self. Hobbes is steadfast in his belief that human behaviour is motivated by material desire and that, because the mind is never satisfied, humankind will remain in a natural state of perpetual war over material goods and base self-preservation (185). By contrast, Traherne believes that, because the soul's desire for God's love is ceaseless, those who seek to experience God's love will also share this love in social interactions. *Ethicks* builds its foundation upon the belief that one's experience of Felicity improves in tandem with virtuous behaviour and love—of God, the self, and others, so one has a vested interest in pursuing goodness and virtue. Traherne's belief in an evolving Felicity, or the fruition of happiness, is viewed by some as "emotional optimism" (Smith 203), a critique that aligns with Hobbes's negative depiction of human nature, because such a view suggests that the goal of *Ethicks*—i.e., Felicity through virtuous behaviour and love—is untenable. I argue that Traherne's goal is not so much an impossibility as an improbability. Traherne acknowledges that original sin has corrupted humankind's nature (Traherne, *Ethicks* 91) but refuses to surrender his hope that, through freely willed actions, human nature can improve on a case-by-case basis and that self-improvement contributes to cohesion and harmony in the collective social space without limiting free will.

Traherne posits that social and personal harmony is achieved through loving relationships and freely willed actions (91). While Cavendish and Traherne both seek social order, only Traherne desires a harmonious social space via freely willed, pro-social actions. For Traherne, harmony can be established between God and his creatures when one understands that one's interests are best fulfilled through virtuous conduct and love for God. Social harmony applies to human co-existence, whereby virtuous conduct and love for God also inspire loving actions towards fellow humans. Traherne conceptualizes harmony using a musical analogy, in which "[a] Musician might rash his finger over all his strings in a moment, but Melody is an effect of Judgement and Order: It springs from a variety of Notes to which Skill giveth Time and Place in their union" (*Ethicks* 184). Following this analogy, the musician may run their fingers across the chords of an instrument, but it is only through the musician's intentional, well-ordered actions that a melody ensues; the harmonious union of notes—or people—is therefore the product of intentional choices and a commitment to establishing positive relationships between distinct notes, or people.

**Homogeneous Space and Relationality**

Traherne was actively aware of the period's changing conceptions of space and, while he sought spatial harmony, he clearly stands by his belief that divine/homogeneous space must be segregated from the space occupied by sin.[119] Traherne believes that space is

---

[119] For example, in the *Dobell Poems*, Traherne writes endlessly of space, especially with regards to the "spiritual room of the mind" (*Ethicks* 73), in "Innocence," "The Preparative," "The Vision," "My Spirit," and "The Apprehension." He also discusses the space of the cosmos, for example in "The Improvement," "Silence," and "Nature," to name only a few. Some examples from *Centuries* include I.37; I.96; II.80; V.2. One great example from *Centuries* that highlights the concept of infinite space during the spatial

relational, in the sense that it is the relationships between material (human) and immaterial (spiritual) bodies that constitute space.[120] In fact, Traherne refers to thoughts as "things" and "objects" that constitute the "'Inward fabric'" of the mind-space, which I treat as a distinct space or conduit between divine and social space (Balakier 25). In terms of heaven and earth, Traherne writes that "the Empire of all the Earth is a Bubble compared to the Heavens: And the Heavens themselves less than nothing to an infinite Dominion" (15). The relationship between the earth and the heavens is significant, as is the fact that the heavens and the earth are two distinct spaces. Moreover, we see a relationship between God and people; if there were no relationship between God and the material world, then these two spaces would be discrete entities that existed coincidently, rather than relatively. Likewise, there would be no heaven and no cosmos if the two spaces united as one. Spaces are united by the relationships between physical and metaphysical entities, or God's creation and the Creator himself.

At the same time, Traherne acknowledges that original sin divided humankind from God, hence *Ethicks*' devotion to teaching readers how to repair their relationship with God. According to Traherne, many worldly institutions, like the church, the monarchy, and the economy, are the fault of original sin:

> WHILE there was no Sin, there was no need of Penitence; while there was no
> Pain or Misery, no Patience; without wrongs and Injuries there is no use of

reformation is: "to show that God is infinitely infinite, there is infinite room besides, and perhaps a more wonderful region making this to be infinitely infinite. . . This is the space that is at this moment only present before our eye, the only space that was, or that will be, from everlasting to everlasting. This moment exhibits infinite space, but there is a space also wherein all moments are infinitely exhibited, and the everlasting during of infinite space is another region and room of joys" (V.6).

[120] Material relationships refer to the physical world, while immaterial relationships exist between souls in metaphysical spaces. In this case, I use "metaphysical" to describe supernatural or incorporeal relationships (e.g., between souls), as opposed to metaphysics as a branch of philosophy.

> Meekness; nor place for Alms-Deeds, where there is no Poverty: no Courage,
> where are no Enemies. In Eden there was no ignorance, nor any Supernatural
> Verities to be confirmed by Miracles; Apostles therefore and Prophets, Ministers
> and Doctors were superfluous there, and so were Tythes and Temples, Schools of
> Learning, Masters and Tutors, together with the unsavoury Duty incumbent on
> Parents to chastise their Children. (33-34)

At creation, the nature of Eden was harmonious and perfect, but because God granted

Adam and Eve freedom of will, they possessed the agency to break God's trust, a breach

that condemned humankind to a sinful existence. The virtues that create social harmony

exist only because sin divided humankind from God; thus, patience, meekness, and

redemption—all of which are central to Traherne's social philosophy—are necessitated

by humankind's relationship with sin. Traherne understands the virtues as a means for

humanity to find its way back to contact with God by displaying patience, meekness, and

love towards God's people—and by seeking redemption when one sins.

Traherne maintains an unwavering hope that humankind may restore its

relationship with the creator, explaining that God

> is infinitely Offended and displeased at Evil Deeds, he guards and fortifies his
> Law, deterres [*sic*] men from displeasing him by the fear of infinite Punishments .
> . . the infinite Hatred of Evil Deeds is the very Torment it self, that afflicts the
> Wicked. Tis but to see how much we are hated of GOD, and how base the Action
> is, no other fire is needful to Hell: The Devils chiefest Hell is in the Conscience.
> (97-98)

It is important to note that Traherne also recognizes that restoring the bond between God

and humankind must occur on a voluntary and individual basis, implying that the feeling

of affliction caused by one's sinful deeds should be enough to torture the conscience and

stir it into reformative action, leading one to avoid further sin in the future. Sin is the

product of one's own volition and "when a Sin is committed, [God's] Soul is alienated

from the Author of the Crime" (99). Repentance is thus the necessary antecedent for

redemption, which happens on a case-by-case basis and must be something one actively seeks to receive—hence repentance's status as a virtue in *Ethicks*. Throughout *Ethicks*, Traherne focuses on the ways that individual actions either strengthen or weaken one's relationship with both God and his material creation.[121] Because sin is the product of free will, seeking redemption must also be of one's own volition—one must choose to confess wrongdoing and correct one's behaviour. For example, if one willfully steals from another, one is redeemed only after making amends with the wronged party and with God. If one does not regret one's actions, then one willfully contributes, though perhaps unintentionally or unthoughtfully, to the disintegration of society because one's lack of remorse leads to a breakdown of social relationships and thus social cohesion. Without seeking redemption, one cannot experience the felicitous state of divine union, leaving one with little incentive for the outward display of virtue. The result, on a larger scale, would be a society—or the body of social actors—overrun by sin, and social cohesion rendered impossible.

Committing an evil deed separates the individual from God so, by this logic, in committing a social injustice (i.e., any sin towards God's creatures and material creation), one places oneself at an infinite distance from God. However, if the devil's "chiefest hell" is the conscience, then the mind-space—where the will and conscience are

---

[121] By contemporary standards, this would be considered an unfair negotiation of choice because, although humans are free to sin, they do so with the knowledge that sinners spend eternal life in hell. It is clear that early modern Christians understood the consequences of sin but, as we see in the *Divine Comedy*, Dante contrasts the horrors of hell with the tribulations of Purgatory and, eventually, the bliss of heaven and union with God. By contrasting these three spaces, Dante underscores the same logic that informs Traherne's comment that God discourages sin through the promise of eternal damnation.

located—is implicated as the only thing that can repair the division of the self from God. The conscience plays a significant role in self-awareness, because it interrupts one's consciousness with the reminder that one's sin has both distanced the self from God and from other social actors. The conscience therefore serves to remind the individual that eternal life or eternal damnation are the effects of free choice; when the self comprehends that the negative effects of sin are self-imposed, its heightened awareness apprehends its natural agency to choose between good and bad—or eternal life and eternal torture. For Traherne, the absence of God in one's life is both caused and sustained by a lack of virtue; however, by freely choosing redemption one can return to God and seek Felicity through a virtuous worldly existence.

Traherne draws parallels between virtuous co-existence, space, and non-material relationships, describing metaphysical places like the "recesses of every Vertue" the "Paths of Righteousness," and the "Temple and Palace of Bliss" as "spacious" (64). These metaphysical (and metaphorical) spaces engage one's consciousness through the "understanding," or the knowledge infused in the soul by God and apprehended in the mind-space; this knowledge informs one's worldly actions, which in turn affect one's relationship with God. The relationship between one's mind-space and knowledge is what Traherne describes as "the Light wherein we are to adorn and compleat our selves" (64); it is through this self-awareness that "all the Treasures of Wisdom are exposed to the Eye of the Soul, tho hidden from the World" (64). The "Key of Knowledge" (64) is what "admits" one to the space of Bliss, which is another way of describing the felicitous union between one's soul and God through virtuous worldly behaviour. This divine

union, however, requires the presence of free will, which is seated in the mind, because "the Mind is [the] Soul exerting its power in such an act" (232). There is therefore an irrefutable link between the mind, human agency, and virtue. The soul acts through the mind, so the mind has the capacity to will the soul's desires into bodily action; if the soul is aligned with God, then one's actions in the social space will be virtuous. The mind has the agency to act and its actions are completed in the material world; if its actions are virtuous, then the mind-space contributes to the cohesion of social space. Pro-social actions create social cohesion, but only after the soul imbues the mind with knowledge of God's love.

Traherne distinguishes between the mind and the soul; the former is associated with free will, or "act" (232), while the latter is the vehicle for one's spiritual union with God (231). The mind and therefore the person enact the will's desires in the material world, but it is the soul that bridges the divide between divine space and, through the mind-space, the social space as well. The soul has the ability to transcend spaces; it informs the mind of its felicitous state of union with God, which prompts the mind to act virtuously, and thereby unites the metaphysical spaces of the divine and the mind; the mind, on the other hand, is the acting force behind all social behaviour. The soul shapes the nature of the mind, and the virtuous actions prompted by the mind nourish the soul, because to love God's creation is to contribute to one's own fruition (51). The mind is the conduit between the soul and the body, for the mind moves the body according to the soul's desire; consequently, a soul inclined toward God will move the body to do good, while an unrepentant soul will move the body to sin.

**Social Cohesion, Relationships, and the Spatial Continua**

By focusing on virtue and the soul's experience of Felicity, *Ethicks* encourages social cohesion through pro-social behaviours that lead to fruitful and loving relationships between all elements of God's creation. This portion of my chapter focuses specifically on how social cohesion is achieved indirectly through virtuous conduct and self-regulation.

Traherne believes that "Moral Goodness is an Alacrity and Readiness of the Will, to sacrifice it self, upon consideration of the Benefits a Man hath received, to anothers Benefit, Enjoyment, Comfort, Satisfaction" (79). Sacrifice is arguably the greatest act of love, a biblical precedent with which Traherne's readers would have been familiar. In Traherne's imperative to sacrifice one's own interests to another's benefit, there is a promise, that "by loving, as it ought to do, the Soul acquires its own Perfection, and is united to all its Objects. By loving as it ought to do, it is made Holy, and Wise, and Good, and Amiable. Onely by Loving does it embrace the Delights of which it is capable" (51). Love is a virtue that, when embodied, perfects the object of one's love; the beloved's soul is nourished by an act of love and, in return, the soul of the one who loves is further perfected.[122] By this logic, if sacrifice is an act of love, then sacrifice also promotes one's own interests—that is, the interests of the soul and the ultimate goal of eternal life.

---

[122] We see again undertones similar to the philosophy of Neoplatonic love, as debated by Marsilio Ficino, Tullia d'Aragona, and Baldassare Castiglione, among many others. In Aragona's *Dialogue*, Tullia and Benedetto Varchi debate whether the lover or the beloved is superior. The debate concludes in a discussion over the potential to love infinitely. The point Tullia wishes to make is that, potentially, love can be infinite, because love is only true if it has "no end" (84). The notion of loving without end is what Traherne's *Ethicks* encourages; both parties—the one who loves and the beloved—benefit mutually.

According to Traherne, "Vertues are not effects of Nature, but Choice" (175), so one must choose to model the virtues outlined in *Ethicks*; a freely willed choice must be accompanied by "clear understanding" of what virtue embodied 'looks like' in the material world (78).[123] Love in action is manifest in self-sacrifice; by choosing to act in another's best interests, the actor also experiences greater Felicity and a stronger love for God. Love, therefore, is mutually beneficial, but the act of loving begins with a choice.

The choice to love occurs in the mind, but in order for the mind to make such a choice, it must be guided by a "clear understanding," or the apprehension of God's love. The concept of clear understanding as coincident with free will recalls the New Testament passage in which humankind is instructed: "be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12.2). Traherne states explicitly that *Ethicks* is intended to "enrich the mind" through mental and spiritual self-discipline; the passage from Romans that exhorts readers to renew their minds is reflected in Traherne's own teachings, especially with respect to the liberty of the mind and its awareness of the value of God's creation—the material world and the cosmos.

Traherne believes that the material world is an important part of Felicity. He believes that when humans esteem and love God's creation—whether that be inanimate or animate beings—they experience greater pleasure, which leads to a heightened

---

[123] Traherne defines a "clear understanding," or the "understanding power" as being "seated in the soul" where the "Essence of Knowledge consisteth" (36). The mind must apprehend this knowledge, because the "power of knowing is vain if not reduced into Act" (36). Because the mind is the seat of free will, it must apprehend knowledge and funnel it into actions, which materialize in the created world.

experience of Felicity (*Centuries* I.7). But, as I mention earlier, Traherne distinguishes

between the material world of God's creation and the material societies created by

humankind; humans are meant to relish the beauty of God's creation and withdraw from

the artificial beauty of material goods. According to Traherne, "RIGHTEOUSNESS in

esteem is that Habit, by Vertue of which we value all things according as their Worth and

Merit requires. It presupposes a right Apprehension of their Goodness, a clear Knowledge

of all their excellencies" (72). Righteousness is the virtue that recognizes the goodness of

others and maintains a clear understanding of the worth of others; it extends beyond

human relationships to include "all things" in God's creation, again rejecting the Neo-

Platonic tendency to devalue the material world in the process of spiritual and intellectual

amelioration. Traherne argues that valuing all parts of creation according to their worth is

"a Kind of Spiritual Justice, whereby we do Right to our selves, and to all other Beings"

(21). The statement that valuing God's creation is a means of "doing right," not only to

others but to oneself as well, is critical to our understanding of Traherne's social

philosophy and his conceptualization of Felicity. Traherne promises readers that

righteousness is mutually beneficial; it is also a cornerstone of social cohesion, because it

provides greater incentive to the individual actor to love others as one might love oneself.

This notion of mutual benefit anticipates the philosophy of Adam Smith's *Theory of*

*Moral Sentiments* (1759), in which the author expounds the principle of altruistic self-

interest as a part of human nature, but in a vein dissimilar to Hobbes's belief that self-

interest is a base and innate human tendency towards selfish warmongering. *Ethicks* is so

strongly opposed to the assumption that corrupt self-interest is the primary determinant of

human nature that the author openly chastises Hobbes's *Leviathan* (261). For Traherne,

love of God's creation—and of the self—is the key ingredient to both Felicity and social

cohesion.

By loving God's creation, one contributes to the perfection or fruition of beloved

objects (51), valuing "all things according as their Worth and Merit requires" (72).

Traherne identifies four types of righteousness: "Righteousness of Apprehension, a

Righteousness of Esteem, a Righteousness of Choise [*sic*], and a Righteousness of

Action" (71). Love for God's creation leads to "Righteousness with men [which] is Peace

and Assurance for ever: because Righteous men are Agreable to GOD and all his

Creatures . . . and assist in the Harmony of the whole Creation" (75). Traherne notes that

a "wise man will actually Extend his Thoughts to all Objects, in Heaven and Earth, for

fear of losing the Pleasure they afford him, which must necessarily spring from his

esteem of their excellency" (72). In this statement, we can see the elements of

"understanding" and free will at work: righteousness is a virtue and virtuous conduct is a

*choice*, so by extending one's thoughts or understanding to appreciate the excellence of

God's creation, one freely chooses to love the world in which one exists relative to

others. At the same time, this love is also an expression of one's own sense of value

because, by loving others, one experiences pleasure within the domain of the mind which,

in turn, nourishes the soul. Such pleasure is Felicity embodied.

Righteous conduct and love for all of God's creation is the means of fruition, a

process through which one's experience of Felicity is enriched. Traherne highlights the

causal relationship between righteousness and fruition throughout *Ethicks*, noting "how

naturally Vertue carries us to the Temple of Bliss, and how immeasurably transcendent it

is in all kinds of Excellency" (3). The process of being carried to the Temple of Bliss is

fruition, or spiritual growth, while Felicity refers to the joy one experiences through

union with God—a product of fruition. Although Felicity is experienced in the soul, it is

the actions that proceed from the mind's will that make Felicity possible. One's

behaviour in the social space determines the level of Felicity enjoyed by the soul; Felicity

is experienced through one's relationship with God, which is enhanced by the

individual's choice to avert sin. Traherne makes this principle abundantly clear in his

remark that "THE Excellence of Virtue, is the Necessity and Efficacy thereof in the Way

to Felicity. It consisteth in this, Virtue is the only Means by which Happiness can be

obtained" (13). Again, one's feelings of pleasure and happiness are linked directly to the

degree to which one lives virtuously and values God's creation, but Traherne recognizes

that this level of selflessness is a habit that must be learned and practiced consistently. In

fact, Traherne's definition of Felicity establishes a relationship between habit and virtue.

Traherne states openly that,

> VERTUE is a Habit: All Habits are either Acquired, or Infused. By calling it a
> Habit, we distinguish it from a Natural Disposition, or Power of the Soul. For a
> Natural disposition is an inbred inclination, which attended our Birth, and began
> with our beings: not chosen by our Wills, nor acquired by Industrie. (25)

As mentioned earlier, Traherne argues that original sin is the cause of most virtues; had

there been no sin, there would be no need for patience or meekness, for example. Original

sin caused humankind to become naturally sinful, making free will inherently corrupt; but

whereas Hobbes would negate the power of self-determination in the transcendence of

one's sinful nature, Traherne affirms this power. Habitual virtue necessitates self-

determination, because humankind must choose to override its natural tendency towards

sin on an ongoing basis. One must choose to behave virtuously on a daily basis; only then

will virtue and pro-social behaviour become habitual, second nature. In essence,

humankind's inherent tendency to sin must be overcome by actively rejecting the

temptation to sin in one's daily life.

Traherne is aware that establishing good habits occurs through patience,

repetition, and time, but the development of these pro-social habits is an important part of

one's fruition, or self-betterment. Fruition is process-oriented; the duration of one's

spiritual growth that coincides with one's evolving knowledge of virtue. Traherne

implicates the passage of time and consistency in the process of fruition, explaining that,

> ALL the Difficulty is in the Beginning. Vertues in the beginning are like green fruits, sour and imperfect, but their Maturity is accompanied with sweetness and delight. It is hard to acquire a virtuous Habit at first, but when it is once gotten; it makes Virtue exceeding Easie, nor Easie alone, but Happy and delightful. (27)[124]

Like any other habit, virtue becomes second nature through consistent application.

Initially, a virtue like righteousness must be practiced consciously until one reaches the

---

[124] In his *Poems*, Traherne frequently uses the image of fruit with reference to the beauty and generativity of God's creation; for example: "Evry Vine / Did bear me Fruit; the Fields my Gardens were; / My larger Store-house all the Hemisphere" ("An Infant-Ey" 34-36) and "Encompass'd with the Fruits of Love, / He crowned was with Heven abov, / Supported with the Foot-stool of God's Throne, / A Globe more rich than Gold or precious stone" ("Adam," 31-34). These three examples employ the imagery of fruit to visualize the manifestation of God's love and goodness in his creation. What God creates is fruitful, but created things can become fruitless when they lose their affiliation with God. For example, he writes that a "Globe of Earth" is better than a "Globe of Gold" because in the latter globe "No fruitfulness it can produce" ("Right Apprehension" 47); material riches lack the generativity that is inherent in God's creation because God has not deemed them fruitful—or, in other words, God does not assign value to the commodities coveted by humans. In the first two examples, fruit produces something beautiful or felicitous *or* is produced by God's love, whereas in the final example we see that superficial goods that are useless after death bear no fruit. Whatever is connected with God's spirit is full of life, but what has been divided from God's spirit by covetousness, for example, is lifeless and pointless. It could be argued that fruit is affiliated with the soul: it can come to fruition through Felicity—which is an experience that begins in one's worldly existence and is perfected in eternity—or it can be superficial and fruitless, in which case the soul experiences nothing felicitous after death.

point at which righteousness becomes a mode of being that can be conceived as an

upwardly evolving unity between the self, God, and his creation. Although Traherne does

not use the word "consciousness" to describe the habituation of oneself to the practice of

virtue, the mind and its capacity for clear understanding are integral to this process. To

build such a habit demands self-awareness, a process that underscores the importance of

clear understanding and knowledge. Knowledge of oneself and how one relates to others

in the social space is a necessary component in elevating one's virtue through the process

of fruition. Every positive habit heightens one's experience of happiness and Felicity, but

Traherne also insists that one's knowledge of Felicity drives one's desire to form virtuous

habits.

Traherne's emphasis on the importance of the element of choice to habitual virtue

and its role in social cohesion raises concerns over the plausibility of his social

philosophy, as we can see in his comment that "[w]ere there no Blindness, every Soul

would be full of Light, and the face of Felicity be seen, and the Earth be turned into

Heaven" (4).[125] Traherne's argument is based on the premise that the Earth would

become Heaven were all humankind to choose to behave virtuously, but this logic fails to

account for illiterate Christians, as well as non-Christians.[126] There is, however, a remedy

to the issue of illiteracy—that is, pro-social behaviour. Traherne writes, "[f]or there can

---

[125] Traherne's *Ethicks*, like Cavendish's *Olio*, presents an idealized society; it is theoretical and does not consider the problems that would have accompanied it, had it been adopted *en masse*. Its theosophical premise counts on a wholly Christian, well-educated population. It could only have been successful were this premise true.
[126] The flaws of *Ethicks* are undeniable, but for the purposes of this chapter, let us proceed on the premise that, in an ideal setting, Ethicks does in fact promote social cohesion.

be no Safety where there is any Treachery: But were all Truth and Courtesie exercis'd with Fidelity and Love, there could be no Injustice or Complaint in the World" (4). With this passage, Traherne emphatically states the indispensability of virtuous conduct to personal and national safety. More specifically, Traherne touches upon the dangers of treachery to the safety of the English people, no doubt calling to mind the recent events of the English civil wars, the stratocratic Interregnum government, and the Restoration of Charles II. Traherne continues this line of reasoning, remarking that "all the Peace and Beauty in the World proceedeth from [virtues], all Honour and Security is founded in [virtues], all Glory and Esteem is acquired by them. For the Prosperity of all Kingdoms is laid in the Goodness of GOD and of Men" (4). By contrasting the opposing realities of war and the need for safety with peace and security, Traherne appeals to the memories and emotions of his readers. The collective memory of war, sickness, death, political and religious instability, food insecurity, and financial peril would likely have been an effective means of encouraging social actors to consider the importance of virtuous conduct. For Traherne, virtuous, pro-social behaviour was not simply a means to an end—i.e., social order; it was a means to achieve eternal life. Traherne imagines the "infinite pleasures" of Felicity that would infuse the social space of England, because "the fruition of all in the Best of Manners, in Communion with God, being full of Life, and Beauty, and Perfection in himself, and having the certain Assurance that all shall be included in his Bliss, that can be thought on" (16). The fruition of all would guarantee the security of the English people; but, in addition to that sense of security and peace of mind

is the promise of eternal life after death.[127] For Traherne, the virtuous conduct of the

collective social body would produce a secure nation and peaceful existence, thus leading

to a collective experience of Felicity. Traherne presents virtuous behaviour as a means to

secure a happy and peaceful worldly existence, as well as a means of securing eternal

life. The by-product of this formula is social cohesion.

Social cohesion would be the logical outcome of the collective's commitment to

virtue and self-regulation. It is in one's best interests to behave virtuously, because

magnifying God's Goodness leads not only to social cohesion, but to Felicity as well.[128]

Traherne writes that,

> Since the Goodness of GOD is the great Object of our Joy, its Enlargement is our
> Interest; and the more there are to whom he is Good, and the more he
> communicates his Felicity to every one the Greater Pleasures he prepares for us,
> and the more is our goodness therein delighted. (82)

If God's goodness is the source of Felicity then, by Traherne's logic, mimicking this

goodness in the realm of social space serves one's own interests, while also serving the

interests of others. This idealized conceptualization of human nature again anticipates the

philosophy of self-interest that underpins classical economics. This system, however, is

predicated on the notion that all social actors share the same moral principles and hold

the same understanding of what it means to behave rationally.[129] The harmony of social

---

[127] Traherne does not clarify whether one can experience maximum Felicity as a mortal being. To remedy this problem, I treat fruition as a lifelong process accompanied by an increasingly heightened experience of Felicity, and that maximum Felicity is achieved upon one's ascent to heaven.

[128] Here is an example of proto-utilitarianism.

[129] Seventeenth-century English class structure makes the philosophy of self-interest, however well-intended, impossible. Rationality is influenced by many factors, one of which is the notion of need. Someone from the lower classes of society will inevitably have different needs than someone of the upper class, which means that rationalization of one's needs moves on a sliding scale of economic status. Cavendish and Hobbes would undoubtedly have disagreed with such a concept, had they lived to encounter it.

cohesion, as depicted in *Ethicks*, would strike a theoretical balance whereby all interests are fully served without hindering the interests of another but, again, that returns us to the problem of plausibility. If human nature does not turn instinctively towards goodness, which is something that must be learned in order to become habitual, then the prospect of a balanced or equitable social system founded upon the outward display of virtue is unlikely. As such, the total perfection of human nature is improbable, which means that—as a collective—humankind is unlikely to unite with God as a whole, while existing in the worldly realm; sin ensures that collective Felicity is a near impossibility.

Traherne's social philosophy illuminates his desire to strengthen relationships in the world and between God and humankind and, however idealistic and implausible the possibility, he relies upon relationality. His vision for society can be viewed metaphorically as a grid or circuit board; each of the parts exists relative to various other parts, but no part acts only for itself. Instead, each part of the circuit board acts in response to the relationships and corresponding signals surrounding it. This metaphor is similar to the way that events in space are meaningful in that they occur relatively between physical entities and/or metaphysical entities.[130] For example, Traherne believes that "[t]here are two sorts of concurrent Actions necessary to Bliss: Actions in GOD, and Actions in Men, nay and Actions too in all the Creatures" (5), meaning that Felicity—

---

[130] The power dynamics present in social structure make it impossible for all relationships to be equal, which further supports my argument that harmonious social cohesion is implausible. The circuit board analogy only works if all parts are equal, as is the case in Cavendish's portrayal of Nature's parts. With reference to relationships between physical and metaphysical bodies, the term "entities" is contentious, but Balakier points out that Traherne views thoughts as "things" and "objects" (25), so I use "entities" in my analysis of physical and metaphysical relationships, like those between God and humankind.

which, in *Ethicks*, is synonymous with Bliss—demands that actions involve at least two, if not three parties: God, humankind, and God's non-human material world. The actions of these three parties are interconnected, which is why I argue that spatial harmony is the product of relationships; a spatial continuum would thus be the effect of the harmonious relationships among God, humankind, and God's creation.[131] Whether intentionally or not, Traherne places humankind on the threshold between God and the rest of creation, underscoring the role of the human individual—and, specifically, the correspondence of the individual mind and soul—in spatial harmony.

**Harmony, Relationality, and Spatial Continua**

Important to our understanding of relationships that constitute space is Traherne's explanation of how the body, mind, and soul navigate space; his poem, "Consummation," is a helpful way of understanding how Traherne conceptualizes space:

> The Thoughts of Men appear
> Freely to mov [*sic*] within a Sphere
> Of endless Reach; and run,
> Tho in the Soul, beyond the Sun.
> The Ground on which they acted be
> Is unobserv'd Infinity.
> Extended throu the Sky,
> Tho here, beyond it far they fly:
> Abiding in the Mind
> An endless Liberty they find:
> Throu...out all Spaces can extend,
> Nor ever meet or know an End.
> They, in their native Sphere,
> At boundless Distances appear:
> Eternity can measure;

---

[131] *Ethicks* focuses primarily on human beings and their relationships with each other and with God. Traherne mentions the natural world briefly in *Ethicks* (unlike in his poems where nature plays a central role in human experience), so I am focusing on human-to-human and human-to-God relationships.

> Its no Beginning see with Pleasure.
> Thus in the Mind an endless Space
> Doth nat'rally display its face. (1-18)

Traherne views human thoughts as transcendental entities that move freely through an infinite sphere—the same infinite sphere to which Pascal refers, albeit rather ominously. For Traherne, thoughts have endless liberty and can move *across* multiple spaces, or "all Spaces," a phrase that implies that Traherne views space as heterogeneous, yet still continuous. The type of space may change but these spaces—social space, mind-space, and divine space—are a continuum along which souls travel freely.

Traherne clearly describes both heterogeneous and homogeneous space in "Consummation." His reference to multiple spaces implies heterogeneous space, while his discussion of endless space and infinity are consistent with a homogeneous account of space. While the mind can traverse both types of space, the body is confined to humanmade/heterogeneous space; similarly, divine/homogeneous space is experienced only by the soul. There is no mind-body duality; the mind extends into the space occupied by the physical body while also extending into divine space through the soul. While in the context of science the cosmos is viewed as an infinite homogeneous plane, Traherne's *Ethicks*, as well as his *Poems* and *Centuries*, clearly contradicts the premise that all space was accepted as homogeneous. If the human body is confined to one space while the soul can travel multiple spaces, then it becomes difficult to deny that Traherne believed that the cosmos is a collection of different coincident spaces.

Interestingly, Traherne states that *in* the mind exists an "endless Space"; the

significance of the mind having within itself an endless—and thus infinite—space is that

the mind too must be infinite in potentiality. Traherne notes that

> [the soul] can exceed the Heavens in its Operations, and run out into the infinite
> spaces. Such is the extent of Knowledge, that it seemeth to be the Light of all
> Eternity. All Objects are equally near to the splendor of its Beams: As
> innumerable millions may be conceived in its Light, with a ready capacity for
> millions more; so can it penetrate all Abysses, reach to the Centre of all Nature,
> converse with all Beings, visible and invisible, Corporeal and Spiritual, Temporal
> and Eternal, Created and Increated, Finite and Infinite, Substantial and
> Accidental, Actual and Possible, Imaginary and Real. (*Ethicks* 40)

Because the individual soul is an extension of the divine soul, the individual soul's

agency is unlimited; the soul informs the mind, so the actions that spring from the mind

are therefore informed by the awareness of the infinite divine, thus making the mind

infinite in its potential to mirror God's image in the material world. After all, "The

Spiritual Room of the Mind is Transcendent to Time and Place, because all Time and

Place are contained therein" (*Ethicks* 73).[132] The spiritual room of the mind—or the

mind-space—is created in the image of God and can therefore transcend the finite and

heterogeneous space born of human generativity.

I want to focus momentarily on the power that Traherne ascribes to the mind-

space. The mind is an internal space in which resides the "Temple of Eternity." Barbara

Kiefer Lewalski notes that "Traherne locates [the temple] in the mind of the regenerate

man who possesses true thoughts and conceptions of God, the self, the world, and

---

[132] This sentiment mirrors Anselm of Canterbury's argument that the will is free, not pre-destined, because
the past, present, and future all exist as a single instance within God's mind, meaning that the distinction
between present and future does not exist to God. Temporal divisions are finite, but human beings'
minds—like God's mind—transcend the finitude of numbers and the events they measure.

felicity" (361). It is in the mind that the Eternal Temple lives; it is also the mind that

experiences the material Kingdom of God through the senses. The mind is the "devil's

chiefest hell" (Traherne, *Ethicks* 98) and it is the seat of free will. The mind enacts the

soul's desires and has the power to reharmonize the eternal temple with God's kingdom

on earth. The mind is a vessel of God's love; it is regenerative and can amplify God's

presence in the material world. Physical and metaphysical spaces converge in the mind,

which is the threshold between material and immaterial worlds. For Traherne, the

capacity of the mind-space is unending—it is "in frame when our thoughts are like

[God's]. And our thoughts are then like His when we have such conceptions of all objects

as God hath, and prize all things rightly, which is a Key that opens into the very thoughts

of His bosom" (*Centuries* I.13).[133] The mind has the potential to be one with God's mind,

but first one must love and esteem the world as God does.

Prior to addressing the three types of relationships that constitute the coincidence

of social space, mind-space, and eternity, I would like to discuss the act of love, a virtue

that is integral to all relationships described in *Ethicks*. Traherne identifies love as the

unifying force of any relationship; love should strengthen and guide relationships and

should be mutually beneficial to both parties—after all, the relationship between the lover

and the beloved contributes to the fruition of others, just as much as it contributes to the

fruition of the self.[134] In addition to this, a loving relationship between an individual and

---

[133] Interestingly, in *Centuries*, Traherne uses the phrase "public mind" (I.27) with reference to "imitat[ing] our Infinite and Eternal Father"; this is an interesting parallel to the more social components of *Ethicks*.
[134] For a lack of better terminology, I am borrowing the "lover-beloved" construct from Neoplatonic love. Traherne's treatment of love is vastly different than Neoplatonic love, which places emphasis on Beauty;

another human being, or with any part of God's creation, is—at the same time—a loving

relationship between that individual and God. Traherne explains that,

> if we excite and awaken our Power, we take in the Glory of all objects, we live
> unto them, we are sensible of them, we light in them, we transform our souls into
> Acts of Love and Knowledge, we proceed out of our selves into all Immensities
> and Eternities, we render all Things their Due, we reap the Benefit of all, we are
> Just, and Wise, and Holy, we are Grateful to GOD, and Amiable in being so: We
> are not divided from, but united to him. (*Ethicks* 52)

The choice to love is a powerful one because, through this choice, the mind enacts the

soul's desires, and these desires manifest as "actions" performed by the body. The soul

and mind are united in action, because love impels the mind to will loving actions

towards God's people, God's creation and, by extension, towards God. The soul values

God's creation by rendering "all Things their Due," while also uniting with God; to value

God's creation is to show gratitude to God, and doing so inevitably leads to the

unification of the soul with God through expanded Felicity. Traherne's portrayal of

love's transfer from God, through the soul, and into the material world is precisely what

harmonizes spaces; it is love that unites the soul with all creation through the freely

willed actions that proceed from the mind, the fountainhead of action. When one person's

soul unites with God, the body inhabits the physical world, while the mind experiences

the eternal space via the soul, thereby establishing an individual continuum that

harmonizes divine and social spaces. Love fosters spatial harmony, which is why I argue

that relationships are critical to our understanding of spatial continuity and social

cohesion. For each individual who achieves spatial continuity through the act of love, the

---

Neoplatonic love is also more concerned with intimate relationships between two people, as opposed to
Traherne's *Ethicks*, which examines transcendental love from a more universal vantage point.

social space is fortified in the process because, when one is united with God, one's

Felicity simply cannot be contained within the mind-space alone. Instead, the abundance

of bliss transcends the mind-space through the vessel of the body, and fills social space

with loving actions via the material human body.

Love has the potential to infuse all relationships, but let us examine how the three

types of relationships that are most integral to Traherne's *Ethicks* benefit from love. The

first of these relationships concerns one's self-understanding, which encompasses the

harmonious correspondence between the mind, the soul, and the passions. Strong self-

awareness infuses one's own existence with value, because it recognizes the self—

composed of body, mind, and soul—as a source of goodness. Traherne believes that "IT

is the Prerogative of Humane Nature to understand it self, and guide its Operations to a

Known End: which he doth wholly forfeit, that lives at random, without considering what

is worthy of his Endeavours, or fit for his Desires" (13). Self-awareness, or self-

understanding, is the precipitant of an intentional choice to contemplate how one relates

to God and creation. One's choice to "guide [one's] Operations" in the material world is

also a means to achieve eternal life. This is not to say that one's physical existence is the

means to an end; in fact, I am confident in saying that Traherne would reject such a

transactional approach to relationships. For Traherne, one's life must be lived

intentionally in order to achieve eternal life; but, more importantly, the "toyl" of worldly

existence implies that one must be habitually virtuous through time, hence the importance

of intentional living.

Traherne states explicitly that to live life with no purpose in mind detracts from

the Felicity of the soul's union with God. An unintentional existence, by this logic,

divides humankind from God, almost as if an apathetic lifestyle were one of sloth.

According to Traherne, "TO live by Accident, and never to pursue any Felicity at all, is

neither Angelical, nor Brutish, nor Diabolical: but *Worse* then any Thing in some respect

in the World: It is to act against our *own* Principles, and to wage war with our very

*Selves*" (14). Traherne emphasizes that Felicity follows a life lived with purpose and

intention, but Felicity is also the effect of a logical choice: it is a means of finding eternal

happiness and a form of eternal self-preservation whereby one's body *and* soul benefit

greatly from one's relationships with others—in essence, this is collective preservation.[135]

An apathetic, or "accidental" existence is a means of waging war upon oneself because

such a lifestyle would oppose the fundamental drive for happiness born of the basic

human tendency towards self-preservation. This logic is further supported by Traherne's

comment that "THE Actions of GOD, or of the Angels, or of other men towards it, add

no value to the Soul, if it will do nothing of it self. If it be Idle or unactive, the more

excellent the Actions of GOD, and of all other Creatures towards it, so much the more

deformed and perverse is the Soul" (31). An intentional existence means that one's soul

welcomes relationships, like those with God and angels; if the soul is idle and inactive,

then it cannot come to fruition. Furthermore, if the soul—through an unintentional

---

[135] Hobbes believes that self-preservation is the first principle of natural law and, although his view of self-preservation hinges upon a negative ideation of self-interest, the principal also applies to positive ideations of self-interest, as is the case with Traherne. I will be discussing self-interest and collective interest in greater detail in my third chapter, "Common Preservation Must Prevail: Homogenizing the Social Space in Gerrard Winstanley's *New Law of Freedom.*"

lifestyle—surrenders its potential to infuse the actions of the mind and body with love

and goodness, then it seems as if the soul would forfeit its purpose. To live

unintentionally would be an act of negligence to one's soul, and thus to God, but it would

also be a disservice to God's people, who would not benefit from the absent love of an

apathetic social actor.

By neglecting the soul, one would be willfully distancing oneself from God,

which is the same effect that sin would have on one's relationship with God. The

intentional existence that stems from self-awareness plays an important role in repentance

and redemption, as well. Traherne notes that, "HOW slight soever our Thoughts of Sin

are, the least Sin is of infinite Demerit, because it breaketh the Union between God and

the Soul" (99). God divides himself from sinners, because their sins detract from his

perfection, and any detraction negates his infinitude (Colie 77; Traherne 97); thus, it is

imperative that the individual have a strong sense of self-awareness, so as to seek

redemption and re-establish union with God via redemption. On repentance, Traherne

writes:

> Its Evil is that of Sorrow, Indignation, and Shame, Its Goodness is the usefulness,
> and necessity of the thing, considering the Condition we are now in. It is highly
> ingrateful to Sence, but transcendently convenient and amiable to Reason; for it is
> impossible for him that has once been defiled with sin, ever to be cleansed, or to
> live after in a Vertuous manner, unless he be so ingenious as to lament his Crime.
> (125)

While repentance might offend the senses—or one's sense of pride—it is a necessary

action with respect to Reason, or the mind. Virtuous conduct begins in the mind and must

be self-determined, but the mind cannot encourage the body to behave virtuously when

the soul is shrouded in sin and divided from God; after all, virtue is inspired by the soul's

relationship with God, just as the soul's relationship with God impels virtue in the mind-space. The correspondence between God, the soul, the mind-space, and the body constitutes a spatial continuum on an individual level.[136]

Repentance is a pro-social behavior because, although the individual seeks forgiveness from God for sins committed in the material world, the redemption one finds in forgiveness restores the mind to a place in which virtuous self-conduct is again a priority. "REPENTANCE is a Sowre and austere King of Vertue, that was not created nor intended by GOD, but introduced by Sin" (125), writes Traherne, reminding readers that, though repentance is necessitated by sin, to repent is a virtuous act in itself. The self-aware individual recognizes their error and the potential consequences of failing to seek redemption, an error that would leave the individual disconnected from God and at odds with God's creation. Unrepented sin is anti-social in the sense that it harms actors in the social space while concurrently rejecting God's fellowship, which results in the sinner's isolation—both in life and, potentially, after death. Pascal's fear that the infinitude of an abyss would isolate man and make him irrelevant and forgotten by God is one way of conceiving of the disconnectedness that accompanies unforgiven sin (Pascal 198); division from God creates an infinite distance between creator and created, so the loneliness and anonymity of existing in an abyss is a frightening parallel to Traherne's depiction of the spiritual consequences of sin.

---

[136] When I say that a spatial continuum can occur on an individual level, I mean that each individual has the choice to build relationships that connect the mind and soul with the material world and divine realm. In theory, if each person could achieve this spatial continuum, then the social space would be nearly perfect, as if it had returned to the Edenic Paradise of Genesis.

An infinite abyss leads to disorientation—its darkness prohibiting any sense of self-awareness or knowledge of one's situation in the world. Traherne's portrayal of Christians orients humankind vis-à-vis God; no one who desires God's love is anonymous or forgotten. God only conceals Felicity in an abyss of ignorance from those who desire neither a relationship with God nor the fruition of their soul. Traherne argues that

> THE Great Reason why GOD has concealed Felicity from the Knowledge of man, is the enhancement of its nature and value: but that which most conceals it, is the Corruption of Nature. For as we have corrupted, so have we blinded our selves. Yet are we led by Instinct eagerly to thirst after things unknown, remote, and forbidden. (16)

Felicity is an earned experience and can only be experienced by those in union with God; it cannot be enjoyed by those who sin, because it is concealed from them—their lack of self-awareness or knowledge of their sins makes Felicity unattainable, because they have not repented. Traherne views repentance as a virtue of "infinite value" to fallen man, because it

> divests him of all his Rebellion, Pride, and vain Glory, strips him of all his Lust and Impiety, purges him of all his corruption, Anger and Malice, pares off all his Superfluities, and excesses, cleanseth his Soul of all its filthiness and pollution, . . . It fits and prepares him for all the exercises of Grace and Piety, introduces Humility and Obedience into the Soul, makes him capable of a Divine Knowledge, and makes way for the Beauty of his Love and Gratitude. (125)

Repentance is both a recognition of one's errors and a commitment to avoid sin and live virtuously, but it also recovers one's relationship with God; it prepares one for divine knowledge by restoring one's virtue, so as to "recover the Divine Image" (128).[137] Just as

---

[137] 1 John 1.9 and Acts 3.19 both treat repentance as spiritual renewal, so the commitment to avoiding future sin is implied.

humankind is made in the likeness of God, so too does the human soul mirror the divine

soul (Miller 266).[138] And if the soul mirrors the divine image, then the mind is sure to

reflect the soul's purity in its actions, which manifest in physical relationships of the

material world.

The second type of relationship featured in *Ethicks* is the one between the self and

God, but in order for the soul to mirror the image of God, it must have a "clear

understanding," which Traherne describes as,

> KNOWLEDGE [that] illuminate[s] the Soul, enkindle[s] Love, excite[s] our Care,
> inspire[s] the mind with Joy, inform[s] the Will, enlarge[s] the Heart, regulate[s]
> the Passions, unite[s] all the Powers of the Soul to their Objects, see[s] their
> Beauty, understand[s] their Goodness, discern[s] our Interest in them, form[s] our
> Apprehensions of them, consider[s] and enjoy[s] their Excellences. All
> Contentments, Raptures, and Extasies are conceived in the Soul and begotten by
> Knowledge . . . The Divine Image and the Perfection of Bliss are founded in
> Knowledge, GOD himself dwelleth in the Soul, with all his Attributes and
> Perfections, by Knowledge. (39)

This definition of knowledge focuses on how one's experience of the world via the senses

"illuminates" the soul. Love, care, and joy are products of one's relationship with both

God and his creation; but in the context of creation and, more specifically, social space,

the will and the passions apply primarily to one's physical and emotional relationships

with the material world. The will is what steers one away from sin and, since sin can only

occur in the physical world, then it is logical to assume that Traherne's definition of

knowledge as a means of illuminating the soul relies heavily on one's relationships in

---

[138] See James Miller, "Three Mirrors of Dante's *Paradiso*," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 46.3 (1977). I am referring to Miller's discussion of mirrors, whereby God's mirror illuminates Dante's soul with divine knowledge. Miller refers to the mirror of truth as a metaphor for God's illumination of the soul, which in turn infuses the mind with knowledge.

society.[139] I have argued that Felicity fuels virtuous conduct, just as virtuous conduct improves one's experience of Felicity, because divine space is coincident with social space, not united as one; rather, these spaces are harmonized through the mind-space, wherein the mind wills one's actions in the social space and virtuous conduct feeds the soul's fruition.

The third type of relationship portrayed in the *Ethicks* is the one between the self and society. Having established that the mind-space enables the formation of a continuum between eternal and social space, we can proceed to discuss how the virtues displayed in the social space are the result of a felicitous soul that, in its worldly body, is the driving force behind social cohesion. As I have explained above, righteousness is an essential part of social cohesion, because it is "that Habit, by Vertue of which we value all things according as their Worth and Merit" (72). Righteousness means that, in the social space, one values, loves, and respects God's creation. By extending love to human actors in the social space, one "perfects" the beloved and contributes to one's own fruition, which "assists in the Harmony of the whole Creation" (75). Traherne describes the "effect" of righteousness as

> Fruition and Blessedness, because all the perfection and Goodness of GOD is, with his Kingdome, received into the Soul, by the Righteous esteem of all Objects. It is the Beauty and Glory of the Inward Man, because a voluntary Agent, that does incline himself to such excellent Actions, is highly Amiable and Delightful to be seen; . . . There is something in the Soul of a Righteous man, that fitly answers all Obligations and Rewards. It is transformed into the Image of GOD. (75)

---

[139] I say that sin can only occur in the physical world because the action that constitutes sin begins and ends in a living human being in the physical world.

Through its actions, the soul is transformed into the image of God, but this transformation is the result of the mind and its freedom of will. The soul receives God's goodness when the mind—as a voluntary agent—chooses to engage in the process of fruition. One's actions in the created world are generated by the mind, but in order for them to be truly good and virtuous, they must be freely willed. Traherne explains that

> TO make Creatures infinitely free and leave them to their Liberty is one of the Best of all Possible Things; and so necessary that no Kingdome of Righteousness could be without it. . . And there must be free Agents. There is no Kingdome of Stones nor of Trees, nor of Stars; only a Kingdome of Men and Angels. Who were they divested of their Liberty would be reduced to the Estate of Stones and Trees; neither capable of Righteous Actions, nor able to Honour, or Love, or praise: without which Operations all inferior Creatures and meer Natural Agents would be totally useless. (90-91)

A positive relationship with God is one of unity, but each individual must first choose to love God freely. Liberty is illustrative of God's Goodness, but it is only through self-determined fruition that the soul can receive God's perfect Goodness. When the mind's self-determined choices lead one to fruition, only then does one become righteous enough to mirror God's image in a perfect union. In doing so, one's actions also contribute to social cohesion, because one's conduct is loving and selfless.

In order to mirror God's image as a mortal being, one must first recognize that the mind and the soul play equally important roles in achieving divine union; this means that actions precipitated in the mind must reflect the soul's virtue and the soul must inspire virtue in the mind. "Being" is the transcendental that describes the unity of souls—those of God and human—but Traherne emphasizes that, "IN GOD, to Act and to Be are the same Thing" (76); thus, union, or being with God, also necessitates action in the material world, which transpires through virtuous conduct. This likeness of souls purifies the

mind, which ensures that the individual makes pro-social choices. Likewise, an increased love for God's creation strengthens one's bond with God. Whereas Being refers to the soul, action refers to the mind and body, which is why pro-social conduct is so significant to the transformation of the soul into the image of God.

The likeness of God's spirit and the human soul constitutes a harmony between metaphysical and physical beings. According to Traherne, there exists a pre-established harmony between all parts of God's material creation, but only when all souls unite with God and share his likeness.[140] Those who sin without seeking redemption are divided from God and cannot therefore experience the Felicity of divine union. Traherne explains that

> There is an exact and pleasant Harmony between us and all the Creatures: We are in a Divine and spiritual Manner made as it were Omnipresent with all Objects (for the Soul is present only by an Act of the understanding) and the Temple of all Eternity does it then become, when the Kingdom of GOD is seated within it, as the world is in the Eye. (53)

Recalling Traherne's comment that "by loving, as it ought to do, the Soul acquires its own Perfection, and it is united to all its Objects" (51), we see that this pre-established harmony—between God and all creation—was undone by original sin, because sin divides people from God and conceals Felicity. It can only be restored when all souls apprehend God's love. Traherne argues that "THE Original of our Knowledge is his Godhead," and that "the understanding Power" is "seated in the soul" (36); however, the form of the soul's understanding or knowledge is "the Act itself" and the "Power of

---

[140] Earlier I differentiated between unity and harmony in a spatial context. With reference to the soul, however, harmony is achieved through the union of souls—and this constitutes one soul because all are united with God's infinite soul.

Knowing is vain if not reduced into Act" (36). Simply stated, the origin of human

knowledge comes from God and is received by the soul, but it is only through action that

such knowledge becomes valuable. The conversion of knowing into acting originates in

the soul and moves to the mind, manifesting as a tangible action in the created world, or

social space. Total harmony between divine and humanmade spaces is then restored

when *every* soul apprehends God's love, and *each* mind is impelled to regulate its

behaviour in the physical world. To return to the musical analogy, harmony is only

achieved when each "stroke" of the finger is intentional in the action of creating a

continuity of sounds; in other words, the harmony that once existed between all material

things can be restored only when every single human chooses to live intentionally

according to God's laws and abide by the virtues outlined in *Ethicks*.[141] When

relationships are orderly, loving, and therefore harmonious, the created world—including

the social space—is at one with itself; but this harmony can transcend the material world

to constitute a spatial continuum among eternal, social, and natural spaces via the mind-

space.

    The soul has the power to traverse all spaces, both physical and metaphysical, and

it does this through the knowledge that the soul receives from God. As explained above,

Traherne believes that the soul that apprehends God's love is omnipresent; it exists

relative to all "objects," or material things. The soul is the source of the

---

[141] Harmony on a larger scale can be likened to an orchestra. If each instrument is played well, the orchestra produces a beautiful harmony of sounds, but as soon as one instrument is out of key, the orchestra's harmony is disjointed. Likewise, in human societies, there is not perfect harmony until every single person completes their part—i.e., their loving contribution towards a social whole.

interconnectedness of matter, because it infuses the mind with love and, therefore, generates virtuous behaviour. The soul is the seat of knowledge just as the mind is the seat of the will; thus, the felicitous soul spurs the mind to generate love and virtue in the material world. It is the mind-space that makes spatial continua possible, because the mind-space—as a conduit—has the capacity to act as a harmonizing force between divine space—or the Temple of Eternity—and social space—or the Kingdom of God. Because humankind has free will, spatial continua are established on an individual basis; one must allow each soul the freedom to apprehend God's knowledge in order to choose pro-social, virtuous, and loving actions towards others in the social and natural spaces of God's kingdom. Traherne's desire to unite all of God's creatures with their creator in eternity is implausible simply because free will and original sin make it so; nonetheless, the pro-social aims of *Ethicks* could in theory elevate social cohesion to a greater level. Any improvement makes the social space a more loving and cohesive place. Perfect harmony, achieved only when all individuals experience a felicitous union, may be implausible, but Traherne's social philosophy is a success even if it improves the lives of only some people.

**Felicity: A 'How-to' Manual for Social Cohesion**

In *Ethicks*, Traherne treats the concept of Felicity differently than he does in *Poems of Felicity* and *Centuries of Meditations*; his meditations and poetry celebrate the blissful state of Felicity, whereas *Ethicks* focuses instead on how one can achieve Felicity.[142]

---

[142] For example, in the *Dobell Poems* Traherne writes,
       To see a glorious fountain and an end,
       To see all creatures tend

*Ethicks* is instructional, whereas Traherne's meditations and poems are noted for their

aesthetic beauty and esotericism. Reading *Ethicks* in tandem with *Centuries* raises

questions over whether the latter is the philosophical predecessor or the companion to

*Ethicks*. For example, in *Centuries*, Traherne writes,

> Love is deeper than at first it can be thought. It never ceaseth but in endless
> things. It ever multiplies. Its benefits and its designs are always infinite. For to
> enable you to please GOD, is the highest service a man can do you. It is to make
> you pleasing to the King of Heaven, that you may be the Darling of His bosom.
> (I.11)

Traherne recognizes the importance of teaching people to please God, but it is only in

*Ethicks* that he undertakes the task of instruction. Although love is central to the lessons

shared in *Ethicks*, it is referenced as a means of attaining Felicity, and Traherne does not

describe it in aesthetic terms. Undoubtedly, the content of *Ethicks* and *Centuries*

overlaps, but what distinguishes *Ethicks* from *Centuries* is that the former focuses on the

"how" of Felicity and the process of fruition, while the latter simply establishes that

Felicity is:

> The fellowship of the mystery that hath been hid in God since the creation is not
> only the contemplation of the work of His Love in the redemption, tho that is
> wonderful, but the end for which we are redeemed; a communion with Him in all
> His Glory. For which cause St. Peter saith The God of all Grace hath called us
> unto His Eternal Glory by Jesus Christ. His Eternal Glory by the method of His
> Divine Wisdom being made ours; and our fruition of it the end for which our
> Saviour suffered. (*Centuries* I.5)

---

To thy advancement, and so sweetly close
In thy repose: to see them shine
In use, in worth, in service, and even foes
Among the rest made thine.
To see all these unite at once in thee
Is to behold felicity." ("The Vision," V.33-40).
Another example from *Centuries* is "That being delighted also with their felicity, I may be crowned with
Thine, and with their glory" (I.96).

The "fellowship of the mystery" hidden in God is discussed in *Ethicks* in more pointed terms. *Ethicks* explains that Felicity is "concealed" by God, because humankind's sinful nature would detract from the perfection of Felicity (*Ethicks* 16). Similarly, in the above quotation, Traherne mentions fruition—Divine Wisdom is "made ours" through fruition— but readers of *Centuries* encounter not a lesson, but a statement of fact. *Ethicks*, on the other hand, breaks down the process of fruition into manageable steps; readers of *Ethicks* learn that, by loving, one's soul "acquires its own Perfection" (51). Perfection and fruition—in the context of *Ethicks*—are one and the same.

    *Ethicks* does not identify social cohesion as its stated goal; rather, it aims to educate humankind in the Christian virtues. As established earlier, however, the virtues are necessitated by sin and exist only in the fallen world. Virtues are behaviours that manifest in the social space, so their effects register both in the material world and the spiritual world; by teaching readers how to achieve felicitous union with God, Traherne succeeds in indirectly promoting social cohesion. Social cohesion simply cannot be separated from Traherne's spiritual instruction.

    Traherne emphasizes that fruition must be ongoing if one is to "perfect" the soul and achieve total Felicity. *Ethicks* states that "no fruition can be truly perfect, that is not conversant about the highest things. The more Beautiful the Object is, the more pleasant is the enjoyment. But where Delight may be increased, the Fruition is imperfect" (20). To attain perfect fruition would be an impossible task for the finite human, because such a state would imply that one has achieved total perfection as a fallen individual, something that original sin prevents. However, Traherne argues that a righteous state of mind

delights in God's creation and esteems all created beings and, although *Ethicks* fails to

clarify what happens when one reaches perfect fruition, *Centuries* provides an answer.

Traherne asks,

> Can you be Holy without accomplishing the end for which you are created? Can you be Divine unless you be Holy? Can you accomplish the end for which you were created, unless you be Righteous? Can you then be Righteous, unless you be just in rendering to Things their due esteem? All things were made to be yours, and you were made to prize them according to their value: which is your office and duty, the end for which you were created, and the means whereby you enjoy. The end for which you were created, is that by prizing all that God hath done, you may enjoy yourself and Him in Blessedness. (I.12)

Following the logic of *Centuries*, one cannot accomplish one's "end" or purpose without

righteousness, and righteousness demands that one values and enjoys God's creation. If

perfect fruition is impossible to the mortal being, then the implication is that fruition is a

lifelong process; after all, one's "end" is to enjoy not only the beauty of Creation, but also

God himself.[143] It follows that, if one's end is to delight in God and his Creation, then

there is no end to the delight one may experience; as such, perfect fruition is unattainable

in life and achieved only when the soul departs from the body and is united with God in

eternity. Fruition ends only when the corporeal body dies and is reunited with God in

eternal union; fruition is about self-improvement and spiritual growth, but once in

Heaven the soul has reached that state of perfection.[144]

---

[143] We could conceive of the individual as having two ends or purposes: a mortal end in which one's purpose is to esteem God's creation, as well as experience and share God's love; and a spiritual end, which would be to spend one's eternal life in communion with God.

[144] In *Ethicks*, Traherne explains that God divides himself from sinners because their imperfections would tarnish His infinite perfection (97-98). In Genesis, Adam lives to age 930 (5.3) and Noah lives to age 950 (9.29), but figures like Abraham live comparatively shorter lives (e.g., Abraham dies at age 175) because God no longer dwells in the flesh of created beings on account of their sinfulness (6.3). Traherne expands on this idea by saying that God divides himself from sinful creatures (89); this is because union in the flesh would make God imperfect, and thus finite.

We have established that fruition is terminated at mortal death, which takes us

back to virtuous conduct and social cohesion. Traherne explains that fruition is the "end"

of knowledge, commenting that the "Knowing Man is the friend of GOD" (42); the

pleasure one finds in the "Divine Amity" that coincides with one's relationship with God

is what perfects the soul (42), hence lifelong fruition. The "Knowing Man" must also

have a "clear understanding" of the virtues that must be mastered as one's fruition

evolves. "UPON this account it is, that so much Care and Study goes into the making up

of a Vertuous man. All kind of Vertues must concur to Compleat his Perfection" (156),

writes Traherne, noting that all of the virtues must be embodied by the individual in order

to achieve perfection, or perfect fruition. The perfection of one's virtue must be a self-

determined choice; one must decide to unite oneself with other members of the social

space and with God's creation in general. Meekness is a virtue that is central to social

cohesion, because it commands one to be good to others, regardless of the circumstances:

> IT is a transcendent Vertue, because the Means of introducing it are wholly
> Supernatural . . . For by Nature we are to be Just and Good towards all that are
> Innocent, and kind to all those to whom Kindness is due: but it is not by Nature
> either just or rational that we should love any Creature that is Evil: and how GOD
> came to do it first is an infinite Wonder. Though now since *he hath first loved us*
> who are so vile, nothing is more natural than that we should do as we are done
> unto, imitate him, and love those whom our Creator loveth. (8)

This passage reaffirms the argument I have made that free will plays a vital role in social

cohesion; however, the will must be trained or habituated to display virtues, like

meekness, that benefit both the individual actor and those with whom the individual

engages. Traherne's conviction that one person's actions affect a network of people in the

shared social space returns us to the Great Chain of Being. Here, every "link" has one

important role; each link was created in God's image and has a purpose, despite the continued existence of social hierarchy. Unlike Cavendish, who sees the Great Chain as a structure that reinforces necessary and rigid hierarchy, Traherne views each link as essential both to social cohesion and the reunification of the Eternal Temple with the Kingdom of God; though Traherne is a monarchist and therefore adheres to principles of hierarchy, he still believes that all parts of the Great Chain are valuable, because God has created them (21). Missing links detract from spatial interconnectedness, so each link matters. Traherne's analogy emphasizes individual duty and argues that the "great end" is possible only through collective endeavour. This collective endeavour, however, is not about banding together to achieve a common goal; rather, it is about each individual choosing to behave virtuously and—as a consequence—the social collective becomes cohesive and harmonious. In return, collective harmony benefits each individual, because the absence of sin makes the social existence of all human beings pleasant and stable— and would likely fuel continually virtuous behaviour.

**Relationships Unify and Divide Spaces**

By highlighting the necessity of collectivity and cooperation for eternal life, Traherne also emphasizes the importance of relationships. What Traherne fails to acknowledge is that, when virtuous conduct is not a collective value, the social space can actually inhibit social cohesion and further divide divine space from social space.

Although for Traherne the unity that existed between divine space and the material world at the time of Creation was subsequently shattered by original sin, he continues to advance the idea that God's entire Kingdom—including eternity—is a

whole, and that each individual part plays an important role in that body. The Kingdom

of God as a "whole" does not mean that space is homogeneous, though; rather, it suggests

that, because the Kingdom of God has a sole creator, it is a whole Kingdom—an

aggregate. Traherne believes that every created thing is "infinitely serviceable in its

Place," arguing that each "part" of the whole is a manifestation of God's Goodness

(*Ethicks* 69). Traherne contemplates,

> all [God's] Kingdome [as] one Intire Object, and every Thing in it a Part of that
> Whole, Relating to all the innumerable Parts, receiving a Beauty from all, &
> communicating a Beauty to all, even to all objects throughout all Eternity. While
> every one among Millions of Spectators, is endued with an Endless
> Understanding to see all, and enjoy all in its Relations, Beauties, and Services.
> (69)

Traherne's position is clear: God's kingdom includes both material and immaterial

worlds, and all of the innumerable parts are interconnected through the shared experience

and knowledge of God's Goodness. Traherne continues down this path, noting that "the

Beauty that results from all, consists in Order and Symmetry, which by any Division is

broken into pieces" (69). The shared experience of Beauty amongst God's creatures is a

confirmation of God's love, as well as a constant reminder of God's omnipotence.[145] We

also see another reference to order and symmetry that parallels Traherne's musical

analogy about harmony. According to these passages from Traherne, and according to the

Scholastics (Schmutz 249), Beauty is proof of God's existence, so if Beauty exists, so too

does God's infinite Love. Following this line of reasoning, the individual experience of

---

[145] Beauty, as a transcendental, is meant to be proof of God's existence, because God is Love and Love manifests itself in the soul in response to Beauty; if Love is God and it manifests in the Soul in response to Beauty, then Beauty is a way for the soul to know God and for the senses to experience God. See Plotinus, *Enneads*, I.6 and III.5. Also, see Plato's *Symposium*, Book 10.

Beauty fosters a clear understanding of God's Love. It is therefore through the shared experience of Beauty, Goodness, and Love that a collective body of people is gathered together as a society. Their shared experiences provide them with a clear and "Endless Understanding" of the value of God's creation, so it follows that, if all people esteem God's creation through their endless understanding of its value, then all people come to fruition and experience Felicity as a consequence of their love for one another.

Traherne is dedicated to the principle of collectivity, so much so that he believes even the smallest action by a single individual affects the entire world, a phenomenon he describes as "a kind of Omnipresent greatness in the smallest action, for it is vertually extended through all the omnipresence of Almighty GOD" (242).[146] Though he makes this comment with respect to positive actions—or, as I have called them, pro-social actions—it applies equally well to negative actions; thus, a single act of sin permeates the social space and makes it impossible for the Kingdom of God and the Temple of Eternity to unite; instead, they coincide, as if the two spaces were discrete dimensions, as opposed to harmonized spaces. Sin is the cause of coincident spaces because it signifies the division of the individual from God; if the individual is divided from God, then the mind-space no longer harmonizes the divine space with the social space. On a larger scale, the greater the amount of sin in the world, the greater the divide between eternal and social spaces. If the societal collective that constitutes the social space is sinful, then God

---

[146] It is worth noting that the omnipresence Traherne attributes to God *and* to the mind-space functions like the infinite sphere of Cusanus and Pascal—it has no centre. This means God's love—and by extension, humankind's loving actions—are experienced throughout infinite space. When there is no centre from which love diffuses, it is simply everywhere. Likewise, human actions stem from the omnipresent mind-space and, by this logic, are experienced universally, because all matter and actions are interconnected.

divides himself from sinners, hence the coinciding relationship between divine space and the fallen material world. As described above, the absence of God signals the absence of Beauty, which leaves the material world "broken in to pieces." This brokenness not only divides the social space from eternal space, but it damages the relationships between co-existing human beings in the social space, because the absence of Beauty also makes it difficult to apprehend God's love. The hampered ability to apprehend God's love affects relationships negatively, because without Love there is no "end" or purpose for humankind; there would be no clear understanding of God's Love or his promise of eternal life, so there would be little incentive to act selflessly. Those who sin without redemption would exempt themselves from the collective experience of God's love. The inconsistent experience of God's love makes social cohesion impossible, because only those who witness the Beauty and Goodness of God are committed to virtuous conduct and self-regulation. By this logic, the inconsistent experience of God's love would make the perfection of the social space impossible, because there would be no collective effort to achieve social cohesion. In the absence of a collective goal, i.e., the perfection of the Kingdom of God, free will would remain unimpeded, but social agents would be less likely to act righteously and selflessly.

Free will can lead to both positive and negative behaviour, which is why Traherne appeals to the wisdom that infuses the soul. Wisdom is an extension of clear understanding, and it is intertwined with the will; according to Traherne, those who are wise will manage their free will responsibly—they will make pro-social, self-determined choices:

> Nothing else is Wisdome, but to chuse and do what we Know is absolutely most Excellent. Wisdome then is founded in the Act of Doing, nay it is the Act of Doing all that is Excellent. And if it be a free and voluntary Act, as it must needs be, because nothing is Wisdome, but that which guideth it self by Counsel freely, to a Known End, which it discerneth to be most Excellent, it implies an Ability to forbear, in him that is wise, by chusing to do what he might forbear. (66-67)

Traherne is intent on showing readers the importance of the virtue of wisdom; it appears as though, without wisdom, Traherne denies the possibility of pro-social actions, because if wisdom leads to excellent deeds, then by implication the lack of wisdom would lead to sinful deeds, or anti-social behaviour. Out of love, God creates each human being with freedom of will, hence Traherne's presentation of wisdom as something one chooses; wise acts must be self-determined, otherwise they would be void of meaning. God can neither force humankind to return his love, nor compel them to act wisely; but, by creating Beauty for the "multitude" of "spectators" to experience, the hope is that one's knowledge of Beauty would lead naturally to wisdom.

*Ethicks* distinguishes wisdom from knowledge. Traherne defines knowledge as "that which does illuminate the Soul" (39), explaining that "The Divine Image and the Perfection of Bliss are founded in Knowledge" (39). Wisdom, on the other hand, is affiliated with the mind—the seat of free will. According to Traherne, "Wisdom is not a meer Speculation of Excellent Things, but a Practical Habit, by Vertue of which we actually atchieve and compleat our Happiness" (65). Knowledge is inherent, but wisdom is a habit—a skill that must be practiced. In a world of sin, the knowledge of good and evil is not enough to guide one down the path of righteousness; only wisdom practiced and perfected has the power to make one righteous and compel one to value God's creation. Wisdom is the antecedent of virtuous conduct, because one must first choose to

act excellently before practicing virtues like meekness, patience, and righteousness—all of which are necessary ingredients of social cohesion.

**Harmony, Social Cohesion, and the Mind-Space**

Returning to *Ethicks*'s premise that the Kingdom of God can be reunited with the Eternal Temple, I now proceed to discuss the role played by the mind-space in the harmonization of eternal, social, and natural spaces—or a single spatial continuum.

As I have explained earlier, the mind-space houses the soul and mind. There is a two-way relationship between the soul and mind, whereby the soul inspires the mind to act, and the mind nourishes the soul by fulfilling the soul's desires in the material world. It is in the mind-space that we find love; the senses experience God's love in the material world and nourish the soul, but it is the soul that inspires the mind to will the body towards loving and virtuous conduct in the social space. I stated earlier that spaces converge in the mind-space and that the mind-space is at the threshold between eternal space and social space, because it is only through self-determined choices that love can flow unimpeded between the Eternal Temple and the Kingdom of God. Unimpeded love is precisely what Traherne desires for humankind, because he understands the value of re-establishing the harmonious correspondence between divine space and the material world. Traherne implores readers to understand that the "world is useless without Life, and Life without Love, the Body without the Soul, the Soul without the Power of Loving, the Power of Loving without the Inclination, the Inclination without the Act" (47). Harmony is integral to Traherne's social philosophy, hence the bond between the mind, body, and soul; but, in addition to this, he views relationships between the world, life,

body, soul, love, and action as absolutely necessary. Without love, for example, the purpose of the soul is moot; likewise, without life the world is pointless. For Traherne, meaning and significance are the products of relationships between material and immaterial entities. The common thread that unites all of the relationships he describes above is humankind—and, more specifically—free will. Traherne establishes that the world was purposed for life, which includes human life; we also know that the ability to love is a quality attributed to human life, but without a body with which to act, love would be impossible. All of the items listed above are interconnected; each necessitates another's existence.

Turning once more to the mind-space, we can see that the diffusion of love begins in the soul and is manifest by the mind which implores the body to act. The soul, which I have affiliated with metaphysical relationships, inspires the mind with a shared understanding of love to behave virtuously; metaphysical and physical relationships are inseparable because of the union between mind, body, and soul, thus my reason for positing the mind-space as the unifying force behind social cohesion and spatial harmony. With a clear understanding of God's love, an individual "is able to Love not only his Family and Relations, but all the City and Country where he liveth, all the Kingdom, all the Cities and Kingdoms in the world, all the Generations in all Kingdoms, all the Spirits of Just men made perfect" (48). The love with which God infuses the soul is endless; it transcends the love one has for family and friends, extending itself to one's nation, its people, and their history. Love is endless; its potential to increase is infinite, because the more one loves, the greater one's experience of Felicity—the blissful state of

the soul that necessitates loving actions in the material world. Traherne views love as upward evolution, similar to Platonic love, but his focus is expanded to include all of God's creation, noting that "the more we love any Person, the more we love all that love him, or are beloved by him. As the reasons of our Love increase, so may our Love it selfe; the capacity of Love being so indeficient, that it never can be exceeded, or surmounted by its Object" (48). Love corresponds with the process of fruition that consequently heightens one's experience of Felicity.

Traherne's *Ethicks* is sound in logic, and the main premise—that eternal life is achieved through constant self-betterment and a growing love for God and his creation— is eloquent, but straightforward. As a social philosophy, *Ethicks* proposes an ideal outcome, but despite Traherne's belief that Felicity is available to all people, he fails to take into account the issue of equity. Traherne's philosophy is somewhat removed from the economic reality of Restoration England. For example, commoners whose employment might be physically demanding with long working hours would be less likely to have the mental energy to pursue self-betterment; basic self-preservation is the more likely goal, meaning that the time and energy required to love one's neighbour unconditionally or to develop wisdom through self-reflection and prayer might not be possible. While I am limited to speculation, basic survival likely trumps activities and practices that are not directly linked to the self-preservation of the physical body—and the bodies of one's family. Traherne's social philosophy, however intricate and detailed it may be, is implausible. Nonetheless, *Ethicks* still presents a set of principles designed to sustain social cohesion, were it ever to be achieved.

Traherne believes that both the Eternal Temple and the Kingdom of God constitute one body and that all human beings have a role to play in maintaining the whole. This philosophy is abundantly clear in Traherne's explanation of social duty. Traherne believes that, in order for post-civil war England to find a secure and orderly existence, there must be an abundance of love:

> All the Sweetness of Society is seated in Love, the Life of Musick and Dancing is Love; the Happiness of Houses, the Enjoyment of Friends, the Amity of Relations, the Providence of Kings, the Allegiance of Subjects, the Glory of Empires, the Security, Peace and Welfare of the World is seated in Love. Without Love all is Discord and Confusion. (150-51)

He may not use the phrase "social cohesion" to describe his vision for a harmonious society, but this is precisely what Traherne desires. As Traherne explains, a society is composed of music and dancing, happy households, friendship, peaceful co-existence, providential monarchs and their loyal subjects, a nation's history, and a general sense of security and well-being. Love is the glue that binds each of these entities together to constitute a society; this is cohesion. Without love, there is discord and confusion. "For where Envying and Strife is, there is Confusion and every evil Work" (198), explains Traherne as he continues to advance the argument that love, virtuous self-conduct, and relations with fellow members of society are requisite not only for social cohesion but also for the fate of one's soul after death. But the fate of one's soul is not left entirely to the individual alone; indeed, one must desire to engage in the lifelong process of fruition, but part of the benefit of being a member of this idealized society is that love is reciprocal. Loving another person and showing kindness contributes to the fruition of

both oneself and the object of one's love, and this sentiment extends to include the loving

reproof of friends and acquaintances. Traherne argues that,

> There is no Duty so necessary, as that of free and faithful Reproof . . . A Good
> man Knows it is incumbent upon him, and yet is very Averse from the Discharge
> of it. . . . Tis difficult to be done well, and so unpleasant to both. . . . He that
> reproves well, must shew a great respect and Tenderness to the Person, a
> necessity of the Discharge of that Duty. (157-58)

Part of one's social duty is to reprove a friend whose actions are sinful. Traherne

acknowledges that this task may be difficult, but it is a necessary duty as a "good man" or

community member. Like any other virtuous act, the respectful reproof of a friend

contributes to one's own fruition, while also helping a friend who has lost track of their

purpose—that is, to work, or plant the seeds for a later harvest and a glorious victory, or

to achieve eternal life (19). This work is comprised of self-betterment and the betterment

of others; it involves loving and being loved, as well as behaving selflessly—a mutually

beneficial gesture that is reciprocated. In fact, Traherne urges readers not to seek revenge

against those who have caused them harm; he insists that "BY Revenge a man at best can

but preserve himself, by killing his Enemy: but Meekness well managed, destroys the

Enmity, Preserves the person, and turns the Enemy into an excellent Friend" (200). For

Traherne, there is no need to make enemies of potential friends; to do so would detract

not only from one's Felicity, but from the fruition of one's newfound "enemy," as well as

from the "sweetness of society."

Traherne believes that the shared ethical principles of a society rely on the

righteousness of individual morals. "THE Universal Justice of Angels and Men regards

all Moral Actions and Vertues whatever: It is that Vertue by which we yield Obedience to

all righteous and Holy Laws, upon the Account of the Obligations that lye upon us, for the Publick Welfare of the whole World" (94), writes Traherne; universal justice depends upon the "Moral Actions" and virtues of individual social actors, each of whom is obliged to obey the righteous and holy laws of a Christian society. Every individual has a personal stake in public welfare.

**Conclusion**

I have argued that in Traherne's *Ethicks* spatial continua are established on a case-by-case basis, because continuity between eternal and social spaces relies wholly on the state of each individual's mind-space. A mind-space oriented towards virtue is one wherein the soul's experience of Felicity improves in tandem with one's process of fruition. At the same time, the soul's Felicity inspires the mind—the seat of free will—to act virtuously and to love and esteem all of God's creation. Free will is essential to the establishment of a spatial continuum because, regardless of "how much God and angels do things to benefit your soul" (31), nothing can come of these actions until the individual chooses to accept these actions to their benefit. Despite the implausibility of Traherne's social philosophy, let us consider the implications of a single spatial continuum for social cohesion. Proceeding with the premise that every single English person establishes a spatial continuum, it would follow that each individual continuum would unite to create an aggregate continuum of divine and social space, because each and every mind-space would be driven by the blissfulness of Felicity, compelling each person to behave in a pro-social manner. The outpouring of love that accompanies Felicity is endless. By Traherne's logic, those who experience Felicity would have no desire to sin or behave in

an anti-social fashion; in fact, it would be the opposite. The blissfulness of Felicity would serve to propel one's process of fruition, so that the individual would constantly seek ways to heighten their experience of Felicity. If this were achieved on a national level, England would be free of disorder and chaos. Traherne counsels readers "to Love one another, for [he] that Loveth another hath fulfilled the Law" (95). God's law is quite simply an imperative to love—to love God, his creation, and the self. When one loves this way, Felicity grows, and social cohesion comes closer to being a reality. Social cohesion is inspired by God's love and the virtuous behaviour that follows, but it is also indicative of a doctrine of free will that resists the premise of pre-determination and the existence of an 'elect' population. One who loves others loves freely—and it is a choice, meaning that the social cohesion is actionable; one does not need to wait and hope that it will happen, but can instead actively pursue social cohesion through loving acts, virtuous conduct, and self-regulation.

Traherne's *Ethicks* aims to teach readers how to behave virtuously and, in turn, move through the process of fruition to heighten their experience of Felicity and prepare themselves for life after death, or eternal union. His philosophical and theological premises are not focused on social cohesion; rather, social cohesion would be the by-product of a universalized experience of Felicity and the re-established harmony of divine space and the Kingdom of God that existed prior to sin. By this logic, acting in one's own interests—i.e., to heighten one's own experience of Felicity—benefits the social collective or the "whole," while concurrently tending to the spiritual needs of the soul.

Social cohesion is only one aspect of the theoretical spatial continuum I have discussed. If a spatial continuum could harmonize eternal and social spaces, it would be because all mind-spaces invest in the process of fruition and experience Felicity through virtuous actions and the apprehension of God's love. I have already pointed out the implausibility of the continuum for reasons ranging from corrupt self-interest to social hierarchy, but let us set these issues aside and consider the implications of a spatial continuum. First, a spatial continuum would mean that all humans desire their own fruition, which would mean that they would behave both virtuously and selflessly towards others; they would also spread love through their relationships with God's creation. Second, a spatial continuum would imply that all humans have the ability to self-regulate, implying that individual behaviour must weigh the needs of others with the needs of the self. Third, a spatial continuum would mean that humankind's exercise of free will would always seek what was inherently good, rather than what pleased or benefited the actor alone. Were a spatial continuum that harmonized divine space with the Kingdom of God formed, this would imply that the entirety of humankind existed in an upwardly evolving state of bliss, because each human being would be in constant communion with God.

Traherne identifies the mind as a space, or "room"; this room is comprised of the mind and soul, so it has the potential to engage with metaphysical entities like God and physical entities like other human beings. Whether the mind-space facilitates positive or negative relationships depends on the nature of that mind: is it oriented towards good or evil? A mind oriented towards good becomes a unifying force that reunites God and the

individual; consequently, the mind oriented towards goodness can help restore the pre-established harmony that existed between all things—physical and metaphysical—at the time of creation. At the same time, a mind with evil intentions not only divides the individual from God, it divides human beings and societies as well. The individual mind plays a significant role in Traherne's *Ethicks*, because it is in the mind that free will is exercised. The mind has the power to choose what is loving and kind, or sinful and destructive. Furthermore, the space of the mind is where pro-social actions positively affect the soul, and where the soul's Felicity infuses the body. The mind-space is the threshold between divine, homogeneous space and sinful, heterogeneous space; without the spiritual room of the mind, the free will required to love God's creation cannot act. In essence, the mind is the genesis of one's actions—pro-social or sinful—and it has the power to heighten the soul's Felicity by compelling the body to behave pro-socially.

Traherne's *Ethicks* may fail in its stated goal, but it succeeds at turning our attention towards the social space of seventeenth-century England at a time when intellectual evolution was rapid and often conflicted. Homogeneous space with respect to the natural world was accepted by thinkers like René Descartes, Isaac Newton, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Anne Conway, Henry More and—later—Jeremy Bentham,[147] but the social world cannot be considered homogeneous. *Ethicks* appears, in some ways, to

---

[147] Sauter lists some of these names (24), but I have also added Henry More and Anne Conway to bring the focus back to the English literary community. Each of these philosophers operates on the premise that space is infinite and is akin to a generic fabric that registers its importance only through the relationships between matter. Conway is slightly more difficult to classify, because I cannot say whether she was a student of Euclid, but homogeneous space is immanent in her natural philosophy. See Emily Thomas, "Time, Space, and Process in Anne Conway."

validate the premise of homogeneous space, because it seeks to promote harmony between divine and social spaces by way of virtuous self-conduct; yet, this harmony implies the peaceful *co-existence of spaces*, not total unity or uniformity. Harmony by definition necessitates at least two distinct parts; for Traherne, these two distinct parts are the divine and infinite space of God and the imperfect and finite space of humankind. While we see in Cavendish and Traherne that social space resists homogeneity, Traherne also shows readers that the homogeneous space inhabited by God does not simply resist but outright rejects spatial homogeneity, because the divisiveness of social space would make divine space finite—thus making God imperfect.

Traherne's *Ethicks* is an important, though under-recognized, contribution to social philosophy in seventeenth-century England. While his conceptualization of a cohesive social space may be implausible, Traherne's belief in both the importance of self-regulation and the individual's responsibility to love God's creation is integral to the sustainability of a peaceful nation. Even if perfect fruition occurs only in certain people—those who choose to regulate their actions and behave virtuously—there is value in this approach to building a stable society. Moreover, Traherne's conviction that community and fellowship will lead to loving co-existence is something modern readers should also consider; in essence, the framework of *Ethicks* is to treat people with kindness and behave in a way that positively impacts the self and the community. This message is not specific to a historical period, but rather to human beings of any cultural background. Peaceful co-existence may seem implausible in a complex world, but that does not mean that it should fall by the wayside.  It is easy to chide *Ethicks* for its unyielding belief in

the goodness of human beings, but from the standpoint of Christianity, Traherne's

argument that virtuous conduct on an individual basis leads both to the eternal life of the

individual and the betterment of society aligns with the Christian belief in redemption

and salvation. Had Traherne's ideal social structure—one that focuses on loving

relationships, rather than status and power differentials—been embraced widely, he

would have solved problems perpetuated by inequality, like the imbalance of basic

resources for self-preservation (i.e., food, clothing, shelter). *Ethicks* is a powerful

testament to human potential and the importance of intentional living: by choosing to

love, the individual does their part in contributing to a more cohesive, stable society.

**CHAPTER 3: Common Preservation Must Prevail: Homogenizing Social Space
in Gerrard Winstanley's *Law of Freedom***

**Introduction**

Gerrard Winstanley led the Diggers movement that, between April and August of 1649,

occupied the common lands of St. George's Hill in Surrey two months after the regicide.

Their goal was to deliver true freedom to England by providing commoners with

unimpeded access to the land, allowing them to benefit from the "fruits of the earth" (*AE*

119; *LF* 305), because "true freedom lies in the free enjoyment of the earth" (*LF* 295).[148]

Winstanley believed that England should become a "common Treasury to all English

men without respect of persons" for two reasons: first, because he saw this outcome in a

trance (*TLS* 89) and second, because his interpretation of the Bible posited that "In the

beginning of time the great creator Reason made the earth to be a common treasury" for

all human beings (*TLS* 77). Winstanley also believed that the *Solemn League and

Covenant* of 1643 signified Parliament's promise to return the land to the people to

establish a true commonwealth that served the common interests of its people (*Poor

Oppressed* 105).[149] Although the Diggers movement in Surrey was short-lived,

---

[148] The majority of Winstanley's writings to which I refer are from Christopher Hill's edited edition, *The
Law of Freedom and Other Writings* (1973), aside from *A Humble Request* (1650) and *New Law of
Righteousness* (1649).
[149] Winstanley regularly interprets political documents to support his radical arguments. The *Covenant* was
signed as an agreement whereby the Scots agreed to support English parliamentarians with the expectation
that, if Parliament defeated Royalist forces, they would institute Presbyterianism. Winstanley selected
random words from the *Covenant* and claimed that it was a promise made by Parliament to give all people
equal access to the land. There are no logical connections between Winstanley's (mis)interpretation and the
*Covenant* itself. Winstanley extrapolates the Covenant's promise by tying it to the Parliamentarian
insistence that overthrowing the King must be based on the Word of God, arguing that the Word of God
also means that all people should have access to the land (*Poor Oppressed* 105).

Winstanley refused to surrender his hope that England would become a "Common Treasury" (*LF* 308) that allowed people of all social backgrounds the basic right to self-preservation.

Before moving into discussion of *Freedom*, I will provide a brief introduction to Winstanley and the main points of his most mature text. After writing a series of tracts on society and governance, including *The True Levellers Standard* (1649), *New Law of Righteousness* (1649), and *An Appeal to All Englishmen* (1650), Winstanley turned his focus towards establishing a more concrete and pragmatic social structure, which he outlines in *Law of Freedom in a Platform* (1652).[150] Winstanley had training as a tailor and was successful for a short while, only to go bankrupt, forcing him to sell his business (Davis and Alsop 2). While Winstanley was not an unskilled labourer, his economic situation was precarious. Winstanley's *Freedom* treats class and status as black and white: he speaks of landowners, landlords, and nobility as the wealthy class, whereas those who labour for the wealthy are the poor. Although Winstanley's social status may have elevated him slightly higher than those experiencing abject poverty, he still viewed himself as a slave to the wealthy, and for this reason I do not speak to the disconnect between how Winstanley understands his own social location versus his identification with unskilled labourers. Winstanley's binary thinking enables him to make sweeping claims, such as his remark that the poor are the victims of the nobility (from the perspective of self-preservation and equality, this is indeed true), through "us" versus

---

[150] Moving forward, I will use the following acronyms: *True Levellers Standard* (TLS); *Law of Righteousness* (LR); *An Appeal to all Englishmen* (AE); *Law of Freedom* (LF).

"them" rhetoric. In fact, Winstanley's social model is constructed upon binary logic—and this is a weakness in his logic, because the group he identifies as the disenfranchised poor is in itself a diverse body of people with different needs and privileges.

In *Freedom*, Winstanley differentiates between the structures and practices of a Kingly government and a commonwealth government. He dedicates *Freedom* to Oliver Cromwell, writing:

> God hath honored you with the highest honor of any man since Moses's time to be the head of the people who have cast out an oppressing Pharaoh. For when the Norman power had conquered our forefathers, he took the free use of our English ground from them, and made them his servants. And God has made you a successful instrument to cast out that conqueror, and to recover our land and liberties again, by your victories, out of the Norman hand. (275)

Winstanley appears to believe that Cromwell will forge a new, more egalitarian approach to governance, but his tone also indicates a level of suspicion. Winstanley gives Cromwell two options: first, he could demolish the "Kingly power" and free the oppressed commoners (whom he says paid the wages of Parliamentarian soldiers), thus allowing him to enjoy the honour that follows the display of wisdom; or he can continue to hold Kingly power and lose his honour and open the common people to an even greater level of "enslavement" than ever before (276). It is difficult to say precisely whether Winstanley believed *Freedom* could convince Cromwell to adopt a more communistic structure for the commonwealth. Historians are conflicted as to whether Winstanley's *Freedom* was popularly read. Christopher Hill, for example, believes *Freedom* saw limited engagement (34), while Ann Hughes presents evidence that *Freedom* received quite a bit of attention by printers, who tended to print sections of *Freedom* out of context. For example, Hughes explains that passages that promoted social

and political reform in a similar vein as Cromwell and the army were extracted from the text, while the argument against private ownership was excluded in an attempt to "domesticate" Winstanley's message for Parliamentarians and their supporters (71). "Winstanley's name, his civilian inspiration, his overall social and economic vision, and his spiritual framework were all missing," explains Hughes, arguing that Winstanley's work was "assimilated" into "broader parliamentarian impulses" (71). Given the contemporaneous revisionism, it is difficult to place *Freedom* and its reception; instead, given the limited historical data of *Freedom*'s influence on its readership, modern readers are left to interpret Winstanley's socio-political and economic impact through a multiplicity of lenses.

Winstanley makes numerous detailed arguments for social reform, but his arguments tend to focus on issues such as removing Royalist-affiliated clergy from the Church, banning the practice of law, banning the obligation to tithe (on grounds that the parishes occupied the rightful land of English commoners, who were robbed of their land by the Norman Invaders), economic equality and, above all, no private land ownership (278-282).

The goal of *Freedom* is to eliminate barriers to economic equality and to provide a blueprint for national social reform. Winstanley "had grasped a crucial point in modern political thinking: that state power is related to the property system and to the body of ideas which supports that system" (Hill, "Introduction" 9), and thus *Freedom*, in part, seeks to undermine state power by questioning the authority of the monarchy, even going so far as to justify the return of the land to the people using the historical events of the

Norman Invasion in 1066. Not only did Winstanley attribute to state authority a spirit of

oppressiveness and inequality that he believed was rooted in private property, he also

insisted that the "political freedom" possessed by the nobility and gentry could not be

extended to lower class English people without first achieving "economic equality"

through the abolishment of private land ownership (9). Winstanley held that private

property should be abolished in order to eliminate economic inequality (9), although he is

careful to distinguish himself from the Levellers and their leader, John Lilburne, who

believed that men should be allowed to have intimate relations with any number of

women regardless of their marital status (*Levellers*, Hill 310; 405). Winstanley's

commitment to achieving economic equality infuses *Law of Freedom*, but this passion

also yields an unexpected problem: economic equality, in Winstanley's social model, is

achieved only by severely limiting the free will of many English citizens. Stated plainly,

those who had nothing to gain from adopting Winstanley's social model had everything

to lose—that is, material excess like large estates, and fortunes, as well as their

immaterial social status. The problem I identify in Winstanley's plan to achieve

economic equality is not one of fairness or privilege; indeed, landowners held

tremendous privilege—and I do not dispute this. The problem is that landowners,

particularly those who enjoyed excessive privilege, are coerced into choosing a commune

lifestyle. Consequently, his social model—had it been adopted—would have exacerbated

the divisiveness of post-civil war England. While Winstanley makes a compelling

humanitarian argument to achieve social cohesion through enforced economic equality, I

will be focusing on the viability and sustainability of this plan. In other words, how do

I—the reader—imagine that this theoretical social structure would have registered to both the wealthy and the poor? My task here is to identify the strengths in Winstanley's plan, while also pointing out the weaknesses, and I do so with reference to free will, self-preservation, and self-interest.

While my analysis of the social spaces created by Cavendish and Traherne has advanced the argument that social space is heterogenous, I argue here that Winstanley's social model can be understood as an *attempt* to homogenize, or forcibly unite all human beings in the national social space of England. In doing so his system would likely have yielded greater chaos and disorder because it prioritizes economic equality for those at the 'bottom' of the social hierarchy by impeding the free will of those at the 'top.'[151] The self-interest of those with pre-existing social power would likely have caused landowners to resist Winstanley's vision for the commune, because there was little incentive for the ruling classes to surrender their property and status to join a commune that would

---

[151] Because there is so little information on Winstanley's early life—including his education—it is difficult to determine how he understands free will conceptually. Winstanley may have attended grammar school, though there is no record of him doing so, but he did become an apprentice tailor and eventually established his own household, though his financial mismanagement forced Winstanley to sell everything and relocate to the home of his father-in-law (Davis and Alsop 1-2). Winstanley's skills as a tailor are pragmatic—and in *Freedom* we see him emphasize the importance of pragmatic knowledge, noting that the knowledge of university scholars is idle knowledge and causes inequality (*FB* 246). Winstanley's limited education paired with his disdain for non-pragmatic knowledge suggests that Winstanley's knowledge of the theosophical discussions of free will was limited. It is possible that Winstanley learned about free will through word of mouth and possibly at church, although there is no way to confirm this. Additionally, Winstanley was believed to have become a Baptist after writing *Freedom*, and Baptists do not believe in the elect, but do believe that human beings were given the ability to choose God and eternal life. My discussion of free will in this chapter focuses on Winstanley's notion of "true freedom," whereby all people have equal access to the fruits of the earth; Winstanley denies that free trade, the ability to worship when one wishes, and the liberty to satisfy lusts constitute "true" freedom (*LF* 294).

establish a society in which their own interests and prosperity would be equal to those with lower social status.

Winstanley's social model is the opposite of Cavendish's, in that it favours the rights and interests of the lower classes, while restricting the free will of the historically powerful nobility and increasingly powerful gentry. I recognize that the seventeenth-century English class system cannot be reduced to "wealthy" and "poor"; however, Winstanley's rhetoric rests on a simple binary: exploitative landowners (i.e., wealthy) and disenfranchised labourers (i.e., poor). Because Winstanley's binary logic divides society in two—i.e., those who own land and those who do not—I attempt to use this same logic as I deconstruct his system.[152] Furthermore, my focus is not on the English social system as it truly existed in the seventeenth century; instead, I anatomize Winstanley's reaction as a space-maker to his understanding of England's social structure. Acknowledging that I—the reader—interpret the text in a way that will reflect my realized and unrealized biases, I do my best to focus on examining possible reactions, problems, and solutions of both the poor and wealthy, had Winstanley's theoretical social space been established as a national system—as was his desire (*LF* 274).

Additionally, as I explain in greater detail in the Introduction to this thesis, I am examining social space as an abstract entity—i.e., a space created in the mind of the space-maker. In this chapter, I do not discuss spatial imagery in great detail because Winstanley's entire social structure is theoretical and does not resemble the social space

---

[152] This is a significant distinction for Winstanley, because only landowners were permitted to vote, leaving labourers voiceless and powerless.

of seventeenth-century England. Moreover, Winstanley's tract is not written eloquently, nor does it appeal to poeticism; it is strictly pragmatic and appeals to readers' logical faculties. Both a joy and a challenge, examining a theoretical social space requires interpretation on behalf of the reader; my task is to construct an understanding of Winstanley's social structure, only to deconstruct that space and question its viability by the standards and beliefs of the period. I pay especial attention to how the social structure could shape human relationships, and so while my approach may be abstract and lack imagistic examples of an actual space, I do this because a theoretical space poised as a means of achieving social cohesion is itself abstract.

I will also discuss the negative ramifications of Winstanley's principle of forced unity and oneness. Winstanley's social space is, in its theoretical form, homogeneous, for there is no room for differences in opinion, belief, interests, and needs; the *ideology* of his social space embodies the uniformity that characterizes homogeneous space—that is, uniformity of matter and space. At the same time, Winstanley's commune would have been impossible without the element of free choice, because individuals must choose to behave according to the legal standards of the commune; with free choice, however, comes sin and other social 'contagions.' Another important topic in this chapter is self-interest and, while I have unpacked this term in the Introduction to this thesis, I think it is important to revisit it briefly. I use "self-interest" with neither positive nor negative connotations attached. It is tempting to affiliate self-interest with the rise of neoliberal capitalism, but the *OED* provides a useful way of thinking about self-interest, that is, as "personal design or aim" (1612). The *OED* also defines self-interest as a "preoccupation

with, or pursuit of, one's own advantage or welfare, esp. to the exclusion of consideration for others," citing John Dryden's use of the word with reference to political hypocrisy in 1693. "Self-interest" is used by early modern and Restoration writers to signify concepts both positive and negative, underscoring the point that "self-interest" develops a positive or negative connotation according to the context in which it is used. My goal in this chapter is to use "self-interest" not to denote selfishness, but simply to describe diverse (and often conflicting) interests and desires.[153]

In the conclusion to this chapter, I will discuss briefly what I call the "homogeneous mindset," or the ideological framework that condones forced unity through conformity as outlined in Winstanley's social structure. While Winstanley's *intention* in *Freedom* is to value all human life by eliminating economic inequality, my deconstruction of his social space unearths problems that could occur in a forcibly united or homogenized social space.

Winstanley, as a space-maker, drafts a blueprint for his ideal social space in *Law of Freedom*; he proposes a total overhaul of the English social structure and seeks support for his system from Oliver Cromwell (275-290), as well as his "brethren," and the "Nations in the World" (272). Christopher Hill notes that, following the civil wars, "It was a time when almost anything seemed possible, a time at which ideas developed rapidly. The point is made by Winstanley's title, *The Law of Freedom*" ("Introduction" 24). As idealistic as his plan may have been, Winstanley did view it as viable; in fact, he

---

[153] For example, it is in one's best interests to avoid walking in front of a moving vehicle—and by acting in one's interests, both the individual and the driver remain unharmed.

believed that his social structure could be exported to other nations, as well (292).[154] The

space developed in *Freedom* is homogeneous, because the social model Winstanley

proposes is one of absolute unity—at almost any cost. A common theme in all his social

tracts is that the earth should be held a "common treasury for every man" (*LR* 28);

Winstanley continues in this vein, explaining that "mankind, thus drawn up to live and

act in the law of love, equity and oneness, is but the great house wherein the Lord himself

dwells, and every particular one a several mansion" (*LR* 28). Winstanley advocates for

economic equality, but *Freedom* introduces a new objective that expands upon the

original goal of the Diggers movement: that the new Parliament, led by Oliver Cromwell,

"unites all people in a Land into one heart and mind" (*LF* 292). According to David L.

Smith, "the republic was never able to escape the circumstances of its birth, and English

politics during [the interregnum] were characterized by constant tension between army

leaders and civilian politicians" (186), suggesting that Winstanley's proposition for *en*

*masse* socio-political reform may have been lost in the tumultuous interregnum politics.

Paul Elmen provides another perspective on the reception of *Freedom*, arguing that

Winstanley's "plan was resisted on economic grounds, Cromwell's supporters seeing in

the Digger enthusiasts a threat to the new commercial privileges which they had so

painfully won" (218). Similarly, Ted Vallance notes that, despite "the acts abolishing

kingly office and establishing a free state" to rid the nation of tyranny, . . . few of

England's new magistrates would have concurred that these acts made 'the Land of

---

[154] Winstanley writes, "The whole earth we see is corrupt, and it cannot be purged by the hand of creatures, for all creatures lie under the curse and groan to be delivered, and the more they strive, the more they entangle themselves in the mud" (*LR* 40). As a millenarian, Winstanley believed that God "was the only answer" to returning the world to the perfection of its Edenic origin (Hill, "Introduction" 40).

*England*' a 'common Treasury,'" as Winstanley has called it (441). Proposing a system

of economic equality, Winstanley notes that God is "no respecter of persons" (292); in

other words, social hierarchy should be abolished, and private property should be

dissolved so that every English person could pursue self-preservation through equal

access to the land. From a modern vantage point, it is difficult to say whether Cromwell,

the army, and Parliamentarians were power hungry or revolutionary leaders of positive

change (Davis 226); thus, when it comes to supposed motivations behind socio-political

and economic reform, it is difficult—if not impossible—to judge whether Cromwell and

his supporters were corrupted by newfound power, or truly believed that their reforms

were in the best interests of the people. It is most likely a combination of both.

    *Freedom* was composed and published after the regicide, and although the

English social hierarchy may have been disrupted with respect to the removal of the

monarchy and many aristocratic families, the hierarchy did not disappear; thus,

Winstanley's goal of redesigning society, so as to return it to its supposedly original,

uncorrupt form—that is, to a peaceful state without private property and oppressive

government—would have superimposed a homogeneous social model onto the

traditionally heterogeneous one. Had this occurred, the free will of some would have

been the currency with which economic equality was purchased—and for this to happen,

landowners would need to demonstrate incredible benevolence, though based on

Winstanley's critique of landowners as "masters" of "slaves,"[155] this seems

---

[155] Winstanley frequently uses the terms "slave" and "enslaved" with respect to English labourers. While Winstanley's definition of slavery is quite different than that used in the context of the slave trade, I believe that the context for these terms aligns with the definition of slavery in the 16th and 17th centuries: "Severe

unprecedented. Had Winstanley's social model been adopted, there would have been

tremendous social friction between the pre-existing classes of the social hierarchy. To put

things in perspective, William and Margaret Cavendish would have surrendered their

estates in order to farm potatoes and weave linen, respectively.[156] In addition to that, their

salons would be banned, for in Winstanley's eyes they would be engaging with

unproductive knowledge, or knowledge that has no immediate economic utility (*LF* 349).

Setting aside obvious moral arguments that self-preservation for all should supersede the

type of free will that prospers from economic inequality, let us consider the ways that a

homogeneous social model could both improve the standard of living, while possibly

inciting national conflict on the grounds that the viability of this model is predicated on

---

toil like that of a slave; heavy labour, hard work, drudgery" (*OED*). This definition hinges on the pre-existence of the notion of a slave defined as, "One who is the property of, and entirely subject to, another person, whether by capture, purchase, or birth; a servant completely divested of freedom and personal rights" (*OED*). I believe Winstanley's use of this word, though questionable from today's perspective, is meant to underscore the oppression of labourers due to the concentration of power held by landowners. Labourers are not true slaves, but they faced limited options in terms of their survival, thereby restricting their free will; when labourers have only two choices (work for low wages or die of starvation), there is no ability to "choose otherwise," a central tenet of free will that I discuss in the Introduction to this thesis. Consequently, I quote Winstanley using the language in *Freedom*, despite having my own reservations about how he leverages terminology.

[156] In Part II of this chapter, I discuss the problems associated with common preservation, including the barriers that Winstanley's blueprint may have encountered—that is, that common interest would likely have failed to entice financially prosperous people. While the optics of the situation allow for the possibility that some landowners would choose common freedom and sacrifice their material goods and social status, seventeenth-century landowners would likely have operated within the principles of natural law, namely that it is unreasonable for someone to choose an option that hinders their quality of life. R.S. White explains that "Even conscience itself is interpreted as based on reason: that which conscience bids is by definition reasonable and that which it forbids is unreasonable. Equally, that which is reasonable will satisfy the conscience" (2). White discusses "conscience" in the context of early modern literature and natural law, because it is central to the decision-making processes that are shaped by natural law. If God is Reason, as Winstanley says, then choosing something unreasonable would be unconscionable. Thus, to defy the Great Chain of Being that supposedly maintains order in the world would likely have been viewed as unconscionable by landowners, because by surrendering their social status, they would be breaking the interconnectedness of the Great Chain. According to the *OED*, conscience determines the "moral quality of one's motives and actions," and breaking order to establish a radically new system could be viewed as immoral and unreasonable. However, a more skeptical approach to the morality of maintaining the great chain might well posit that maintaining one's place in the Great Chain is beneficial only to those at the top.

*absolute* unity—or the unwavering universal acceptance of a newly crafted

Commonwealth.[157]

The goal of this chapter is to show that the homogeneous space of the cosmos that

was understood as orderly, reasonable, and harmonious cannot be applied to the social

space without running the risk of substantial oppression and tremendous violation of the

free will of social actors. I am looking at *Freedom* as an example of pragmatic space-

making[158]—just as I have done with Cavendish and Traherne. Specifically, I am focusing

on how the harmonious homogeneity of the cosmos, when replicated in society, may in

fact be the most untenable social model of the three examined in this dissertation.[159] In a

social context, a homogeneous model is an inflexible system that treats all human needs

and interests as uniform, but this is detrimental to a diverse body of people with interests

and desires that correspond with their current social status. Winstanley's social model

would polarize the English people, representing only the interests of those who,

historically, were subject to economic inequality, an action that would likely be a quick

path to renewed civil war. Winstanley's cause is altruistic, but there are also undeniable

totalitarian undercurrents in his social philosophy that cannot be ignored. This chapter

examines the viability of Winstanley's social structure by contrasting the positive

intentions of his ideal social space with its more likely outcome; both analyses are of

---

[157] When I say, "universal acceptance," I am referring to England as a nation, for this was Winstanley's focus.

[158] I define pragmatic space-making with respect to social space as a text that proposes a workable alternative to the current state of affairs.

[159] As a reminder, I introduced homogeneous in my Introduction as a means of conceptualizing space that is totally uniform; there are no distinct spaces in homogeneous space. For Winstanley, to homogenize social space would be an attempt to make all people experience space in the same way.

hypothetical outcomes, but the goal is to show that, had Winstanley's system been accepted, the concept of "unity" could have become oppressive. The *Law of Freedom* is the focus of this chapter, but I will draw upon various other works by Winstanley written between 1648 and 1650. I distinguish between *Freedom* and Winstanley's earlier works because while the former is a pragmatic, well-formulated argument for national social reform, his earlier social tracts are ideological precursors to *Freedom.*

*Freedom* was written with the intention of gaining support for social reform on a national scale, and this treatise was "a carefully constructed and polished document, intended to enlist the power and influence of Oliver Cromwell, and to persuade a wide audience of the justice, practicality, and restorative capacity of what was now presented as a national scheme" (Davis and Alsop 10). Robert Appelbaum notes that Winstanley implies that "the new society is to be an entirely voluntary association" and that "those who remain in the old ways of private property will eventually come around, also voluntarily" (164). "Voluntarily" is an interesting choice of words; if the nobility were left to their private property after their labourers join Winstanley's commune, they would be ill-equipped to fulfill their basic needs.[160] Because the upper classes require the contrasted existence of the impoverished classes, labourers would join the commune, leaving the nobility hopelessly incapable of caring for their estates and basic needs. The

---

[160] To be clear, the nobility's inability to harvest crops, and care for livestock is not the fault of commoners. In theory, the nobility's *inability* to fulfill their essential needs without the assistance of labourers makes them vulnerable; if all labourers were to dispense with labour-for-hire, or "slavery" as Winstanley calls it (*LF* 343), the nobility would be at the mercy of labourers. Their weakness underscores the centrality of economic inequality to the perpetuation of their excessive lifestyles; in other words, without the skills of underpaid labourers, a luxurious lifestyle is untenable. Even if the nobility learned how to perform the actions of their labourers, they simply would not have the "people power" to complete the work.

choice to integrate into the commune may technically be voluntary, but in practice there is only one choice: when facing life or death, life would be the only option.[161] A national commune would have forced landowners to dispense with their possessions, a situation which removes true consent from the equation.

Winstanley's evolving focus has generated a thematic range of scholarship, but that scholarship appears not to acknowledge that the nature of *Freedom*'s composition is in stark contrast to his earlier works published between 1648 and 1650. Nonetheless, scholarly engagement with Winstanley's earlier works establishes a foundation for the ideological premises in *Freedom*. Kathryn Murphy argues that "'The 'True Levellers' asserted that only by returning the earth to its original status as a 'common treasurie for all mankinde' could peace and prosperity become possible. . . . God had not meant that one group should be able to shut out the rest of men from the only means of obtaining bread" (216), a statement that would more appropriately describe the goal of *Freedom*, despite Murphy's focus on the Diggers movement of 1649. The Diggers desired a commune within England, but it is only in *Freedom* that Winstanley expresses not only a desire for national, but also international reform (273). John Gurney brings clarity to the conversation, acknowledging that "a significant shift in Winstanley's thinking did take place from 1650 to 1652" (48); furthermore, "The *Law of Freedom* might appear less of an aberration in relation to Winstanley's earlier works, and more of a determined attempt by Winstanley to reiterate his communist message in the changed circumstances of 1651–

---

[161] To choose death would be the equivalent of suicide, so the nobility would have been held spiritually hostage.

2" (52). I will turn to scholarly discourses on Winstanley and early communism shortly, but first I wish to address the "changed circumstances of 1651-52."

Through the late 1640s, Winstanley was an active voice for social reform. He believed that economic inequality "tempts people to do an evil action, and then kills them for doing of it" (*LR* 33); for Winstanley, a starving person with no means of feeding themself could steal food for self-preservation, only to be punished for their transgression. Winstanley names private property as the catalyst for economic inequality:

> In the beginning of Time, the great Creator Reason, made the Earth to be a Common Treasury . . . but not one word was spoken in the beginning, That one branch of mankind should rule over another. And the Reason is this, Every single man, Male and Female, is a perfect Creature of himself; . . . so that the flesh of man being subject to Reason, his Maker, hath him to be his Teacher and Ruler within himself, therefore needs not run abroad after any Teacher and Ruler without him, . . . And so selfish imaginations taking possession of the Five Sences, and ruling as King in the room of Reason therein, and working with Covetousnesse, did set up one man to teach and rule over another; and thereby . . . man was brought into bondage. (*TLS* 6-7)

Before discussing Winstanley's beliefs about one's natural birthright to the land, it is worth pointing out that he equates God with Reason. Hill notes that, for Winstanley, "Reason is the law of the universe. When Reason rules in man he lives 'in community with the globe and . . . in community with the spirit of the globe'" (Hill, "Introduction" 52).[162] According to Winstanley, Reason is located within each individual, for God should be sought within oneself; likewise, Reason is "universal love" and "righteous conscience" that, in theory, should guide the actions of Christians (*FB* 221).[163]

---

[162] Winstanley, *Fire in the Bush*, 221.
[163] Winstanley differs from Traherne and Cavendish in this belief. Traherne acknowledges that those born into a noble family will more naturally find virtue and reason than those of a lower birth. Cavendish is less subtle in her assessment that impoverished people are unintelligent and incapable of participating in governance. It seems as though what distinguishes Winstanley's social philosophy from those of Traherne

Winstanley's focus on human relationships is just as important as his belief that unfettered access to the land is an undeniable birthright for all human beings. It is no surprise that Winstanley views the monarchy as the root of most—if not all—inequality. Winstanley believed that the English people had been promised a substantial portion of land in exchange for the free lodging that they provided soldiers during the civil wars, as well as for the lives lost fighting on behalf of Parliament. Winstanley's shift from focusing on the Diggers movement to national social reform was a response to Cromwell's denial of this supposed promise; the changed circumstances to which Gurney refers pertain to this broken promise. At the end of the war, Winstanley wrote, "let the rich work alone by themselves and let the poor work together by themselves, the rich in their enclosures, saying, This is mine, the poor upon their commons, saying, This is ours, the earth and fruits are common" (*LR* 30). By contrast, Winstanley wrote in 1652:

> Now saith the people, By what Power do these maintain their Title over us?
> Formerly they held Title from the King, as he was the Conquerors Successor: But
> have not the Commoners cast out the King, and broke the band of that Conquest?
> Therefore in equity they are free from slavery of that Lordly Power. (*LF* 280)

Whereas the earlier passage, written just months after the regicide, still advanced the Diggers' ambition to form a commune, the latter passage—written after it had become clear that Cromwell would not surrender the common lands to the people—demands not only the common lands, but the return of the lands gifted to the nobility by the Norman Conqueror. Another significant variation in these two passages is that, in the earlier one,

---

and Cavendish is that Winstanley does not believe in the Great Chain of Being, so there is no good reason to believe that the nobility is blessed with intelligence, leaving the lower-class members of society to dwell in perpetual ignorance. In fact, Winstanley's social philosophy suggests that the attitudes and actions of the oppressive upper classes actually violate Reason, because they devalue the lower-class people who are also God's creation.

Winstanley believes that dividing the poor from the wealthy is the best possible outcome for the Diggers, whereas in the latter passage he wishes to dismantle the hierarchical institution that creates social division on a national level. The "Conquerors Successor" is a reference to the Norman invasion of 1066, at which point English lands were seized, leaving the common people no choice but to become labourers on the land they had previously occupied. The English nobility and monarchy are the descendants of the Norman Conquerors (James I qtd. in Hill, 61)[164] a fact which, according to Winstanley, invalidated private land ownership in the seventeenth century because stolen land cannot be owned by the thief. According to Hill, "The lords of manors are the successors of William's 'colonels' . . . they are merely the beneficiaries of a successful theft, and in consequence they are wholly lacking in title to their land, if the kingly power were really to be cast out" (56).

When the monarchy fell in 1649, Winstanley expected that these stolen lands would be rightfully returned to the people—but they were not. *Freedom* is a well-articulated blueprint for national social reform, but it is also an expression of Winstanley's outrage over the fact that, after two years, Cromwell had failed to deliver on his promise to return the land to the people. It was these circumstances that prompted Winstanley to approach social reform on a national level, rather than advocating for small-scale change that would concern only the Diggers and their supporters.

---

[164] "The greatest part of the English were descended from Normans, and in that right they might claim a liberty, that the Conquest is expired, and now they are to be governed by just laws." *The Political Works of James I* (ed. C. H. McIlwain, 1918), 61-63.

Utopian readings of *Freedom* are not uncommon because Winstanley, "[u]nlike

many of his contemporaries, . . . was aware that England's social organization as much as

the person of a royal despot was responsible for England's miseries" (Murphy 226).

Winstanley's *Freedom* differs from the more popular utopias like Thomas More's *Utopia*

(1516), Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1626), and Margaret Cavendish's *Blazing World*

(1666). Whereas Bacon and Cavendish focus on "intellectual extravagance" (Martin-

Gimelli 137), as is clear in their references to Salomon's House (Bacon 159), knowing

the secrets of creation (160), infinite division (Cavendish 143), and the "Cabbala" (166),

Winstanley's social space pays attention to economic production in his theoretical

commune. Bacon's and Cavendish's utopias seem to aim only to highlight the intellectual

elitism of society's upper class that Winstanley openly condemns in *Freedom*, based on

their uselessness in terms of economic production (*LF* 362); he also refers to "book

learning" as "Judas's ministry" (*FB* 233). Winstanley, like More, articulates a quasi-

realistic alternative to England's current social structure, though I would say that

Winstanley's *Freedom* is even more pragmatic than More's, simply because

Winstanley's utopia has a defined geographic location and is meant as a blueprint for

social reform, whereas More's is—by definition—no place, and it offers no plan for its

actualization. *Freedom*'s utopia is based on a theme held in common by Winstanley and

More: "a return to divinely ordained justice in a world which was ignoring the word of

God" (Murphy 216). In addition to religion, both utopias created "social institutions" that

"held that the purpose of these institutions was to provide a better life for a *majority* of its

citizens" (Ogden 64; emphasis mine). In terms of pragmatism, More's utopia ranks

higher than Bacon's, and Cavendish's, but does not exceed the practical social platform of *Freedom.*

While both Winstanley and More aim to bring divine justice to their utopias, it remains clear that neither utopia is "ideal" or "perfect" (Ogden 65). Like More, Winstanley thought there would still be a need for coercive authority in the true commonwealth, because "man's nature could be radically improved by a new environment, but it would not be perfected" (Murphy 227). Self-interest and coercion posed significant barriers to the success of Winstanley's commune, an issue I will return to later. Concerns related to coercion and the nature of humanity, especially, are common issues in Marxist readings of Winstanley's *Freedom*; however, coercion does not seem to concern Winstanley—in fact, quite the opposite. While Winstanley's *Freedom* has many positive arguments that seek economic equality for all, its structure relies heavily on coercion, an issue I will discuss in greater detail below. Some scholars justify what might otherwise be called anachronistic Marxist readings of *Freedom* by pointing out that Marx was aware of Winstanley and that Marx's philosophy was influenced by *Freedom* (Gurney 2017; Hill 1961). Marxist interpretations also appear to be fortified by the fact that Winstanley's name is engraved on a Russian memorial for "Outstanding Thinkers and Fighters for the Emancipation of the Working People" (Gurney 191). I am not disputing that Winstanley's *Freedom* may have influenced Marx, but I remain unconvinced by arguments that Winstanley's social philosophy could be considered

proto-Marxist;[165] simply saying that Winstanley's communism was a source of inspiration for Marxism, does not mean Winstanley's communism *is* proto-Marxist.[166] Arguably, the most significant problem with Marxist readings of Winstanley is that they fail to take into account the centrality of religion to Winstanley's social philosophy. Whereas Marx viewed religion as a bourgeois construct, Winstanley actively sought to return England to a prelapsarian state. In fact, Winstanley anchors many of his arguments on social reform and property ownership in the Bible. Paul Elmen points out that "[t]he difficulty with 'economism' as an adequate explanation of the Digger experiment is that it dismisses too lightly the fact that all of Winstanley's many tracts in defense of the project depend on theological argument" and that "if it is alleged that his language serves as a cloak for concealed economic motives, the answer must be that modern political strategies must not be used to gauge the sincerity of seventeenth-century sectarians" (208). Winstanley's commune is modelled in such a way as to achieve national economic prosperity, but his foundation is based entirely on the argument that, at the time of Creation, God made all humans equal and did not allow the dominion of one man over all (*TLS* 80).[167] Even though faith is the foundation of Winstanley's communism, I do

---

[165] Examples of pro-Marxist readings include Christopher Hill (in a selection of texts), John Gurney (2017), and James Holstun (1999).

[166] The most notable difference between these economies is that the 19th-century economy was far more secular than the 17th-century economy. Interestingly, it was in the 19th century that homogeneous space was supplanted by non-Euclidean space, which meant that space was now entirely secular.

[167] For Winstanley to revolutionize the contemporary economy, he would have had to contend with the hierarchy that the Bible presented as a social norm; in other words, God may value all people equally, but the Bible still allowed status distinctions that perpetuated inequality. In fact, God's preference for one person over another—like Abel over Cain—consistently sparked conflict between the favoured and the unfavoured.

believe that his proposed social structure can be read through terms of economic production.

Winstanley's claims to the land—on both a smaller scale in the Diggers movement and a larger scale in *Freedom*—are not rooted entirely in religion; there are also economic and ethical grounds. During the Norman Conquest, English lands were seized by the Normans and subsequently divided amongst the Norman nobility, who employed the English people whose land and labour they seized and exploited for their own interests.[168] Winstanley's "questionable" argument that, when Charles I was executed, the land titles should revert back to the people, is in fact more valid than Elmen admits (212). "The Norman Yoke theory was not quite so absurd as some twentieth century historians have assumed," explains Hill, noting that "if we go back far enough, the Anglo-Saxons had a tribal organization which was far freer than the unequal society and state which superseded it" ("Puritanism" 68). According to Marc Morris, women played significant social and political roles in Anglo-Saxon culture; he explains, "pre-Conquest England . . . was freer, more liberal, with representative institutions and better rights for women" (19). By contrast, Winstanley's vision for society "involved the reconstitution of patriarchy," whereby father were the heads of shires, trades, and

---

[168] Because Winstanley was not a popular writer and virtually disappeared from society after publishing *Law of Freedom*, there is very little information on his education. The entry for Winstanley in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* notes that, "it is frequently assumed that Gerrard attended the local grammar school but no enrolment records for the period are extant" ("Winstanley"). In 1630, Winstanley entered the household of Sarah Garter as an apprentice tailor, and in this space Winstanley would have had access to Garter's library, which contained books on divinity and medicine ("Winstanley"). There is, however, no record of Winstanley's encounters with historical texts and given his disdain for university scholars and their theoretical knowledge, it seems likely that Winstanley's knowledge of the Norman Invasion was acquired through conversation or grammar school.

families, among other things (Hughes, "Gender Trouble" 358). Hill's suggestion that

Winstanley sought a freer society akin to the Anglo-Saxons has some justification with

respect to freedom from oppression by external forces; in other words, Winstanley's

connection to Anglo-Saxon society is only partially comparable. Winstanley likens the

Stuart monarchy to the Norman Conquerors—and this is a valid comparison; however, it

is clear that the social structure presented in *Freedom* is notably different than that of his

Anglo-Saxon predecessors.

In his *History of Britain* (1670), John Milton also points out that "the embodiment

of the Norman Yoke, the Conqueror himself, had made an empty promise to 'defend the

Church, well govern the people, and maintain the right Law'" (Milton qtd. in Jenkins

322),[169] but given the ruthlessness of William the Conqueror and his army, it appears as

though the promise to "well govern" the people fell by the wayside. Although Elmen

questions the strength of Winstanley's Norman Yoke argument, there is no denying that it

plays a formidable role in *Freedom*, especially with respect to his justification for the

return of the land to the people (*LF* 275). Winstanley believes that Anglo-Saxon land was

stolen by the Normans, who appropriated it for the nobility, clergy, and other friends of

the Norman regime.

In Part I of this chapter, I will discuss what an ideal social space looks like to

Winstanley, as outlined in *Freedom.* In Part II, I will provide a critical analysis of

Winstanley's social space and draw some conclusions about its viability. Part II also

---

[169] Milton qtd. in Jenkins 322. See *Historie of Britain that part especially now call'd England from the first traditional beginning, continu'd to the Norman conquest* (Milton VI.307).

investigates the ways in which Winstanley's space-making practices seek to homogenize the social space. My concluding remarks will also address the logical flaws underlying the homogenization of a social space.

**Part I: Winstanley's Ideal Social Space**

Winstanley's *Freedom* advances the idea that "true Freedom lies in the free enjoyment of the earth" (*LF* 295). By this, Winstanley means that English commoners have the same birthright as the nobility—an equal claim to the land and the ability to profit from the "fruits of the earth" (*LF* 234). Economic inequality was, for Winstanley, a social evil that allowed labourers to starve while working on the lands of prosperous landowners. By Winstanley's logic, "true freedom . . . could be attained only where every man had an unrestrained opportunity to use the land and gain his livelihood from it" (Murphy 226). The underlying premise of Winstanley's ideation of "true freedom" is that, in Genesis, humankind was given dominion over all other living things—but Winstanley protests that this authority does not justify a hierarchy of human beings, a structure that accentuates inequality. This concept of true freedom is the thread that unites Winstanley's social tracts. In *The True Levellers Standard*, Winstanley argues that "none shall dare to seek a dominion over others, neither shall any dare to kill another, nor desire more of the earth than another; for he that will rule over, imprison, oppress, and kill his fellow creatures . . . is a destroyer of the creation" (80). This view is the foundation for *Freedom* because Winstanley's appeal to Cromwell is wholly predicated on his concept of true freedom,

which he presents as factual based on his interpretation of Genesis.[170] In even greater

detail, we see that Winstanley equates landownership with power and prosperity—and

rightly so. Winstanley is concerned with the inequality between landowners and

labourers, focusing especially on the power imbalance of the master-slave relationship, or

"the tyranny of the propertied and slavery of the propertyless" (Davis and Alsop 6).

Winstanley believed landownership was the source of economic inequality, a system that

ensures that the poor continue to remain impoverished while sustaining the lavish

lifestyles of the oppressors, or landowners. In *Law of Righteousness*, Winstanley dissects

the ideological system of English social structure:

> The man of the flesh judges it a righteous thing that some men that are clothed
> with the objects of the earth, and so called rich men, whether it be got by right or
> wrong, should be magistrates to rule over the poor; and that the poor should be
> servants, nay rather slaves, to the rich. But the spiritual man, which is Christ, doth
> judge according to the light of equity and reason that all mankind ought to have a
> quiet substance and freedom to live upon earth; and that there shall be no
> bondman nor beggar in all his holy mountain. Mankind was made to live in the
> freedom of the spirit, not under the bondage of the flesh, though the lordly flesh
> hath got a power for a time, as I said before. For everyone was made to be a lord
> over the Creation of the earth, cattle, fish, fowl, grass, trees, not any one to be a
> bond-slave and a beggar under the Creation of his own kind. Gen. I. 28. (*LR* 25-
> 26)

Winstanley's analysis of social structure renders the diagnosis that righteousness is

subjective. While he defines righteousness as the "spirit of God" that, when embraced by

---

[170] Winstanley's interpretations of the Bible are frequently problematic. Oftentimes, his interpretations use
the absence of one thing to confirm the verity of another. For example, his claim that human beings were
not given dominion over one another is based on the fact that Genesis states that God gave humankind
dominion over all other creatures. While God does not state that one human can have dominion over the
other, Winstanley fails to acknowledge the ways that Genesis affirms the dominion of one human being
over another. Adam had dominion over Eve (created from Adam's rib, Eve was introduced as an extension
of Adam). He was also the father of all human being, and patriarchy is central to Hebrew culture in the Old
Testament.

an individual, renders them "one with the Father and the Son" (*FB* 249), he points out

that a "man of the flesh" may believe it righteous that economic status dictates one's

social location, thus creating social stability through the reinforcement of inequality.

Winstanley fails to acknowledge that righteousness is a term open to interpretation,

making his social tracts that rely heavily on the practice of righteousness vague and

subjective. Essentially, Winstanley rejects the belief that enslaving the lower classes is

righteous or just—and this is objectively true, because oppression is a form of

exploitation whereby the powerful party abuses the powerless party. The practice of

allocating political power to those who own land is void of logic, because being able to

govern or "rule" is therefore based not on ability or interest, but on patrilinear land

transfer.[171] Winstanley refers to this power imbalance as "bondage of the flesh," and

*Freedom* therefore attempts to dismantle society's rigid power structure that perpetuates

the divide between the rich and the poor. In the context of space-making, the

unarticulated goal of *Freedom* is to homogenize English social structure in order to

eliminate economic inequality.

Winstanley—who has rightly been called a millenarian by some critics (Gurney

48)— viewed the outcome of the civil wars as an opportunity to restore the birthright of

equal, unimpeded access to the land. The ruling classes' monopoly over land, which

made self-preservation nearly impossible for the lower classes who experienced the

effects of famine most deeply, had to end. In his appeal to Cromwell, Winstanley seeks

---

[171] This issue arises in Cavendish's *Olio*, as well, except that Cavendish argues that the nobility are born virtuous and their morals are therefore more sound than those of the "poorer sort."

not to make land ownership a possibility for all English people, but to "envisage a different kind of social system" that recognized all land as "communally owned" (Sabine 53); he believed that "land and all the means of production should be nationalized" but—importantly—Winstanley was "opposed to the violent expropriation of private owners" (53). Communism, in Winstanley's eyes, was the only means to economic equality and the fulfillment of the "creation-right to subsistence," which was "a communal and not an individual right" (53). This vision for national social reform was hampered, however, by Cromwell's unwillingness to forfeit his own personal gain that resulted from his leadership throughout the civil wars and into the Interregnum (Elmen 218). In his appeal to Cromwell, Winstanley writes,

> That which is yet wanting on your part to be done, is this, To see the Oppressors power to be cast out with his person; And to see that the free possession of the Land and Liberties be put into the hands of the oppressed Commoners of *England*. For the Crown of Honor cannot be yours, neither can those Victories be called Victories on your part, till the Land and Freedoms won be possessed by them who adventured person and purse for them. Now you know Sir, that the Kingly Conqueror was not beaten by you onely as you are a single man, nor by the Officers of the Army joined to you; but by the hand and assistance of the Commoners. (*LF* 275)

By Winstanley's logic, if Cromwell refused to honour the sacrifices made by the "Commoners of *England*" to secure a parliamentarian victory, he would be perpetuating the oppressor's power. Cromwell, who became Lord Protector in 1652, was—by some accounts—as tyrannical and unjust as his royal predecessor. Winstanley views the parliamentarian victory as a collective one, so it should therefore be collectively beneficial: "So that whatsoever is recovered from the Conqueror [i.e., Charles I], is recovered by a joynt consent of the Commoners: therefore it is all Equity, That all the

Commoners who assisted you, should be set free from the Conquerors power with you" (*LF* 276). Parliament's victory was due in part to the sacrifices of the English commoners, so it would be a great injustice to share the spoils of victory with the new social elites exclusively.

Whereas the Diggers' tracts assert that any English person had the right to farm unowned parcels of land as their "creation-right to subsistence," *Freedom* argues that all land—including the private properties belonging to the nobility, gentry, and clergy—be reappropriated so as to free those currently "enslaved" by wealthy landowners (Sabine 53). The abolishment of the monarchy was, by Winstanley's reasoning, an opportunity to oust the beneficiaries of "theft" and transform England into a collectivist nation (*TLS* 85);[172] but returning the land to the people was only the first step. During the Interregnum, "the state appropriated and sold the property of the Crown, of the Church, and of those royalists who were unable or ineligible to compound for their delinquency and so regain possession of their estates by paying a fine" (Habakkuk 130). The appropriation of lands allowed more people to become landowners, although "at the Restoration the sales of confiscated property were invalidated" (130).[173] In only "exceptional occasions" were Royalists unable to regain their estates, so in 1652 when Winstanley calls for the return of the lands that once belonged to the oppressor, he is in

---

[172] Winstanley argues that "those who buy and sell land, and are landlords, have got it either by oppression or murder or theft; and all landlords live in the breach of the seventh and eight commandments, *Thou shalt not steal or kill*" (*TLS* 85). Winstanley is referring to theft through oppression and murder, and he attributes these injustices to the Norman Conquerors, whom Winstanley likens to the Babylonians who held Israel under their yoke (*TLS* 86). Importantly, Winstanley equates contemporaneous landowners with Norman soldiers, beating down and "enslaving" English people.
[173] Habakkuk, H.J. "Landowners and the Civil War," *The Economic History Review*, vol. 18, no. 1, 1965, pp. 130-151.

fact reclaiming the majority of English landholdings. Recalling the above comment that Winstanley opposed violence as a means of transitioning the English people to collectivity, it seems as though he would not physically and forcibly remove the remaining nobility from their land; however, for the landowners remaining in England, there would be no one to farm the land, harvest the crops, care for livestock, or perform any sort of labour, which could be perceived as jeopardizing their self-preservation. At the same time, self-preservation and free will are distinct, in that self-preservation is about acquiring basic needs, while free will is a more expansive concept that emphasizes the importance of uncoerced choices. If someone is coerced into joining a commune on the grounds that their self-preservation will be best protected in a commune, their free will is violated, while their self-preservation is protected.[174] The question, then, is whether the self-preservation of all triumphs over the free will of some.[175]

For Winstanley, equal access to the land would ensure sustenance and the ability to pursue self-preservation, and this is why he presents a "platform" wherein he has "declared a full Commonwealths Freedome, according to the Rule of Righteousness, which is God's Word" (*LF* 285). The landowners who resist his plan for national social

---

[174] Aquinas says, "On the part of the agent, a thing must be, when someone is forced by some agent, so that he is not able to do the contrary. This is called 'necessity of coercion.' Now this necessity of coercion is altogether repugnant to the will. For we call that violent which is against the inclination of a thing" (549).

[175] While I personally would say that the self-preservation of all at the cost of free will of some is the most ethical path, it is more complex in the "real world." On a university campus, many people live freely and have more than the basic necessities required for life, yet there are people experiencing homelessness, health trauma, and food insecurity, dying nationally and internationally—and this becomes an area of research, rather than a behavioural response that leads to tangible change. It borders on hypocrisy to condemn landowners in early modern England for enjoying wealth while in their country people are dying, when a similar situation is reproduced on university campuses today. Nevertheless, it would be repugnant not to condemn exploitative landowners in Stuart England. This is the problem we encounter when thinking about theoretical spaces and actual spaces—ideally, every person thrives in society, yet in actuality this is not the case.

reform may be isolated, but Winstanley believes this would be temporary, for his plan is

a manifestation of God's word and is therefore righteous and reasonable. After all,

Winstanley believed that God's intention was for all humans to be equal, as he believes it

was described in Genesis. Reason, for Winstanley, exists within all human beings

because it is a faculty of God, their Creator; however, infallible Reason belongs only to

God, while human reason is subject to corruption, and is therefore not always practiced

by the English people, hence their disparate views on landownership (*TLS* 84). Because

he believes Reason is inherent, it is logical for Winstanley to believe that landowners

would come to accept his plan for society because all of God's creation—including

humankind—was infused with God's light or logic and should therefore see the logic of

Winstanley's plan in due time. Winstanley's conviction is that Reason and "rational spirit

[are] arising up to rule and treading unreasonableness under his feet: this is the restorer or

saviour of the captivated or the imprisoned earth, which sets mankind free from bondage

within himself" (*FB* 261). The final phrase, that Reason sets humankind free from

"bondage within [it]self," expresses anticipation for the day that human beings are

released from the bondage that exists within themselves. Although he consistently

portrays labourers as enslaved, he also argues that, so long as they "work for hire" they

"consent still to hold the creation down under . . . bondage" (*TLS* 84-85). Thus, it follows

that Winstanley views labourers and landowners as complicit in the servitude of

production; if landowners hire labourers, the landowners are complicit, just as labourers

who accept pay for work are complicit.

Winstanley believed his proposed social space would be infused with divine reason, so it was presented as a morally superior alternative to the "individualist, acquisitive, competitive society" that Winstanley attributed to monarchic rule or dominance (Sabine 54). Making no attempt at masking his distaste for the nobility, Winstanley writes, "those who have been favourites about the conqueror, have by hypocrisy and flattery pleased the king, that they might get what they can of the earth into their possession; and thereby have increased the bondage of the painful labourer," whose servitude is inadequately compensated by the nobility who "live in fulness by other men's labours" (*LF* 376). Winstanley's message is that human labour should benefit the labourer, not place them at an economic disadvantage with respect to more powerful social actors who trade flattery for riches. However, this sentiment conflicts with his belief that labourers who exchange work for capital gain are complicit in their enslavement. It appears that Winstanley views landowners' complicity as more damaging than the complicity of "enslaved" labourers. Regardless of this discrepancy, Winstanley's message is clear: economic equality is impossible in a society founded upon systematic oppression, and it is money, private land ownership, and excess material goods that are the tools used to divide the lower classes from the gentry and nobility.

Winstanley's goal of economic equality—a term used by Hill in his Introduction to *Freedom*—would mean that money and status could no longer perpetuate power differentials in society. Winstanley explains, "But shall not one man be richer than another? There is no need of that; for Riches make men vain-glorious, proud, and to oppress their Brethren; and are the occasion of wars" (*LF* 287). That material goods are

tools with which the rich oppress the poor and mar their pursuit of self-preservation is evident, but of equal importance is Winstanley's focus on the mutual benefits of cooperation (287). The notion that one person benefits from helping another is akin to Adam Smith's theory of self-interest, as expressed in *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), but there is one key distinction: for Smith, the benefit one receives from helping a neighbour is not obligatory, whereas for Winstanley, if one neighbour assists another in harvesting a crop, "then are those riches his neighbours' as well as his; for they may be the fruit of other men's labours as well as his own" (*LF* 287). Winstanley's understanding of mutual benefit is that, by being aided, one is obliged to trade something in return; Smith, on the other hand, views reciprocation as optional, though possible and necessary to social cohesion. Smith's definition of self-interest could arguably be understood as self-aggrandizing (i.e., giving oneself a pat on the back for being a good person) and patronizing (i.e., "you clearly need my help"), leading to intangible benefits on behalf of the self (the initiator of benevolence), who may celebrate their perceived selflessness; Winstanley, on the other hand, values sharing and cooperation that tangibly benefit both parties. While Winstanley's presentation of mutual benefit may appear transactional, it is perhaps a more realistic portrayal of social interaction. Furthermore, cooperation amongst poor labourers could be viewed as a form of resistance to the power of wealthy landowners; through cooperation, the poor have a better chance at fulfilling their needs. In other words, cooperation is a form of unity that enables self-preservation, especially because the wealthy oppressors would prefer to divide people and keep them from banding together. Oppressive tendencies flourish when the oppressed peoples lack a

sense of community. As I discuss later in this chapter, common interest is a concept that can be problematized as paternalistic and corrupt, because common interest—in Winstanley's corpus—is defined by Winstanley's personal beliefs about what constitutes a cohesive society. One person deciding what is good for all is a slippery slope, but I will return to this shortly. At the same time, common interest—as depicted in *Freedom*—is a means of building resilient communities that allow people to thrive *together*—which opposes the celebration of the individual excellence characteristic of the nobility.

According to Winstanley, one becomes an oppressive tyrant "by promoting their self-ended interests or Machiavellian cheats" (*LF* 317). "There is but bondage and freedom, particular or common interest," writes Winstanley, as he emphasizes the merit in common freedom, while establishing that self-interested individuals themselves live in bondage (*LF* 342). This sort of bondage is not class-specific; bondage refers to slavery in an abstract sense in that money and power enslave those to whom they belong. Winstanley frequently refers to covetousness as the root of chaos and oppression, explaining that, "where money bears all the sway, there is no regard of the golden rule, *Do as you would be done by*. Justice is bought and sold. . . . [I]t is the cause of all wars and oppressions" (*LF* 384).[176] Those who seek riches and power through flattery and enslavement seek to maintain or improve their fortune, bonding them to money and material excess. In response to this, Winstanley uses *Freedom* to articulate a social space

---

[176] Interestingly, in *Olio* Cavendish also agrees that material possessions lead to tension in relationships, and tense relationships may lead to the deterioration of society. Winstanley and Cavendish differ in their solutions to this problem: Winstanley argues that inequality can be solved through the elimination of material excess, whereas Cavendish believes that people should bow to social hierarchy and live within their 'station.'

that would make common interest the genesis of all actions and behaviours. Winstanley argues that the "creation-right to subsistence" cannot be achieved through "self-ended interests" because the preservation of life is "a communal and not an individual right" (Sabine 53). I would not say, however, that self-interest (as a neutral term that describes what is best for the self) disappears; instead, self-interest is best fulfilled by focusing on the best interests of the collective.[177] Nevertheless, Winstanley's insistence that common interest should exist exclusively is an expression of homogenization; his social philosophy has tremendous merit and could have, in its perfect form, improved the lives of numerous people, but pretending that personal interests will disappear is unrealistic. The very fact that sin exists is proof enough that conflicting interests will never subside completely.

The matter of self-interest, common interest, and the law is another important part of *Freedom*. Unsurprisingly, Winstanley believed that if covetous and oppressive behaviour characteristic of corrupt self-interest were to occur within his ideal commonwealth it would destroy its cohesion, so it follows that he developed a legal system that limits the potential dangers of self-interested behaviours. According to Winstanley, the nobility and gentry "wrung the freedoms of the earth out of [the common people's] hands, and cozened them of their birthrights" (*LF* 366), a point that illustrates

---

[177] Margo Todd explains that, in the context of seventeenth-century English social reform, Christian humanists believed that, because the individual's soul is rational, they should "subdue [their] selfish passions and act for the common good" (29). Again, this is an issue of theory versus practice; selfish passions exist because of Original Sin—a belief that is recorded throughout the Bible. While one would hope that the rational soul would prioritize the wellbeing of others over its own selfish desires, it is unlikely that this would occur in a large-scale context. Economic inequality exists precisely because selfish passions overwhelm the common good.

the violent nature of economic and social inequality. Winstanley's disdain for the

inhumaneness of economic inequality is evident in his treatment of criminal acts in

*Freedom.* Crimes such as rape, theft (of the personal belongings from one's home, or

from the common stock houses), and buying and selling meet a range of punishments.

*Freedom*'s explanation of punishment for misaligned interests highlights the severity of

Winstanley's legal system.[178] Winstanley explains that, "If any have so highly broke the

laws as they come within the compass of whipping, imprisoning and death, the

executioner shall cut off the head, hang or shoot to death, or whip the offender according

to the sentence of law" (*LF* 335). Hill acknowledges that "Winstanley thought of

whipping and forced labour as corrective punishments" (Hill, "Intro," 42), which appears

harsh; but it is also important to recognize that prisoners were treated with dignity. For

example, while awaiting trial, any defendant being tried for a crime unrelated to murder

could return home in order to "prevent cruelty of prisons" (*LF* 334). While prisoners are

set apart in Winstanley's ideal society by wearing "white woolen cloth" so that they may

be "distinguished from others" (*LF* 386), or embarrassed by being "set upon a stool, with

. . . words written in [their] forehead" (383), they are still provided the food and shelter

required for self-preservation. The punishments, for the most part, may appear punitive

and degrading, but they did not threaten the lives of prisoners—which is a significant

improvement on English monarchical law.

---

[178] Punishment as a function of a social space is also a means of encouraging social actors to think about how their actions affect the common good, and in the theoretical social space of *Freedom*, these punishments may be preventative rather than severe. Punishment in *Freedom* is to ensure that all social actors, or bodies, complete their assigned tasks—as well as their duties in familial and social relationships; by maintaining order between residents of the commune, or bodies in space, Winstanley ensures that each part of the aggregate whole is contributing to the commune's wellbeing.

The preservation of law and order in Winstanley's social space is paramount to maintaining collective interest because order begets unity and harmony in the social space. While Winstanley's social philosophy claims to value all people equally, he does create a series of political roles through which male members of society rotate. An officer of the commonwealth must be someone unquestionably dedicated to common interests, "So that he who is a true Commonwealths Officer, is not to step into the place of Magistracy by policy, or violent force, as all Kings and Conquerors do" (*LF* 317). A good officer exercises the power of his office, nothing more and nothing less; he is an esteemed member of the community over the age of 40 selected "by them who are in necessity, and who judg [*sic*] him fit for that work" (317). The task of the officer is to quash "self-ended interests" in order to avoid the return of tyranny, oppression, and economic inequality (317). Winstanley, a millenarian, had tremendous faith in the potential for social unity and collective interest in his ideal society, yet he still establishes a system of checks and balances to hold officers to account, suggesting that he recognized that even a 'fresh beginning' would be marred by sin.[179] In essence, the officer is a gatekeeper tasked with maintaining the integrity of the social space Winstanley himself created. As an added precaution, Winstanley describes what would exclude a man from becoming an officer: "He who breaks any laws shall be the first time reproved in words in private or in public, as is shewed before; the next time whipped, the

---

[179] Winstanley, like Traherne, recognizes that human sin will make even the most perfectly theorized social space corrupt; instead of believing that every single person will understand the logic of the social spaces Winstanley and Traherne ideated, they rather focus on working around those problems. For Winstanley, the workaround was to eject the offending party from the collective space, placing the offending party away from others, fit only for hard labour.

third time lose his freedom, either for a time or for ever, and not to be any officer" (*LF* 386). Winstanley's belief that God is within all of creation, including humankind, allows him to conceive of all members of society as being of equal value (*LF* 211); nonetheless, his social space is embedded *within* God's creation (i.e., the universe)—the space that preceded humankind. God's created space was perfect, but original sin meant that the inherent value of all human beings could be ignored by those with the ability to dominate others. Original space—the world created by God—could be viewed as homogeneous, for all "parts," or material entities, lived harmoniously as a united, whole body; however, at the time that Winstanley wrote *Freedom*, there was no unified social body. By contrast, Nature and the heavens are homogeneous and are therefore harmonious, united, and cohesive spaces in which all parts or bodies work in unison to preserve the society. Winstanley's millenarian goals do not take into account that his theoretical social space is the effect of sin. Because these spaces are created by an imperfect human being who occupies space in an imperfect world, attempts to establish cohesion and equality are inevitably derailed by the space-maker's own sins; likewise, a theoretical social space is also a response to sin—after all, there is no need to reconfigure the social space if it is perfect. Social cohesion or harmony is the intention behind Winstanley's social philosophy, but a homogeneous social structure—one that is uniform and united—cannot exist in a sinful world where wealthy landowners are not held accountable for their damaging and selfish passions.

**Part II: Deconstructing Winstanley's Ideal Social Space**

**Analysis of Viability**

Common freedom, by Winstanley's standards, requires strict laws and guidelines for

nearly all social behaviour. While God may be within all human beings, this premise is

no guarantee that social actors will follow the "golden rule." Because the golden rule is a

biblical imperative not enshrined in English law, the discontinuity between biblical

injunction and common practice is the effect of sin and selfishness, both of which

Winstanley attributes to hypocritical landowners, who "imprison, crush, nay put to death,

any that denies God, Christ, and Scripture; and yet they will not practise that golden rule,

*Do to another as thou wouldst have another do to thee*" (284). While the Bible advocates

for reciprocal human relationships, there is little incentive for the nobility and gentry—

landowners—to respect labourers. Winstanley's social utopia aims to correct these

perceived anti-social behaviours with a rigorous legal system founded on the principle

that,

> because the spirit in Mankinde is various within it self; for some are wise, some
> are foolish, some idle, some laborious, some rash, some milde, some loving and
> free to others, some envyous and covetous, some of an inclination to do as they
> would have others do to them: but others seek to save themselves, and to live in
> fulness, though others perish for want, Therefore because of this was the Law
> added, which was to be a Rule and Judg for all mens actions, to preserve common
> Peace and Freedom. (*LF* 314)

Winstanley points to a diversity of spirit in humankind that he believes causes anti-social

behaviour. In the context of Winstanley's social philosophy, anti-social behaviour can be

understood as any behaviour that detracts from social cohesion and common peace and

freedom. Winstanley's belief is that, in social settings, diversity is dangerous to the

commonwealth government, which has been restructured in *Freedom* to regulate social behaviour. To sidestep the sort of diversity that detracts from state unity—or the uniformity of the social space—Winstanley argues that his commonwealth government "depends not upon the Will of any particular man, or men" (*LF* 312). The goal of Winstanley's idealized commonwealth government is not to "pretend" common freedom but to actualize it, because if "common Freedom were not pretended, the Commoners of a Land would never dance after the pipe of self seeking wits" (312), thereby eliminating what Winstanley views as anti-social behaviour born of diverse opinions and interests. Winstanley believes that tyrants of the past—like Charles I—established government through the "cheating mystery of Iniquity" (312); iniquity begets self-seeking behaviour, creating a closed circuit wherein self-seeking births iniquity in an endless sequence of events; each is a cause and effect. For Winstanley, common freedom is the "freedom of all" (302); it enables self-preservation for all humankind, not just landowners.

**Unity, Order, and Power in Freedom**

Winstanley believed that his proposal for a new commonwealth government would "unite[ ] all people in a Land into one heart and mind" (*LF* 292), beginning with the family unit. In *Freedom* unity and common preservation are one in the same; the former "rose up first in a private Family" (314), so if each family unit is united, then the commonwealth is more likely to be united (similar to Cavendish's building blocks), for it would be an aggregate of unified families. Furthermore, if we follow the logic of Winstanley's social structure—especially with regards to the duties and roles assigned to family members, most particularly fathers—then it becomes clear that national unity, for

Winstanley, is established through the actions of a social aggregate composed of individual families. If individual families follow the roles Winstanley prescribes in *Freedom*, then unity would exist both within the family unit and between family units, simply because all families would be structured and conditioned by the same set of standards.

By establishing unity within and between family units, Winstanley moves to eliminate class division, thereby doing away with power differentials that allow the wealthier members of society to enslave the poor. Winstanley explains that, "When Mankind lives in division, contention, and covetousnesse, one part of Mankind [hedges] themselves into the earth by force and sword, (as experience shewes, the strongest sword rules over the weakest) and thereby [shuts] out another part of Mankind, making them slaves" (*LF* 424). Whereas divisiveness fosters disunity and creates opportunities for the abuse of power, unity is a precedent of equality, a central goal of *Freedom*.

Winstanley's social progressivism with respect to human rights and dignity is impressive but, unsurprisingly given the general acceptance of patriarchal authority at the time, the social structure of his ideal commonwealth is paternalistic. However, rather than attributing paternity to the king, a single body, Winstanley redistributes that power to the head of every family in the commonwealth. As the master of a family, the father is "to cherish his children till they grow wise and strong, and then as a master he is to instruct them in reading, in learning languages, Arts and Sciences, or to bring them to labour, or employ them in some Trade" (*LF* 325). Not only does the father educate his children, but he also instils in them a sense of social responsibility; he is to "command them for their

work, and see they do it, and not suffer them to live idle" (325), because idleness detracts

from common preservation. In Winstanley's commune, all education is pragmatic; there

is no room for "book learning" alone because "scholars," as Winstanley observes, "spend

their time to find out policies to advance themselves to be lords and masters above their

labouring brethren . . . which occasions all the trouble in the world" (362). All education

must have an end that benefits the community and solidifies common freedom; scholars,

in Winstanley's eyes, are self-seeking and desire to wield knowledge as a form of power

over those with more practical skills, like the knowledge and practice of trades. Thus, a

father who educates his children along the lines described by Winstanley strengthens

common freedom and social cohesion by eliminating the possibility of intellectual

tyranny. Likewise, a father must do his part to maintain social order by disciplining his

children, so that they "may not quarrel like beasts, but live in Peace, like rational men,

experienced in yielding obedience to the Laws and Officers" (325). Education and

discipline are foundational to the success of a commune in which all people have equal

access to the land and are free from oppression.

The family unit is meant to be a building block of society, for its function is to

prevent self-seeking behaviour through early education and discipline. Winstanley

recognizes, however, that the diversity of "spirits" means that there will still be those who

deviate from the law, which is where the role of the parish officer becomes important.

Winstanley explains that,

> There must be fit Officers, whose spirits are so humble, wise, and free from
> Covetousness, as they can make the established Laws of the Land their Will; and
> not through pride and vain-glory, make their Wills to rule above the Rules of
> Freedom, pleading Prerogative. For when the right ordered Laws do rule, the

> Government is healthful; but when the Will of Officers rule above the Law, that
> Government is diseased with a mortal disease. (*LF* 306)

These officers play a significant role in preserving common freedom, but it is requisite

that they act in the interests of the whole; officers are placed in a position of power and

must therefore resist the temptation to mobilize that power for selfish gain. While it may

seem as though Winstanley allocates tremendous and unchecked power to these men, he

takes measures to ensure that the balance of power is not in the hands of the officers

alone. Just as he distributes power in the commonwealth widely, so too does Winstanley

distribute state power across a network of government officials.

Winstanley divides the English masses into self-governed family units; the family

units are accountable not only to other family units and social actors, but to the state as

well. "All of these offices are links of a chain, they arise from one and the same root,

which is necessity of common peace, and all their works tend to preserve common

peace," explains Winstanley, but only after emphasizing the importance of the father of

each family unit to preserving common peace (324). The father, just like any public

official, is an officer whose role is to protect common interest. A parish constitutes an

aggregate of family units in one geographical area, and for each parish Winstanley

assigns peace-makers, task-masters, an executioner, overseers, and soldiers. The peace-

makers are "councillors" and their job is to "order the affairs of the parish, to prevent

troubles and to preserve common peace" (325). They also resolve quarrels between

community members and ensure that the public officers remain committed to the

collective interests of the parish, while overseers preserve peace by mediating property

disputes. Winstanley is firm in his conviction that, while land and the fruits it bears are

the property of all, private property—like furniture and wives—is not communal (304)—

an important distinction that divides his social philosophy from the Levellers and their

practice of polygamy. Winstanley also insists that overseers must be "ancient men, above

sixty years of age" (332), a rule that likewise applies to officers, who must be at least

forty years old (362). Soldiers are tasked with "represent[ing] power" and ensuring that

the "spirit of rudeness" is obedient to the government (333). The task-master assigns

those who have broken the law to unpaid labour and determines the length of time to be

served (335), and the executioner performs physical punishments, ranging through

whipping, imprisoning, death, decapitation, hangings, and shootings (335).[180]

Parishes are organized into counties, each of which has judges and additional

overseers; likewise, counties fall under the umbrella of the "whole land," or the state,

which has a parliament, a commonwealth's ministry, a post-master, and an army (324). I

mentioned earlier that Winstanley's social philosophy reveals his homogeneous space-

making ideology, something we see in the way he structures society into networked

bodies—i.e., the state, the family unit, counties, and parishes. These are all part of a

"chain," explains Winstanley; they are interconnected, and each body plays its own role

in preserving common peace or the integrity of the "whole"—i.e., the state.[181]

---

[180] Ironically, Winstanley attributes whipping and executions to the Norman Conquerors and subsequent monarchs, whom he condemns for using such force to control the population (*FB* 236).

[181] The chain metaphor is an interesting one because it calls to mind the Great Chain of Being that Winstanley would no doubt dispute. I refer to the parts of Winstanley's social system as "interconnected," a departure from the chain metaphor in that the links of a chain share only two connections, while parts of a whole can have numerous connections. Given that Winstanley's social system would exist within the boundaries of England, I suggest thinking about his social system as a closed circuit. The closed-circuit metaphor suggests that there is no change in the system—its structure remains the same, and its various parts remain connected and communicative. However, the downside of any closed system is that it becomes inflexible and unable to evolve in pace with everything outside of the closed system.

Winstanley's social space is linked to prelapsarian Eden, because he uses the structure of the "first family" to establish a system of governance in *Freedom* (317). "In the first family, which is the foundation from whence all families sprang," writes Winstanley; the father "is the first link in the chain of magistracy" (317); the father teaches his children how to "plant the earth" and how to "live" and "obey" (317). In doing so, the children make the father "not only a father, but a master and ruler" (317), hence Winstanley's insistence that magistrates must be chosen overseers in the same way that Adam was chosen to oversee his children. The "chain" links all social and political roles together, for "they arise from one and the same root, which is necessity of common peace . . .. [T]hey assist each other, and all others are to assist them" (324-25). This social ecosystem designed to enforce Winstanley's idealized commonwealth is almost identical to Cavendish's portrayal of Nature; each "part" knows that its interests are best served by preserving the whole and not deviating from that purpose. Cavendish's depiction of Nature is that it is infinite and perfect, so we see an interesting connection here: Winstanley's *Freedom* crafts a perfect or ideal society that somehow resembles Cavendish's description of Nature as a "society." Winstanley's social structure presents an intriguing possibility for a human society to mirror the inner workings of Nature's collectively interested parts, however unlikely this ambition may be.

Returning briefly to the role of officer, Winstanley acknowledges that the power an officer holds will inevitably lead him to deviate from his purpose of preserving common peace. Social order, for Winstanley, rests on the absence of corruption and disorder, both of which directly correlate with "self-seeking" behaviour, or corrupt self-

interest. Winstanley argues that "the heart of man is so subject to be overspred [*sic*] with the clouds of covetousness, pride, and vain-glory" because the "Great Offices in a Land and Army have changed the disposition of many sweet spirited men" (*LF* 319). To counter this problem, Winstanley mandates that officers should be replaced every year in order to avoid the return of tyrannical oppression (319). Winstanley's commonwealth is intent on keeping oppression and economic inequality at bay; he explains that "All Slaveries and Oppressions, which have been brought upon Mankinde by Kings, Lords of Manors, Lawyers, and Landlords, and the Divining Clergy, are all cast out again by this Government," a feat made possible when the "Commonwealths Government governs the Earth without buying and selling" (311). Winstanley recognizes the need for a parliament, but also insists on its regulation by the appointed officers. Although he does not state this directly, the commonwealth officers appear to hold the greatest amount of power—even more than the parliament—because they are the ones who ensure that power is consistently balanced. Officers enforce the principle of equal access to the land, thereby eliminating the power dynamics of ownership of private property that lead to the enslavement of labourers. Commonwealth officers are assigned to designated parishes, so no single officer can monopolize his public authority and create factions within the commonwealth. Winstanley's *Freedom* presents a meticulous system of checks and balances designed to safeguard the peace and prosperity of the nation, while concurrently protecting the English people from tyrannical rule.

The primary goals of *Freedom* are common peace and equal access to the land, both of which require individual citizens to subordinate their interests to the agenda of

common freedom; in other words, Winstanley's message—although not stated as such—

is that self-preservation is only possible when common preservation is adopted as the

priority of each social actor. This spirit of reciprocity is the cornerstone of Winstanley's

social philosophy and, had his social structure been implemented successfully, it is this

reciprocity that Winstanley believed would "make a whole Land, nay the whole Fabrick

of the Earth, to become one family of Mankind, and one well governed Commonwealth,"

or a united body (325).

**Relationships and State Policy**

Winstanley equates God with Reason and believes that Reason is universal, because

Christ dwells within each individual. Reason is not reserved for the upper classes alone

but is instead ubiquitous and accessible to all. Because Reason is inherent within each

individual and does not depend on one's pedigree, Winstanley argues that all members of

society have the choice to unite as a social body; as such, he believes that this social

body, or "the people," should be involved in governance, specifically when it comes to

making decisions that affect the nation's population. Winstanley expresses the need for

popular consent in the model of governance he establishes in *Freedom*:

> Enacting of new Laws must be by the Peoples consent and knowledg likewise.
> And here they are to require the consent, not of men interested in the old
> oppressing Laws and Customs, as Kings used to do, but of them who have been
> oppressed. And the Reason is this: Because the people must be all subject to the
> Law, under pain of punishment; therefore it is all reason they should know it
> before it be enacted, that if there be any thing of the Councel of Oppression in it,
> it may be discovered and amended.
>      But you will say, If it must be so, then will men so differ in their
> judgments, that we shall never agree. I answer: There is but Bondage and
> Freedom, particular Interest, or common Interest; and he who pleads to bring in
> particular interest into a free Commonwealth, will presently be seen and cast out,
> as one bringing in Kingly Slavery. (*LF* 342)

Winstanley's argument is logical and, aside from gender discrimination, quite progressive for his time in terms of social structure.[182] Instead of promoting a system of governance that gives the decision-making power to a concentrated group of men (i.e., powerful landowners) who represent an exclusive set of interests, Winstanley's model disperses power across the nation, providing all members of society representation and a voice; his model of general consent gives all English people (i.e., first men, then women and children) agency regardless of their status at birth or role in the community. Winstanley does not say whether women are invited to participate in this form of lawmaking but, because he is very clear about gender roles in other parts of *Freedom*, it is possible that women's voices would be welcomed, especially because women are required to follow the same laws as men. At the same time, Winstanley undoubtedly viewed women as the 'weaker sex': their labouring efforts were devoted to less physically rigorous jobs. Furthermore, Winstanley is unequivocal in his belief that men should be the heads of family and are responsible for their family's contribution to the commune. Interestingly, when it comes to aspects of childrearing—like teaching children skills to prepare them for labouring or guiding their behaviour towards other members of the family— Winstanley places these duties in the realm of the father.

---

[182] Despite Winstanley's insistence on equality of all people, he does not seek equality in gender. In *Freedom*, women are assigned to less rigorous jobs like cooking, cleaning, and textiles, while men complete the physically demanding jobs and are also able to hold official positions in parish governance. Winstanley consistently presents Eden as the space of absolute perfection—a space in which all people could access the land freely; however, Adam is superior to Eve, so even in the so-called Edenic paradise, power dynamics exist.

Winstanley's deference to the "first family" as the model for all families in his social space means it may reject class hierarchy, but it sustains gender hierarchy. Winstanley defines "true righteousness" as having "the earth set free from all kingly bondage of lords and manors and oppressing landlords" (*LF* 302), and while he believes that each woman should have her own husband (*LF* 291), he also views women as beacons of worldly lust (*FB* 221). Winstanley does not appear to blame women for causing men to fall into lustful deceits, but on several occasions his phrasing suggests women are passive objects of men's corrupt behaviour.[183] In a sense, Winstanley does not simply curtail the agency of women by objectifying them, but he also removes the agency of men, who appear helpless (or hopeless) when it comes to self-control. Winstanley does recognize that women are susceptible to the unregulated passions of men, declaring that "If any man do force or abuse women in folly . . . the laws following do punish such ignorant and unrational practice; for the laws of a commonwealth are laws of moderate diligence and purity of manners" (*LF* 304). Winstanley portrays women as passive objects, as if sexual intercourse happens to them, not with them—though this is not unusual for the time. In an undated poem, Winstanley also cautions women not to engage in intercourse with men, because they will be left with the burden of raising a child, while the male partner is free to continue his life pursuing other women ("England's Spirit Unfolded" in Hill 392). Winstanley views human relationships as economic transactions, whereby one's behaviour positively or negatively affects one's community and one's

---

[183] For example, "beastly community with women" (*FB* 227); "immoderate *use* of women" (*FB* 256; emphasis mine); "this freedom of wanton unreasonable beasts . . . tends to destruction" (*LF* 294).

economic function in the community. Winstanley's *Freedom* aims to collapse the social hierarchy to achieve economic equality that affords self-preservation for all, yet his somewhat progressive social system makes women's self-preservation contingent upon the behaviour of men. Consequently, before his unified social space could ever have been adopted, it would have been dichotomized and inequitable, thus providing another example of how social spaces resist homogeneity. The inevitable hierarchy of Winstanley's proposed social structure is evidence that even those space-makers who seek total unity still foster inequality, simply because they are products of the social space in which they exist.

Civic engagement is Winstanley's way of subduing oppression in government, and though he recognizes that there will never be total consensus, his primary concern is to preserve common interest; by Winstanley's logic, if members of society disdain the tyranny of "particular" or self-interest, they will vote in the common interest precisely because the individual's interests are best served through reciprocity and the prioritization of common interest. Once negative or selfish self-interest prevails in a society a power imbalance erupts—and that sort of inequality favours only the people with the most economic capital.[184] Winstanley's blind spot is that he—a space-maker— designed a social space that would have fulfilled his personal interests—and those of similar social status. Though Winstanley believed he was concerned with common interest, he failed to recognize that his articulation of "common interest" is defined

---

[184] Essentially, this is what we would call free market capitalism, or neoliberalism. Those with the most capital and power have the most latitude to exercise self-interest.

relative to his own social position as a literate, professionally trained male with enough economic stability and supplies to write. The problem with common interest on a national scale is that, when defined by one person alone, it is really a product of the self-interest of the space-maker, Winstanley—i.e., what Winstanley believed to be good, or necessary. By communicating his idea of social cohesion through common interest, Winstanley shares a view that represents his own interests; incidentally, his own interests also take into consideration the needs of those he identifies as part of his social group (i.e., labourers). I am not questioning the intention behind Winstanley's articulation of common interest; rather, I am simply pointing out that, in the case of the solitary act of space-making, even the best intentions towards others are still the product of what the space-maker believes aligns with their self-interest. After all, a space-maker like Winstanley is not going to create a social structure that inhibits his best interests, for this is contrary to the law of nature. The problem herein lies with perspective; "good" for one person may be "bad" for another.

One objection that Winstanley had with unprofitable, scholarly knowledge is that it was inaccessible, hoarded by the few privileged people to possess it; for this reason, his policies are designed to be accessible to all members of society. Winstanley recognizes that equality demands that all people have the right to understand the legal system that binds their actions and holds them to account. General accessibility is another means of suppressing tyranny, while concurrently promoting self-regulation so as to protect common interest. Winstanley argues that

> it was not for nothing that the Kings would have all their Laws written in French and Latine, and not in English, partly in honour to the Norman Race, and partly to keep the common people ignorant of their Creation-freedoms, lest they should rise to redeem themselves and were they written in English, it would have given them 'knowledge of our bondage.' (*LF* 374)

Winstanley's shrewd assessment of the historical power dynamics of the English monarchy points out that one way to ensure power remains unbalanced and in the hands of the upper classes is to divide the lower classes from the knowledge they need to exercise free choice to their benefit, not their detriment. When people are unfamiliar with the laws that bind them, they are subject to manipulation and inequitable treatment. By ensuring the ignorance of the lower classes by hoarding information, those with socio-economic power are best positioned to enslave commoners and treat them not as people, but as labourers whose sole purpose is to reinforce the wealth and power of the nobility and gentry. On the other hand, "if the Laws were few and short, and often read, it would prevent those Evils; and every one, knowing when they did well, and when ill, would be very cautious of their words and actions" (378). By creating a legal framework that necessitates the participation of all (or most) members of society, Winstanley promises to give all English people agency, self-preservation, and the knowledge that allows the individual to exercise free choice from an informed standpoint. Anyone is free to commit a crime of their own volition; but it also follows that anyone who commits a crime could justly be held accountable for their actions.

**Unanticipated Problems in Winstanley's Social Philosophy**

Winstanley's social utopia is progressive in its goal of erasing social hierarchy and traditional monarchic rule in favour of economic equality through collectivity and the

primacy of common interest; however, there are some contentious points that would

hinder free will had Winstanley's social model been adopted. It may seem as if accepting

Winstanley's plan as a viable alternative to what he understood as a rigid social hierarchy

would have been an obvious solution to economic inequality, but if we follow

Winstanley's logic we encounter a conflict: that is, by universalizing equality through the

revocation of social status and eradication of power differentials, the free will of

landowners would have been abused. In reality, by ignoring Winstanley's proposal for

national social reform, Cromwell protected the free will of landowners,[185] but in doing so

he reinforced the inegalitarian living conditions of the lower classes, which in turn

limited their free will.[186] Because the goal of an egalitarian society in which everyone has

free will would have amounted to a levelling of the scales, whereby the concentration of

wealth and power in the upper classes would have been redistributed evenly to all

members of society, landowners would likely have vehemently opposed Winstanley's

plan for social reform. This opposition would have arisen in a yet unstable post-civil war

society, and though we can only speculate on the consequences of the homogenization or

imposition of a drastically different social system onto the pre-existing heterogeneous

social space, it is reasonable to believe that Winstanley's new system would only have

compromised the already unstable English social space. The goal of this section is to

approach the meritorious aspects of Winstanley's social structure through a critical lens,

---

[185] In the introduction to *Freedom*, Winstanley calls Cromwell to account for protecting the interests of the upper classes (229).

[186] For a visual example of this paradox, it is as if free will is on a separate sliding scale from equality; the problem is that, regardless of which concept is at which end of the scale, free will and equality are always opposite one another.

specifically as to how the violation of the free will of landowners would have been self-defeating in its objective: to establish an egalitarian, unified, and peaceful nation. I want to emphasize again that my goal here is not to determine whether Winstanley's social space is ethical, but rather to examine a collection of the possible outcomes of the homogeneous social space and its impact on free will and social cohesion.

Common freedom, as a blanket concept, can be problematic because, as we can see in *Freedom*, Winstanley narrowly defines the concept as "common freedom of the earth" (*LF* 281). In his address to Cromwell, Winstanley's closing remarks on common freedom are stated as an ultimatum: "But here take notice that common freedom . . . was thy pretence; but particular freedom to thyself was thy intent. Amend, or else thou wilt be shamed, when knowledge doth spread to cover the earth" (293). Quite boldly, Winstanley reminds Cromwell of his alleged promise to return all Crown lands to the people after the wars ended, something that Cromwell refused to do. Winstanley's assessment that Cromwell reneged on his promise because of particular interest—or self-interest—underscores the centrality of common preservation through free access to the land to *Freedom*. At the same time, Winstanley's comment that, if Cromwell does not deliver on his promise, he will be shamed by people around the world, seems to suggest that Winstanley failed to consider the opposition that his social model would have received from foreign, monarchic governments. Had *Freedom* been widely circulated, Winstanley's social model may well have garnered the interest of lower-class people throughout the western world, and possibly posed a threat to Christian monarchies, the Holy Roman Empire, nobility, and the clergy—Anglican and Catholic alike. Regardless

of the size of his readership, however, Winstanley's belief that Cromwell's refusal to honour the alleged contract would lead to his public shaming seems unrealistic, likely because Winstanley did not have formal training in politics, law, or philosophy (Hill, "Introduction" 11; *DNB* n.p.). Many of Winstanley's ideas are sound, but where *Freedom* falls short is in his plan for the execution of ideas; like Cavendish's, Winstanley's space-making produces a theoretical social space, but fails to provide clear direction on how to achieve his vision; there is no transitional phase, which poses a problem for the social structure's viability.

Winstanley's vision for common freedom solves problems for some, while creating them for others. Because Winstanley defines common freedom in such narrow terms, his social philosophy is primarily concerned with practical labour that sustains the commune; thus, scholars and philosophers had no place in his society because their skills were impractical and did not contribute to common preservation. Winstanley's approach to labour is transactional; it treats human beings as unit-producing bodies, whose value is determined by their effectiveness at generating consumable products; however, Winstanley's preference for pragmatic knowledge does not reject knowledge from the Arts and Sciences. Instead, Winstanley focuses on applicable knowledge that improves the lives of the English people:

> In every Trade, Art, and Science, whereby they may finde out the Secrets of the Creation and that they may know how to govern the Earth in right order. There are five Fountains from whence all Arts and Sciences have their influences: he that is an actor in any or in all the five parts, is a profitable son of mankinde: he that onely contemplates and talks of what he reads and hears, and doth not employ

> his Talent in some bodily action, for the encrease of fruitfulness, freedom, and peace in the Earth, is an unprofitable son. (*LF* 363)[187]

His phrase, "a profitable son," reduces individual worth to its utility-function, but the

distinction he makes between profitable and unprofitable intellectual contributions has to

do with the way knowledge is applied. Abstract knowledge does not increase the

fruitfulness of the earth, nor does it contribute to common freedom, because Winstanley

believes that the purpose of this sort of knowledge is commodified and used to perpetuate

tyranny. On the one hand, knowledge of the "wandering stars" is valuable because it

allows the common people to know "the secrets of nature and creation" (346); this

knowledge is applicable to farming the earth because it helps labourers understand the

motions of the earth and their effects on the climate and crops. "Imaginary study," on the

other hand, does not seek to understand God better but is instead used to glorify the

learner (347). Understanding God's creation is valuable to Winstanley, for this type of

knowledge allows one to experience the "fullness" of God (347). In addition to the utility

value of acceptable knowledge, Winstanley also emphasizes that imaginary knowledge—

the unprofitable type—is kept "secret" so that men may "get a living by [it]" (347), as

would be the case in Court. The bottom line, for Winstanley, is that unprofitable

---

[187] The five fountains are the areas of knowledge that Winstanley believes influence the Arts and Sciences: husbandry, astronomy, raising livestock, forestry, and weather. Winstanley is quite unclear about the five fountains and how they influence Arts and Sciences; his grammar alone makes it difficult to distinguish the five fountains. George Rosen's article, "Left-Wing Puritanism and Science," attempts to discuss the five fountains, but also fails to distinguish five separate categories. I have derived these categories from the descriptions of the five fountains made by Winstanley and commented on by Rosen. In short, Winstanley favours scientific pursuit that is pragmatic, as opposed to "Traditional Knowledg," or "idle" knowledge, which is attained by reading, or by the instruction of others, and not practical," because this sort of knowledge leads to idleness, which is unprofitable (*LF* 363). Both Winstanley and Cavendish view idleness as a destructive force, but whereas Winstanley worries that idleness slows economic production, Cavendish believes that it leads to war because idle people have more time to ruminate over the state of society.

knowledge is lorded over uneducated people, reinforcing the class divide and sustaining

the system of "kingly slavery" (347). By removing unprofitable knowledge from the

social context, Winstanley—again—attempts to achieve total unity and uniformity in the

social space. A society in which kingly slavery occurs wholly opposes the concept of

common freedom. Unprofitable knowledge, then, enables a system of bondage and self-

interest.

Winstanley's valuation of knowledge is problematic simply because it represents

only his view yet plays an important role in the configuration of his ideal social space; by

definition, however, a society is about "connection, participation, or partnership" and

"the state or condition of being politically confederated or allied" (*OED*). Unity connotes

at least two distinct parties *choosing* to band together to achieve a common goal, but the

landowner-labourer binary must be eliminated to incentivize the prioritization of common

interest. By removing the material (e.g., estate) and immaterial things (e.g., status) that

cause power differentials and economic inequality, Winstanley believes that his

"commonwealth's government unites all people in a land into one heart and mind" (*LF*

292). His phrase, "in a land into one heart and mind" is the underlying premise of a

homogeneous social space; Winstanley desires total unity in beliefs, desires, goals, and

actions. Social homogeneity[188] is problematic as a model for the social space because it

assumes that all human needs and interests are the same, justifying the annihilation of

---

[188] I am using this term to discuss homogenizing social space; I am not borrowing this term from political science, where scholars like Hermann Heller have used it to discuss political structure in post-Nazi Germany. Although there are many similarities between my use of the term and its use in political science, there is no need to complicate my analysis with this tangential theory.

social hierarchy and declaring all members of society "equal" in terms of the individual

factors involved in self-preservation. Essentially, a homogeneous social model favours

common preservation and denies self-interest in, as Winstanley says, its "particular"

form; while the basic needs of the individual are met, their personal interests are denied.

By homogenizing society Winstanley reduces all human needs and interests to the

essentials:

> When a man hath meat, and drink, and clothes, he hath enough. And all shall
> cheerfully put to their hands to make these things that are needful, one helping
> another. There shall be none lords over others, but everyone shall be a lord of
> himself, subject to the law of righteousness, reason and equity, which shall dwell
> and rule in him, which is the Lord. (*LR* 28)

In this quotation, the standards for common preservation are homogenized, thus

eliminating the unique needs of other individuals; there is only one standard for common

preservation, and that is Winstanley's. Once again, Winstanley's particular goals for

common preservation are apparent in his belief that all people will happily unite to fill the

basic needs of the collective; furthermore, his remark that people will "cheerfully" put

their hands together for the collective has both comical and sinister undertones. To use

Cavendish as an example again, were she to live in Winstanley's social space, we can

reasonably assume that she would not perform manual labour "cheerfully"; conversely,

we can also see that Winstanley's version of society is idealistic to the point that

"cheerfully" joining hands to support the collective calls to mind Soviet-era propaganda

designed to create an image of unity to outsiders (or to convince insiders that they are and

should stay united) while concurrently masking the internal turmoil. In essence, to

believe that all people will work together cheerfully at all times to sustain the collective

speaks to Winstanley's lack of consideration with respect to human temperament and particular interests, not to mention humankind's inherently sinful nature. In other words, Winstanley's conceptualization of social space is idealistic in that it does not adequately address how selfish and damaging personal interests could lead to renewed civil war in his egalitarian commune. It is a social structure that works theoretically, but as soon as unique human beings enter the scene, the theory falls short. It is one thing to believe that all people will band together and serve the needs of the collective, but it does not necessarily follow that the English people will, in time, see the reasonability of his plan to establish a cohesive commune.

Winstanley aims to correct the injustice of economic inequality, but in doing so his actions would compromise the free will of the upper classes, and anyone else who does not want to work the land would be coerced into embracing a communistic lifestyle in which they held the same amount of social power as those they previously viewed as inferior. This seems a reasonable price to pay in terms of equality and self-preservation for all, but there remains the issue of general consent; regardless of the merit of Winstanley's proposed social space, if people choose to reject his views, economic inequality will likely prevail. The class hierarchy of seventeenth-century England existed precisely because those in power did not consent to surrendering their power in the name of economic equality. Thus, once again, the premise of economic equality is hopeful, but the execution of such a policy would have faced serious resistance. Though we can only speculate, it seems probable that, because landowners were powerful and, not to mention, gentry and merchants worked hard to attain wealth and status, their resistance would have

ended Winstanley's vision for equality.[189] Winstanley's system creates just as many

problems as it solves.

**Problems with Governance**

Winstanley also decided how his ideal Commonwealth should be governed, and despite

proposing a representative form of government, the system itself was generated by

Winstanley alone, meaning that his notion of collective interest is really a manifestation

of his own self-interest. This is not to say that Winstanley promotes the adoption of a

social space that serves his own needs and interests; I am simply pointing out that the

space-maker cannot completely remove their own beliefs and values from the social

structure they create.[190] When it comes to equality and the inherent worth of all human

beings, Winstanley does make a valid point in saying that government is tasked with

protecting the free will of *all* its citizens. That all humans are born free is the central

assumption upon which Winstanley establishes his argument in *Freedom*, and his

understanding of "slavery" is the lynchpin because Winstanley believes that labourers are

enslaved by landowners—and likewise, that landowners are enslaved to material goods;

in Winstanley's eyes, "slavery" is the greatest barrier to a cohesive commune, so it

should be eradicated. While Winstanley is not recognized as a contributor to the early

stages of political science, *Freedom* anticipates some important arguments made by

---

[189] The lower classes could have overcome this resistance if they united as one, because if the upper classes had chosen to respond with armed force, they would not have the lower-class soldiers to fight their battles.
[190] As we have seen in the course of western history—especially in the colonization of foreign lands and the subsequent problems spawned by colonization—one person deciding what they believe to be in the best interests of a body of people (and their combined interests, i.e., the common good) is a slippery slope. It would be dangerous to allow a single person to make a decision in the interests of the public body without consultation and then decide that their decision was "good" or "bad" based on the outcome.

political scientists with reference to natural law, the divine right of kings, equality, and free will.

In *Discourses* (1698), Algernon Sidney argues that, while human beings are born free, they cannot remain in the state of nature because "the Liberty of one is thwarted by that of another" (21), and we see this same sentiment earlier in the century in Winstanley's *Freedom*. Winstanley's argument that labourers are enslaved by landowners implies that the liberty of labourers is thwarted by the liberty of landowners. Sidney's satirical commentary on Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha* (1680) attacks Filmer's argument that God "caused some to be born with crowns upon their heads, and all others with saddles upon their backs" (Sidney 406).[191] Sidney's scathing critique of Filmer's support for the divine right of kings encapsulates a statement made much earlier by Winstanley: "If any say the old kings' laws are the rule, then it may be answered that those laws are so full of confusion that few know when they obey and when not, because they were the laws of a conqueror" (*LF* 283). Winstanley questions the legitimacy of the monarch's authority by arguing that the Norman conquerors established the monarchy and stole the land from the common people, only to redistribute it amongst those pre-existing nobility and clergy who aligned themselves with the Normans; the English monarchy, by Winstanley's logic, is the manifestation of the Norman kings. By delegitimizing the basis of the monarch's authority, Winstanley lays claim to the land that was "stolen" from the people, an action that led to institutionally sanctioned economic inequality. Despite the validity of Winstanley's argument, it appears as though he was aware that it would be

---

[191] Sidney, Algernon. *Discourses Concerning Government*. London, 1698.

ignored, hence his attempt in *Freedom* to articulate a new social structure that would—in theory—ensure that self-preservation, a subset of natural law, was unhindered by the imbalance of socio-economic power. In exchange for the protection of free will, citizens are meant to sacrifice a certain degree of agency so that social cohesion is possible.

In terms of the viability of a commune based on Winstanley's attempt to delegitimize monarchic authority and landownership, it seems likely that he would face considerable backlash from those whose privileged existences relied on monarchic authority and landownership, especially when land was gifted by the reigning monarch. Monarchic rule protects the interests of landowners, while a government, by Winstanley's reasoning, protects the interests of the collective—but Winstanley's common interest is forced upon the upper classes as an unfair negotiation of choice, effectively defeating the ideology that common preservation benefits all people equally. Conversely, monarchic rule makes self-preservation impossible for labourers. Nonetheless, the shrewd insight apparent in Winstanley's deconstruction of the history of monarchic authority and landownership, however valid it may be, fails to acknowledge the fact that common preservation, as defined by him, is in the interests of labourers, but does not necessarily represent the interests of landowners.

While Winstanley's argument is valid—and may have been ignored because it threatened the social structure that benefited people like Cromwell—it is unviable; regardless of how accurate Winstanley's logic is, the people who held social, political, and economic power—although fewer in number—could simply deem Winstanley an

annoyance or "dissident" rather than a threat.[192] As contemporary readers with

knowledge of how western political science has unfolded through time, we may find

ourselves showcasing the value and social progressiveness of Winstanley's social system,

but acknowledging that a well-intended system had the potential to reproduce the

oppressiveness it was trying to escape may be a source of discomfort. Totalitarian

undercurrents are manifest in Winstanley's explication of law and order in his ideal

Commonwealth. Winstanley takes time, for example, to detail who is allowed to take part

in state governance; he uses the phrase "fearful ignorant men" to describe those who must

be excluded from participating in government (*LF* 321). Fearful and ignorant are relative

terms that express one party's perspective, further supporting my earlier point that the

values, laws, and order in *Freedom* are said to represent collective interests, when in fact

they are indicative of Winstanley's subjectivity as a space-maker. Winstanley's

individuated values and priorities are the sole determinant of who can participate in a

representational government—an attitude that completely undermines the purpose of

representation, because Winstanley chooses who can run for these political positions,

thereby limiting the pool of potential representatives to a select group of men whom

Winstanley deems acceptable. The problem does not lie in the fact that Winstanley

ideates a representational form of government; the problem is that Winstanley chooses

who can run for government, meaning that the pool of candidates is not an accurate

---

[192] What is interesting about critiquing the structure of Winstanley's social space is that the monarchy operated under the same principles as Winstanley proposes, except that they occupy two ends of a socio-political spectrum. If we were to swap common interest with self-interest, there is still an oppressed party. Common interest negates the free will of the wealthy because it deprives them of their status and material belongings; but self-interest negates the free will of the poor because it makes self-preservation difficult.

representation of the commune, but rather of Winstanley's beliefs about who should

govern. The discriminatory aspects of Winstanley's social structure are designed to

exclude certain people, including women, former nobility and gentry, as well as

> all uncivil livers, drunkards, quarrelers, fearful ignorant men, who dare not speak truth, lest they anger other men; likewise all who are wholly given to pleasure and sports, or men who are full of talk; all these are empty of substance, and cannot be experienced men, therefore not fit to be chosen Officers in a Commonwealth, yet they may have a voyce in the choosing. (*LF* 321)

Unfortunately, the element of choice is a veneer, because the "drunkards" and those who

enjoy the frivolity of sporting[193] are "empty of substance" and are therefore banned from

holding government positions, a conclusion that would make it difficult for subjects truly

to "have a voice in the choosing." The objective of voting is to choose a candidate from a

relatively diverse pool of candidates to represent one's own interests; if men who enjoy

"sports" are banned from running, they would not find a candidate who represents their

interests in sporting. Thus, those who experience the type of discrimination of which

Winstanley approves would have limited free will, simply because they are either barred

from participating in government or their participation is impeded—both as a

---

[193] The *OED* defines "sport" as an activity "[t]o amuse, divert, or entertain oneself; to take one's pleasure, have a pleasant or leisurely time." Similar entries on "sport" refer to it as a "frivolous" way to spend one's time. Winstanley's arguments in *Freedom* suggest the author may take issue with the notion of "leisurely time" because he believes idle bodies lead to quarrels that could lead to renewed civil war (*LF* 289). Interestingly, *The Book of Sports*, first issued by James I, and added to later by Charles I, was meant to sanction an appropriate day for sports—Sunday. Charles I wrote that upon returning from Scotland, he "found that his Subjects were debarred from Lawful Recreations upon *Sundays*," insisting that "these Times were taken from them, the meaner Sort, who labour hard all the Week." He concluded that sports were necessary to "refresh their Spirits" (2). In 1643, the "Lords and Commons in Parliament" ordered that *The Book of Sports* be burned, but the anonymous statement issued after this order did not state the reason for burning the book. Winstanley criticizes sport, yet Christopher Hill explains that Winstanley "thought it rational to retain one day in seven as a day of rest for men and beasts," though his intention was that people would spend their time in "parish fellowship and for education" ("Introduction" 56).

representative and a voter.[194] Such an approach to representational government

contradicts classifications of Winstanley's social structure as a popular sovereignty; the

"popular" component of the concept cannot exclude voters or electors whom one man

deems unworthy, because otherwise the elected government becomes the very thing it

was designed to avoid: a uniform, non-representational regime. Prior to the civil wars,

elected officials had to be landowners, but Winstanley's proposed solution to the power

imbalance caused by an exclusive body of elected officials simply replaces landowners

with commune members with 'acceptable' morals and values, excluding former nobility

and gentry who refuse to conform to the ideology and practices of Winstanley's social

model.

Winstanley's rhetoric can be highly exclusive in that it bars non-compliant

English people from actively engaging in their own communities. The division of

compliant people from non-compliant people is further entrenched by Winstanley's

mission to establish "Rules . . . for every action a man can do" (*LF* 288). This level of

state intervention reinforces social division, because there are countless ways that diverse

people could qualify something as "good" or "bad." When a subjective stance of good

and bad is enshrined in the law, it gives license to individual citizens to mistreat and

oppress those who are viewed as non-compliant. It is difficult to imagine how such a

system could create a unified state when its very structure is predicated on one-sided

interpretation and divisive ideology. Only when people are truly united behind a single

---

[194] By choosing who is allowed to run for office, electors are left to vote only for those who represent the values of Winstanley's social philosophy. Similar to "show trials" that present a veneer of justice, Winstanley's elections perform the motions of democratic election but fail in trying.

vision can that society prosper as a community of one heart and one mind (*TLS* 80); the

efficacy of total unity requires that it be all-encompassing and openly embraced by all.

Instead, Winstanley's notion of total unity is the product of a single mind—his own.

**Total Unity and Oppression**

Winstanley's philosophy of unity, as it turns out, presents as oppressive with respect to

non-compliant people. Had Winstanley's plan for national social reform been accepted

and implemented, the English people would have been forcibly integrated into a

homogeneous social space. Making matters worse, Winstanley's plan takes for granted

that those who choose not to join his community may remain on their estates *until they*

*are ready* to comply with his philosophy of unity and common preservation. The belief

that everyone will choose to join his commune is unrealistic. For Winstanley, total

compliance is inevitable—and whether that path is short or convoluted, compliance is the

end-goal. Winstanley explains that,

> Yet I desire, That the *Commonwealths* Land, which is the ancient Commons and
> waste Land, and the Lands newly got in, by the Armies Victories, out of the
> oppressors hands, as Parks, Forests, Chases, and the like, may be set free to all
> that have lent assistance, either of person or purse, to obtain it; and to all that are
> willing to come in to the practice of this Government, and be obedient to the Laws
> thereof: And for others, who are not willing, let them stay in the way of buying
> and selling, which is the Law of the Conqueror, till they be willing. (*LF* 290)

There are serious implications to such a statement. Freeing the land benefits the lower-

class English people, while isolating the nobility, gentry, and merchants who refuse to

join Winstanley's social revolution. While Winstanley does not condone violence as a

means to achieve one's will (Webb 583), exiling non-compliant upper- and middle-class

English people is akin to the abuse of power for which Winstanley criticizes the

monarchy. Forced conformity may not be a direct physical assault, but the abuse of power still remains problematic. Furthermore, landowners who rejected common preservation would be left to farm their own lands, care for their livestock, harvest their crops, prepare meals, care for their properties, and raise their children, among many other things. While there is nothing unjust about expecting people to care for themselves, the reality of the situation would likely have been catastrophic—not on the grounds that landowners deserve labourers to tend to their every need, but because the expectation that landowners would somehow develop the required skills to manage an estate and the daily lives of its occupants is unrealistic.

Moreover, Winstanley's comment, "until" the nobility chooses to join, indicates that he recognizes that the nobility's preservation required them to be part of a community; "until" suggests that Winstanley knew that people would eventually join of necessity—and this appears to violate free will because it is coerced. What is intriguing about this violation of free will is that Winstanley himself is not violating the free will of landowners; rather, it is the social structure that violates free will. In other words, there is no social actor or embodied agency violating the free will of landowners. Labourers are not indebted to landowners, and they must be able to prioritize their own self-preservation, so—in theory—by their joining Winstanley's commune and leaving landowners to fend for themselves in the short term (only to join the commune of necessity), landowners' free will is not violated by anyone in particular. In reality, labourers in seventeenth-century England held tremendous, possibly unrealized, power; by leaving their posts as labourers, the quality of the life for nobility and gentry would

come crashing down.[195] The hierarchy would collapse, leaving all its social agents on the same level. On a logistical level, free will in Winstanley's commune is incredibly intricate, because arguments can be made that his social space violates free will while enabling self and common preservation.

Having broken down the logistical components of free will and self-preservation in Winstanley's ideal social space, I now return to the viability of this space— emphasizing that the sustainability of a cohesive social space requires the majority of the population to accept the social structure as valid. Without general acceptance (or in a perfectly homogeneous space, total acceptance), there would be internal friction between those who accept the system and those who reject it. Just as labourers faced an unfair negotiation of choice when having to choose between death or enslavement, landowners who relied heavily on low-paid labourers would be forced to choose between life or death for their basic needs—like food, clothing, shelter, and transportation.[196] The problem, however, is that landowners would be manipulated by undesirable circumstances, whereas labourers faced an unfair negotiation of choice (i.e., life or death) at the hands of landowners. While the free will of both parties may be compromised, landowners are not forced by a social agent to join the commune—almost as if there is a level of passive coercion that does not require an agential body to manipulate landowners; labourers, on

---

[195] This may be reminiscent of the attitude of dissidents under Tudor rule. Richard Cust explains that the Tudor monarchs "cultivated" the belief that "rebellion always failed" (64).

[196] When I use the term, "unfair negotiation of choice," I am not suggesting that landowners having to care for themselves or join the commune is morally unfair or wrong; rather an unfair choice is when one is presented with two undesirable options and is forced to choose the lesser of two evils. The element of choice always exists, but the presentation of choices can be considered unfair in this sense.

the other hand, were coerced into low-paying jobs by wealthy landowners who willfully exploited their destitution and status.

Had Winstanley's commune succeeded and landowners been integrated into the commune, the social space would—in theory—be united because all members chose to join; however, forced unity through an unfair negotiation of choice is ephemeral and would have led to sustainability issues. Winstanley may have recognized that sustaining this type of society would be challenging, because self-interest can never be fully vanquished. Winstanley's system of punishment is emblematic of the problems he believed would occur:

> if this Offender run away [from] that [County] to another, and so both disobey the Peace-makers command, and break his own promise of appearance; then shall the Souldiers be sent forth into all places to search for him, and if they catch him, they should bring him before the Judge, who shall pronounce sentence of death upon him without mercy. (*LF* 334)

If such severe methods are necessary to maintain unity and order, then we cannot help but question how effective Winstanley's social philosophy is to begin with. Winstanley's ideal society adopted these violent methods to maintain control over the people. But if his system were truly effective in its promise of equality, freedom, and unity, he would not require such punitive measures; in the context above, non-compliance is met with a death sentence, but what is frightening is that the death sentence would be applied to a situation where the punishment far exceeds the severity of the crime. Herein lies one notable contradiction in Winstanley's social philosophy: he rejects violent social revolution as a means to *obtain* power, yet consents to the use of violence to *maintain* unity, which is

ironically harsh for someone who openly disdains Machiavellianism and attributes harsh

corporeal punishment to the monarchy.

Not only does Winstanley's social philosophy condone state violence to control

its non-compliant citizens, it also attempts to control what people learn and believe. As I

mentioned earlier, there is no place for "useless" knowledge that does not advance the

economic goals of the collective. For Winstanley, free thought and imagination lead to

"fears, doubts, troubles, evil surmisings, and grudges" (*FB* 221), in turn destabilizing

society. "That selfish imaginary power within you is the power of darkness, the father of

lies, the deceiver, the destroyer, and the serpent that twists about everything within your

self " (*FB* 221), writes Winstanley, whose distrust of imagination appears to represent his

own beliefs about the causes of civil war.[197] Unity, however, is only genuine when it is a

choice; by controlling what and how people think, Winstanley appears to have hoped to

manipulate people into uniting through the shared fear of further civil war. Winstanley

writes extensively on knowledge and its relationship to power, noting that,

> when a studying imagination comes into man, which is the devil, for it is the
> cause of all evil, and sorrows in the world; that is he (GOD) who puts out the eyes
> of mans Knowledg, and tells him, he must beleeve what others have writ or
> spoke, and must not trust to his own experience: And when this bewitching fancy
> sits in the chair of Government, there is nothing but saying and unsaying,
> forwardness, covetousness, fears, confused thoughts, and unsatisfied doubtings,
> all the days of that mans reign in the heart. (*LF* 349)

While it is clear that Winstanley's unshakeable devotion to common preservation and

freedom is what informs his view that the imagination is from the devil and therefore the

---

[197] Imagination has no utility-function. By Winstanley's logic, it produces ideas that are detached from economic production, thereby promoting idleness.

root of all evil, his will to establish a division between "good" knowledge and "bad" knowledge speaks, once more, to the subjectivity—and thus, self-interest—inherent in his social philosophy. Winstanley justifies his position on good and bad knowledge further, commenting that "if Common Freedom be found out, and ease the oppressed, it prevents murmurings and quarells, and establishes Universal Peace in the Earth" (*LF* 304). For Winstanley, imagination can generate new ideas about how society should be structured, or how people could be controlled and oppressed, so his solution is to eradicate it. Compliance, in Winstanley's ideal society, is obtained through the control of information, the limitation of available knowledge, the demonization of "bad" knowledge, and fear-mongering. If knowledge that is "bad" is legislated away, then many law-abiding people would accept that imagination and free thinking are in fact dangerous. Homogenizing knowledge through the use of fear tactics would not establish unity in the way Winstanley wished; instead, it would create a social space in which oppressive tactics are mobilized by the state against the people to control their thoughts and behaviours. Winstanley makes the mistake of believing that there is only one truth—and that is *his* perception of truth.

Winstanley's space-making practices attempt to impose national unity on a divided population; he sought to achieve total unity and unquestioning compliance with the ideological system presented in *Freedom*. Yet, despite his attempts to homogenize the social space of England, Winstanley fails to conceptualize a solution to self-interest, and this oversight would have completely undercut his altruistic goals of economic equality and freedom to profit from the fruits of the land that he believes is a birthright for all (*LF*

306). Instead of persuading the English people to weigh their self-interest against the needs of others—as Traherne does in *Ethicks*—Winstanley's proposal for social reform removes the element of free choice, and thus free will; instead of teaching readers the benefits of collective interest, he seeks to force the concept of common interest, policing and punishing those who fail to conform. *Freedom* seeks not to encourage readers to question how their decisions affect the wellbeing of others; rather, it suggests that those who do not prioritize collective interest over self-interest should be publicly humiliated— or even executed:

> He or she who calls the Earth his, and not his brothers, shall be set upon a stool, with those words written in his forehead, before all the Congregation; and afterwards be made a servant for twelve moneths under the taskmaster; If he quarrel, or seek by secret perswation, or open rising in arms, to set up such a Kingly propriety, he shall be put to death. (*LF* 383)

Winstanley advocates for the public denigration of self-interested individuals and, if they continue to fail at prioritizing the common good, he argues that servitude for a period of one year should follow. By forcing non-compliant people into servitude, Winstanley adopts the oppressor's practices of enslavement; he punishes non-compliance by inflicting as punishment the unfair tactics he fought to abolish. Winstanley states that slavery is "brought in" by the "kingly conquerors" (*LF* 303), yet he reproduces this form of oppression in his proposed punishments of the people in his ideal social space. Because no one in Winstanley's idealized commune is paid for their labour, slavery is simply a means of embarrassing the guilty party by subordinating them to another community member. Such a gesture detracts from total equality, because it clearly identifies the subordinate party as inferior to compliant commune members. The

punishment is psychosocial because Winstanley's commune would have abolished social

hierarchy, meaning that one person could be no lower than another; yet, despite this, the

person being punished is treated as 'less than,' a practice that would generate both

psychological and social consequences that would destabilize the social structure. If, after

completing a term of forced labour, the individual remains quarrelsome and opposed to

common preservation, then he or she will be put to death. It is difficult to tell if

Winstanley was aware of the irony that his legal system, in attempting to unseat the

oppressor, uses the oppressor's tools or methods, thereby perpetuating systematic

oppression; the only difference is that landowners would be the most likely targets of

oppression when, historically, they were socially positioned as oppressors.

Self-interest and self-preservation are inseparable in an historically hierarchical

society in which standards for self-preservation depend on one's social position. A

society in which some people hold social and political power while others do not makes it

difficult for the powerless to pursue self-preservation and fulfill their own interests. In

post-civil war England, self-preservation was made nearly impossible for the lower

classes, thus making the pursuit of their own interests virtually impossible. Winstanley

chastises the wealthy, whose selfishness hinders the ability of the poor to pursue self-

preservation in a hierarchical society:

> We are willing to declare our condition to you, and to all that have the treasury of
> the earth locked up in your bags, chests, and barns, and will offer up nothing to
> this public treasury; but will rather see your fellow-creatures starve for want of
> bread, that have an equal right to it with yourselves by the law of creation. But
> this by the way we only declare to you and to all that follow the subtle art of
> buying and selling the earth with her fruits, merely to get the treasury thereof into

their hands, to lock it up from them to whom it belongs. (*Poor Oppressed* 102-103)

Winstanley's commentary on the selfishness of the wealthy is apt, but this is where his argument for common preservation enters a logical grey area. It goes without saying that labourers should not be starved to death in a society of plenitude hoarded by the wealthy. Winstanley advocates for the basic human right to self-preservation, and there is no valid ethical argument with which to counter this point—especially in a Christian society that, from a faith-based perspective, should value the wellbeing and livelihood of all members, not just the wealthy. The problem with Winstanley's plea, however, is that collectivism regulated and sustained through force would not have been an effective, long-term solution. The logic behind Winstanley's standpoint is irrefutable when we look at economic inequality through the lens of human welfare. Arguably, however, the nobility and gentry who would have opposed common preservation may have been less concerned about human welfare if they believed that a social hierarchy that reflects the Great Chain of Being was a valid structure with which to order people according to their perceived 'worth.'

Given that landowners profited off the earth while labourers died from starvation, it follows that, in a hierarchical society, the ability to safeguard one's right to self-preservation changes according to one's social status. Landowners had the means to assert and fulfill their rights to self-preservation, but the lower classes had limited agency and ability to self-preserve simply because they could not access the same essential resources—i.e., food, clothing, and shelter—as landowners. What Winstanley offers in *Freedom*—i.e., common preservation—would likely have failed to entice financially

prosperous English people to surrender certain freedoms and luxuries, because the deal

he offers would worsen their state of being rather than improve it which is, again,

contrary to the principles of natural law. As Aquinas explains, "The will can tend to

nothing except under the aspect of good. But because good is of many kinds, for this

reason the will is not of necessity determined to one" (550); thus, what is "good" to

Winstanley may not be perceived as "good" to nobility, meaning that the likelihood of

nobility perceiving commune living as "good" is low, especially for people who view

themselves as "masters" of labourers.

The fatal flaw of *Freedom* is that it establishes a social structure to enclose and

represent all English people, but it is founded upon the radical beliefs and perspective of

one man, Winstanley, whose declaratives, like "When the Earth was first bought and

sold, many gave no consent" (*LF* 287), are presented as universal truths and precedents

for a communistic society.[198] Instead of proposing a compromise by which all parties

would agree to limit some freedoms in return for certain rights, Winstanley drafts an

ultimatum—one that would have had to be maintained through the constant use of force.

Winstanley refers to the "golden rule"—do unto others as you would have done unto

you—but it seems that in the effort to eliminate economic equality in a campaign for

national social reform, Winstanley simply reverses the imbalance of power, licensing the

once-poor to oppress the once-wealthy.

---

[198] Winstanley is referring to the Norman Invasion. As I have discussed earlier, Winstanley makes a rhetorically compelling argument about the false premises underlying monarchic authority and landownership, namely that the Normans stole the land from the people. Winstanley may be correct, but I do think he oversimplifies an historical event in 1066 to establish credibility for his argument.

**Conclusion**

Winstanley's *Freedom* is relatively forward-thinking and certainly well-intended; though

his social system would have, in many ways, provided labourers a real chance at self-

preservation, examining his space-making practices and the potentially negative

implications is also incumbent upon us. Not questioning the implications of a proposed

social structure, regardless of how good it appears, would be negligent, because even

well-intended systems can cause harm. While it is easy to make valid arguments both for

and against Winstanley's social space, my treatment of *Freedom* has remained primarily

concerned with viability and sustainability. "His communism," writes Sabine,

> was an effort to envisage a different kind of social system. His argument is that
> the common land is communally owned. Ideally his plan implied that land and all
> the means of production should be nationalized, and this is certainly the end he
> looked forward to, though he was opposed to the violent expropriation of private
> owners. The 'creation-right' to subsistence, therefore, was a communal and not an
> individual right. Accordingly, Winstanley could not possibly identify equity with
> individual liberty. (55)

While there is no reason to disbelieve Winstanley's dedication to non-violent social

reform, it is difficult to ignore the fact that, had his social system been implemented, it

would most surely have led to further violence and oppression; though he would protect

self-preservation for all, he would also curtail the free will of part of the population. The

homogeneity of Winstanley's ideal social space would have prioritized common

preservation and economic equality; however, as Sabine rightly suggests, Winstanley's

alternative to monarchic tyranny would have forbidden the co-existence of equality and

individual liberty. By creating space only for common preservation, Winstanley severely

impedes the free will of those who reject his social philosophy.

Winstanley states openly that free will is God-given in several of his social tracts. In *Freedom*, he identifies free will as a birthright of all of Adam's descendants (*LF* 315); he also writes that "the earth was not made for a few, but for whole mankind" (*AE* 110); however, his justification for asserting that God bequeathed free will to all humankind is that "God is no respecter of persons," meaning that Winstanley believed that one's social status was irrelevant in the exercise of free will (110). Furthermore, his assertion of free will as God-given is written with economic inequality in mind—"freedom in the common earth is the poor's right by the law of Creation and equity of the Scriptures" (110). While Winstanley agrees that free will is the right of humankind, his focus is on maximizing the free will of the poor through access to the land; thus, it is logical to assume that the violation of the free will of the wealthy is an unfortunate but unintended consequence of Winstanley's progressive vision to eliminate economic inequality.

Returning to the issue of viability, it becomes clear that the homogeneous social model is bound to fail; social homogeneity implies unity and conformity, but as soon as one non-compliant person is involved, freedom, common preservation, and unity are jeopardized. Winstanley writes, "wheresoever there is a people thus united by common community of livelihood into oneness, it will become the strongest land in the world" (*TLS* 89); this affirmation of collective strength concurrently reveals that social homogeneity—or oneness—is threatened by the presence of diversity, difference, and self-interest. "Oneness" is immediately broken when one person questions the philosophy of the commune. In *Freedom*, Winstanley explains that,

> He who endevors to stir up contention among neighbors, by tale-bearing or false reports, shall the first time be reproved openly by the Overseers among all the people: the second time shall be whiped: the third time shall be a servant under the Taskmaster for three Months: and if he continues, he shall be a servant for ever, and lose his Freedom in the Commonwealth. (*LF* 380)

Winstanley is acutely aware that oneness necessitates total unity—that every person must be aligned behind the goal of common preservation and self-denial. Those who deviate from this sort of groupthink are to be stripped of their power by the state; their agency is removed and they are enslaved for the rest of their lives. Winstanley states that they will become "a servant forever," but in reality, the non-compliant person is condemned to a lifetime of slavery and an oppressed will—which is precisely what Winstanley has fought against.

Winstanley's plan for national social reform may have been a good one if *all* citizens could elect to join; coercion notwithstanding, Winstanley's vision for the ideal, cohesive social space articulates the author's keen understanding of the power dynamics of inequality. Moreover, the plan for governing his social space also underscores his awareness of human corruption and sin. In crafting a national space that would function like a closed circuit with interconnected parts, Winstanley spreads political power across that network of people, ensuring that if one governing official deviates from Winstanley's established government the nation will not fall into civil war. The image of a closed-circuit network is a helpful way of understanding the potential dispersal of power in his commune. First, if one 'part' (i.e., a governing official) were to 'malfunction,' it could be replaced quickly and easily without disrupting the entire network; second, Winstanley only allows elected officials to possess political power for one year, at which point they

are replaced by newly elected officials. In the closed-circuit network, the transition of

power (i.e., replacement of its parts) is smooth and does not interrupt the cohesivity of the

network. The genius of this interconnected body, however, is idealistic: it is perfect in

theory, but in practice the likelihood that England would become a united commune of

people with the same goals, interests, beliefs, and values, is negligible. In theory,

Winstanley creates a self-regulating system that maintains internal harmony through total

unity; but, in practice, a closed system whose internal balance relies on total unity and

complicity is bound to fail, simply because it does not have the agility or flexibility to

respond to change and disruption.

What we see in *Freedom* is a blueprint for uncompromising oneness. Difference

and diversity—or the will to preserve one's own interests over common interest—are a

form of deviance that Winstanley's plan for national social reform aims to eradicate.

While unity is viewed as having a positive connotation, this connotation is altered when

we contemplate the means by which unity is achieved and sustained. Winstanley

advances a homogeneous social structure that could be of "one heart and one mind" only

when all members of society are compliant; yet, when self-interest is factored into the

equation, division and plurality are inevitable. Homogeneous space—in the context of the

spatial reformation—is perfect, for it is created by God. As we see in Cavendish's

conception of Nature, it is homogeneous, and its perfection ensures that all bodies move

harmoniously as an aggregate—a unified body of parts that choose unity because it is in

their best interests; but this perfection cannot be attained when one or more citizens

believe their best interests are served in some other way. Nature's parts choose common

interest because that choice safeguards their self-preservation, but imperfect human beings whose minds are corrupted by the desire for material gain are unlikely to believe that their interests are best served in a society that rejects materialism and status. Furthermore, the literary production of space cannot produce homogeneous space to structure human societies, because the sinful nature of the human mind cannot comprehend, much less create perfection. Interestingly, Winstanley's belief that God— i.e., Reason—infuses all of creation coincides with the concept of perfect homogeneous space. A social space infused with Reason differs from Nature and the inherent Reason of its parts in that, in human societies, social institutions—like government, monarchy, or other institutional facts like social hierarchy—valuate human life differently according to the standards dictated by a Fallen world in which sin is prevalent. Moreover, there is no single definition of "Reason" because it is a subjectively defined term based on one person's evaluation of God's presence in the world. Unfortunately, Winstanley's social structure is inevitably unviable; even its very initiation is problematic because, by taking away the level of free will that landowners took for granted, he would have provoked resentment, anger, and resistance. While the provocation of emotion in others is not Winstanley's burden to bear, the reality is that resentful people are unlikely to band together in the spirit of communism, especially because their resentment stems from their loss of material excess and social status. In a society that has historically accepted the Great Chain of Being, those located at the top of the social hierarchy view their status and corresponding wealth as part of their identity. To take that away—however valid

Winstanley's argument is—could be viewed as stripping the nobility of their identities and perceived importance.

On a national level, social homogenization would have led to limitations on free will and self-determination; it would have truncated free speech and free thought, and it would have forced compliance which, when not freely chosen, is an unfair negotiation of choice and is therefore oppressive. In the Introduction to this thesis, I explained that homogeneity can also describe an ideology or frame of mind. In Winstanley's case, his theoretical social space would homogenize people, making them into a uniform body. In theory, Winstanley's plan seems like an eloquent solution to economic inequality, but had his social structure been *applied* to the pre-existing social space, it would encounter extreme resistance, for human beings have different needs and interests and are not uniform. To homogenize or forcefully unify a body of people does not establish a strong foundation for a cohesive social space, because being forced to believe something that is only true to some generates resentment and resistance; it is a foundation structured on sand, not rock. Thus, human societies resist spatial homogenization. Winstanley's *Freedom* is homogeneous in theory, but divided and heterogeneous in practice.

## Conclusion

The title of this dissertation, *This Body is Without a Head*, is meant to illuminate the fractured, or divided, social space in which Cavendish, Traherne, and Winstanley were writing. Charles I, the "head" of the English people until the regicide may have done little good for the body he governed; yet, despite the dissolution of the monarchy and nobility during the Interregnum, Charles II was welcomed back to England in 1660 as the head of state. Social instability existed during Charles I's reign, but also during the Interregnum and Restoration periods, suggesting that the head of state was not the sole root of England's social problems. The monarch, or any head of state for that matter, occupies a transient position like "King" or "Lord Protector," but even when one ruler succeeds another, the same social problems exist, because they are tied to larger, divisive issues like religion, governance, laws, and economics—among other things. It is the conditions created by social hierarchy that influence the attitudes of space-makers like Cavendish, Traherne, and Winstanley. Cavendish wrote *Worlds Olio* during the Interregnum, a period in which she and her husband could not access their estates or finances; the social hierarchy that underwrote her status as Duchess of Newcastle was reconfigured, though only temporarily, leaving her to question how the social space of England could be restored to its earlier state—one in which the nobility held tremendous power. Winstanley also wrote *Law of Freedom* during the Interregnum, though his plan was not to restore order, but rather to *reorder* society in its entirety. Traherne, on the other hand, wrote *Christian Ethics* during the reign of Charles II; fighting against the cynicism of Hobbesian politics and the king's lack of interest in modelling what Traherne

would have viewed as Christ-like behaviour, Traherne sought to restore social order and cohesion by exhorting readers to love one another and in doing so, be rewarded with eternal life. The work of these three authors has something important in common: each aims to shape or reconfigure the structure of society so as to change how the English people relate to one another.[199] The spaces created by these authors indicate the authors believed that, if human relations could be influenced in such a way as to achieve order, harmony, or unity, then social cohesion—or stability—would follow. Likewise, each author expresses a desire for peace and social cohesivity, although the ways they define these terms and propose achieving these goals differ.

This dissertation was born of my interest in natural philosophy. My original intent was not to focus on social space, but Sauter's *Spatial Reformation* sparked my interest in space-making, social structures, and human relationships. This newfound interest, however, did not build off of Sauter's findings; rather, Sauter's argument served as a point of departure—moving away from science and towards the social realm of post-civil war England. Sauter's anthropological study does focus on relationships—but not human-to-human interactions, only humanity's relationship to the development of material culture. The more time I spent working with Cavendish, Traherne, and Winstanley, the more I realized that Sauter's anthropological study was missing something critical: humanmade spaces—not in art or through globemaking, but actual spaces that could be populated and shaped by social actors. Sauter's focus on the

---

[199] As I will discuss shortly, Traherne focused more on encouraging people to regulate their own social behaviour, rather than establishing an ideal social structure—although it is clear in *Ethicks* that Traherne is a monarchist.

intellectual aspects of geometry and homogeneous space fails to address the anthropological significance of social relationships, free will, self-interest, and social cohesion in the development of western culture. What was missing from Sauter's study was how humanmade social spaces and the structures designed to govern human interactions in fact *resist* his claim that homogeneous space is *the only* type of space.[200] When examining the socially oriented texts of Cavendish, Traherne, and Winstanley— three authors with notably diverse views on social structure—it becomes clear that homogeneous space cannot account for humanmade social spaces, which are inherently fragmented by disagreement, diverse perspectives and ideologies, and opposing political allegiances. Through the process of space-making, a contemporary term I borrow from Sauter, Cavendish, Traherne, and Winstanley provide evidence to refute the verity of all-encompassing homogeneous space. Social spaces have structures to influence, direct, and control human interactions; more to the point, when space-makers visualized the social space for human co-existence, they conceptualized it as either necessarily divided or forcefully unified. The three spaces discussed in this dissertation reflect diverse views on social cohesion and the means by which it should be achieved.

---

[200] Sauter's claim, which we also see in Koyré's earlier study, is that all space is conceptualized as uniform, homogeneous, and infinite. Moreover, Sauter conducts an examination of culture but, for the most part, leaves out human-to-human relationships, thereby necessitating a deeper analysis of humanmade social spaces. Sauter's cultural analysis rests solely on evidence that *supports* his claim for the universality of homogeneous space; he does not address issues that refute the claim that all space is homogeneous. Furthermore, Sauter's argument that the spatial reformation lasted for 500 years (1350-1850) destabilizes his argument, simply because this was a historical period of rapid intellectual change; differences in how people understood the structure of the heavens, the potential infinitude of space, the infinite division of geometric points, religious reform and sectarianism, and burgeoning political philosophy, for example, change tremendously even between 1500 and 1660, weakening his claim for homogeneity's supremacy.

I have argued that Cavendish, Traherne, and Winstanley conceptualized social spaces that were structured to achieve social cohesion amidst the chaos of post-civil war England. These abstract, theoretical spaces are not utopias, but are instead articulations of what the authors viewed as applicable solutions to the real-life problems that contributed to social decay and instability; these authors' social spaces are not created in some unknown land but are instead proposed as alternatives to England's social structure following the civil wars. Furthermore, I have argued that space-making is a self-justified, subjective process that represents the interests of the space-maker—and these interests are attached to the social position and perspectives of the space-maker. By contrasting the socially oriented writing of Cavendish, Traherne, and Winstanley, I examine the ways that humanmade social spaces resist homogeneity, thereby calling into question the central premise of the spatial reformation: that *all space* was understood as uniform and homogeneous. After all, if space is infinite and homogeneous, then there can be no defined spaces outside of this uniform space; social spaces are divided and heterogeneous and, while the *theoretical* space of geometry may be understood as infinite and homogeneous, it cannot account for the spaces of *reality*—those that are occupied and structured by inherently sinful human beings.[201]

Returning to the primary literature, I will now draw some concluding remarks on how the "case studies" on space-making in the works of Cavendish, Traherne, and

---

[201] When I use "reality" to describe social space, I recognize a contradiction exists. Cavendish, Traherne, and Winstanley create social spaces that are themselves theoretical, but the distinction I wish to make is that their spaces were designed for "real life" application, whereas the homogeneous space of geometry has no immediate application to "real life" societies and the structures that influence human interactions.

Winstanley refute the argument for homogeneous space. Beginning with Cavendish, we see a strong desire for social order in *Worlds Olio*, a conceptual social space created by Cavendish to restore social cohesion in post-civil war England; however, Cavendish aims to achieve order by truncating the free will of the lower classes. When the free will of those at the bottom of the social hierarchy is diminished, then—in theory—these "uneducated" people cannot create havoc, for they are tethered to their social station. In Cavendish's eyes, commoners fulfill their basic duties as cogs in the economic wheel, leaving the nobility to live in a state of heightened freedom. Cavendish's classification and restriction of people to set positions in the social hierarchy is self-perpetuating, for the effect of the nobility's unimpeded free will is that the lower classes continue to experience economic inequality, oppression, and limited free will; likewise, systemic oppression and inequality make it virtually impossible for impoverished people to pose a threat to the nobility's place at the top of the hierarchy, simply because they do not have the resources to mobilize resistance (nor could they likely afford to stop working). Cavendish, though, does not present a wholly new social structure; in essence, she advocates for the return of the monarchy—the "head" of England's body, but with stricter rules designed to safeguard social hierarchy from future civil unrest. For Traherne and Winstanley, I discuss the viability of their social structures, yet for Cavendish viability is a non-issue; monarchic rule in England had been the norm for centuries prior and Cavendish sought to re-establish and strengthen that status quo. As history indicates, monarchies are indeed viable systems, though that does not mean that monarchies benefit all people; but, for Cavendish, the monarchic structure made her life more stable. What is

unique about Cavendish's *Olio* is that it discusses issues such as marriage, child rearing, education, gender roles, predestined social roles and personality traits, and knowledge. We see in *Olio* that Cavendish views the family unit as an essential building block of social cohesion—and, despite the vast differences in their social structures, we see the same sentiment in Winstanley's *Freedom*.

In her attempt to pigeonhole people into certain 'spaces' on the social hierarchy, Cavendish conceptualizes a social space that fosters divisiveness, while also revealing something interesting about free will and heterogeneous space: the stratification of Cavendish's social structure makes it heterogeneous but inegalitarian, yet heterogeneity in society is imperative for free choice and the choice to do otherwise—as I discussed in my Introduction with reference to Aquinas. While Sauter claims that homogeneous space is emancipatory, Jennifer Nelson argues that the multitude of perspectives that lead to spatial fragmentation are a precursor, indeed are integral to free will (131); in other words, spatial fragmentation (an aggregate of heterogeneous spaces) can connotate both good (e.g., free will) and bad (e.g., divisiveness that leads to civil war). The social hierarchy characteristic of a heterogeneous social space must exist in order that free will is a reality for social actors.[202] Sauter's claim that homogeneous space is emancipatory

---

[202] My conviction that heterogeneous social space is hierarchical is based on the existence of power dynamics, including economic capital, cultural capital, and social capital, though the basis of various social hierarchies may well differ. By definition, a heterogeneous social space is defined by difference; this could be difference in race, religion (or Christian sect), relational proximity to people who hold positions of power, gender, employment, etc. A social space is political. Distinctions like language, institutional facts, identity, materiality, status, and money—to name a few—mean that any heterogeneous social space is politically charged. We may not look at the spaces we occupy as hierarchical—possibly because this would feel uncomfortable—but human difference means there will always be power dynamics at play. When the arrangement of matter, including humans, occurs as a result of power dynamics that are inherent in human societies, heterogenous social spaces are bound to be hierarchical.

because it allows the human mind to see the world in a view that had historically been

reserved for God alone is highly theoretical; this all-encompassing theoretical space,

when applied to the "real world" of humanmade spaces, falls apart. Humanmade spaces

are structured to maintain peace and stability, but because these spaces are occupied by

human beings with diverse perspectives and worldviews, no single unified space can

emancipate all members of society while maintaining order. In other words, it is

impossible to accommodate the vast array of human needs, desires, and beliefs; the

nature of social space is therefore one of differentiation and division—but as Nelson

argues, differentiation need not connote something negative, for differentiation in

experience is what makes free will and choice possible. Difference in experience is

related to one's social position, meaning that some people will be more satisfied with a

given social structure than others; the conflict between Royalists and Parliamentarians

speaks to this difference in experience (not to mention the internal division of

Parliamentarians during the Interregnum). In Cavendish's *Olio*, difference tied to one's

social status also leads to the imbalance of free will, which has led me to conclude that

the degree to which one can exercise free will is contingent upon one's location in the

social space—or one's position in the social hierarchy. Consequently, scholars' efforts to

pinpoint a single definition of free will in Cavendish's corpus are sidetracked by spatially

contingent free will because, for Cavendish, there is no single definition of free will, nor

need there be. In *Olio*, we see that social cohesion is the result of a carefully

manufactured social structure; but this structure is not simply the mirror image of

monarchic structure, but rather a careful account of how the building blocks of society—

families, status, "breeding," employment, behaviour—come together to achieve cohesion and stability.

Traherne's *Ethicks* takes a different approach to social cohesion, focusing on harmonious interpersonal and spiritual relationships as the solution to socio-political chaos. Undoubtedly, Traherne is an idealist—and this quality sets him apart from Cavendish's more controlling approach to social cohesion. On the one hand, Traherne does not home in on economic issues, unlike Cavendish and Winstanley, who believe that human behaviour should be structured to ensure the success and longevity of England's economy. Traherne's non-economic approach to social cohesion, however, does not take into account the fact that economic capital causes inequality and thus shapes human behaviour, making his vision for society inclusive and loving, but difficult to achieve. So long as economic inequality exists, there will be personal gain for one at the cost of another's personal loss, and this undoubtedly influences human behaviour. For example, as I discuss in my third chapter on Winstanley, the pursuit of negative or selfish self-interest by the nobility tends to exploit labourers—and for this reason, Winstanley's social philosophy promotes not love, but total unity and conformity. By failing to address the negative and/or necessary behaviours that influence one's ability to make pro-social choices, Traherne's ideal social space, however innovative, becomes the 'white whale' of social reform. What I mean by this is that *Ethicks* operates on the assumption that all people have the time for self-reflection, meditation, and frequent prayer—but this is not realistic for the poor, who laboured endlessly only to remain impoverished. Although Traherne promotes equality in many ways, his plan for social reform is inequitable, for it

fails to recognize that not everyone enters the process of fruition from the same point of departure; some people would have more time to work through the process of fruition, while others would have very little time. The social space of *Ethicks* does not require institutional reform, nor does it require that the structures of the government, law, and social hierarchy change. Instead, these institutions could remain the same, and the change would be attitudinal and behavioural; Traherne's desired reciprocity, compassion, and dedication to spiritual betterment in members of society would naturally create cohesion between English people. Had even a small group of Traherne's readers adopted the philosophy espoused in *Ethicks*, the social space would have naturally become more cohesive; those who chose to self-regulate and consider the ways their actions affect others would make the social space more harmonious and cohesive. Traherne's plan can therefore be understood as potentially having a positive impact on English society with no negative consequences. Traherne's *Ethicks* presents a version of social cohesion that may not be achieved in the bigger picture, but its influence on behaviour at the individual level can only lead to positive outcomes. Each individual has the opportunity to mobilize the mind-space as a conduit that connects body and soul, and the material and immaterial worlds, meaning that, despite the improbability of total social reform, there can still be positive social change in a sort of grassroots fashion.

Traherne's approach to social cohesion incentivizes a brand of self-interest similar to Winstanley's, whereby the individual benefits from being kind and virtuous to members of their community. The interconnectedness of community members can be imagined as a network: one's behaviour affects the surrounding members, and these

members respond in some way that affects even more community members. This positive

self-interest, which Traherne calls "self-love," is like a wave that moves across the

interconnected body of people; the actions of a single person can have far-reaching

effects on others, even without that actor's intention. Nevertheless, self-love can become

corrupt. Traherne recognizes humankind's inherently sinful nature, and although he

devotes a large part of his treatise to discussion of spiritual fruition via positive

interpersonal relationships, he states early on in *Ethicks* that human beings cannot

traverse between the divine and worldly spaces. Traherne reasons that any breach of

divine space would detract from God's perfection and, thus, his infinitude; if God's

infinitude were depleted, he would no longer be infinite and eternity could no longer

exist.[203] Thus, Traherne's *Ethicks* shows readers that homogeneous space—the perfect

divine space—can co-exist alongside the heterogeneous space whose fragmentation is the

result of original sin. Sin divided the heavens from the earth, resulting in coinciding

spaces that could be traversed only through the imagination, or the soul.

In *Law of Freedom*, imagination is the seed that grows sedition. As I discussed in

the chapter on Winstanley, there is a "good" (i.e., pragmatic) and "bad" (i.e., academic)

type of knowledge. Winstanley's classification of knowledge is problematic because it

---

[203] This brings to mind Nietzsche's famous line: "God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him" (181). Nietzsche's comment is often taken out of context, when in fact he was talking about this in the context of heliocentrism and the infinite void to which Pascal refers. Nietzsche writes, "'Where has God gone?' he cried. 'I shall tell you. We have killed him—you and I. We are his murderers. But how have we done this? How were we able to drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What did we do when we unchained the earth from its sun? Whither is it moving now? Whither are we moving now? Away from all suns? Are we not perpetually falling? Backward, sideward, forward, in all directions? Is there any up or down left? Are we not straying as through an infinite nothing? Do we not feel the breath of empty space?'" (181). See also Sauter (196-197).

suggests that, in his ideal social space, all human beings would be restricted to "knowing" and relating to the world in one way alone; any other types of knowledge would be punished, which is oppressive. Winstanley's most mature social tract seeks economic equality, moving to abolish social hierarchy, private landownership, and the unequal treatment of persons based on their social status. Winstanley's ideal social space can be understood as an *attempt* to homogenize English society, making all citizens equal. In other words, Winstanley presents a social structure that would, in theory, make all human matter the same—uniform. It is a novel idea for the period and historical context of England, but in his attempt to emancipate all English people from an unbalanced socio-economic structure, Winstanley runs the risk of creating an alternative to monarchic tyranny that could have been as oppressive as its predecessor. Enforced sameness between human beings is a violation of free will. Free will is also severely limited because non-conformity is viewed as a danger to social cohesion, hence Winstanley's rationale for acceptable knowledge only. By coercing some people to set aside self-interest in favour of common interest, Winstanley would have been stripping non-compliant people of their free will; at the same time, he would be guaranteeing that all English people would have the same access to food, shelter, and the other necessities of life, so that all members could thrive equally in a collective setting. While citizens could have acted freely within the constructs of Winstanley's society, they could do so only within the confines of a strict regulatory system. Winstanley's *Freedom* insists that all people are God's creatures, and no one has the right to oppress others—an argument that anticipates Locke's and Algernon Sidney's views on natural law; however, the blind spot

in *Freedom* is that could have led to renewed civil war because Winstanley's social structure is predicated on the belief that all people will eventually choose to join his commune on the grounds of its merit. Had his social space been adopted, it is unlikely that landowners, especially nobility with excessive material possessions, wealth, and status, would have agreed with the commune's merit, as I have discussed in the chapter on *Freedom*; instead, it would likely have been a coerced choice that would have violated the free will of landowners, though concurrently securing their self-preservation. Ultimately, Winstanley's commune would have been unsustainable, because forced unity requires continuous enforcement, making total uniformity difficult to sustain.

What is interesting is that Cavendish and Winstanley create social structures that are polar opposites, yet they are so intent on achieving total order (Cavendish) and total unity (Winstanley) that they would both severely limit the free will of the people. In Cavendish's case the free will of the lower classes is most limited, whereas in Winstanley's case the free will of the upper classes is most violated. Traherne takes a different approach to free will; in fact, *Ethicks* in no way attempts to regulate the free will of others, but instead attempts to teach people the value of *self-regulation*.

I have examined the role of perspective in space-making, showing that the way one experiences the world determines how one develops beliefs about what is fair, just, and cohesive. Specifically, I have discussed the impact that different social structures would have on human behaviour, especially with respect to free will, self-preservation, self-interest, and economic inequality. I have examined not how human relationships and space-making generate knowledge, but instead how space-making had the potential to

generate conditions and practices that could affect the ways that social actors related to one another—both positively and negatively. Indeed, these conditions and practices contribute valuable insights into the cultural history of the west, but my primary concern is not the insights they produce but rather the *conditions* from which these insights are born, specifically in contexts such as social and intellectual movements like millenarianism, civil war and regicide, private land ownership and labour, as well as science, geometry, calculus, and the birth of modern physics. Cavendish's, Traherne's, and Winstanley's social tracts have been the focal point of my inquiry into the mechanics of social structure; however, *Worlds Olio*, *Christian Ethicks*, and *Law of Freedom* have yet to be recognized as examples of how context-dependent human behaviour is not geometric, nor is it measurable, objectively rational, or orderly. A diverse body of human beings in a given social space cannot be homogenized, nor can it be uniform. At the end of the day, social space is fragmented and divided because social actors hold unique perspectives that shape how they relate to other people. The diversity in perspectives is an important part of free will, but it also means that there can never be a perfectly ordered social space—not in the way that matter is perfectly ordered and uniform in the homogeneous space of the heavens. Human societies are not unchanging diagrams, like those used to understand the perfection and constancy of the heavens; there is no guarantee that the actions of a monarch, for example, will be constant through time in the same way concentric heavenly figures are. The earth will continue to move on its axis and orbit the sun, but the monarch—also analogized as the "sun"—will not behave in predictable ways—nor will the monarch's people. Free choice means that human actions

are generally unpredictable and there are few precedents for reliability; when paired with diverse contexts, it is even more difficult to determine the actions of another human being. Human behaviour is an uncertain variable, meaning that no social structure can rival the perfection of heavenly bodies.

My analysis also emphasizes the role of the reader in space-making; while the space "exists" as a text, it comes to life in the minds of readers, whose own lived experiences shape their understanding of the logistics of a social space. It has been challenging to discuss topics like free will and self-interest, especially as we are readers in a neoliberal world, but my goal throughout the thesis is, to the best of my ability, to examine the viability and sustainability of these three textual spaces. These texts focus on the mundane and quotidian aspects of human relationships. Nevertheless, these social tracts allow us to look at the concept of space-making as a subjective, self-justified account of order, harmony, and unity. Moreover, despite some of the unsettling implications of the social structures I examine, most notably those in Cavendish and Winstanley, these ideated social spaces illuminate the need for knowledge, power, and interpersonal relationships to be examined within a specific context. In the context of seventeenth-century England, these texts function as case studies that undercut the veracity of the claim that space is universally uniform.

When it comes to the philosophy of geometric space, Cavendish, Traherne, and Winstanley are lay writers, but what is intriguing about their socially oriented works is that they are drawing on experiential knowledge and personal beliefs to express their understanding of cohesion—of order, harmony, and unity. All three authors propose

attaining social cohesion in vastly different ways, yet there are similarities: each conceptualizes a social space that is structured to their own liking, the data of their personal experiences is expressed in writing, and they shape their conceptual societies in a manner that they believe will achieve stability in an unstable social context. Three different social spaces, in theory, achieve the same thing—stability and cohesion— thereby underscoring my earlier comment that social space is, because of its diverse social actors, heterogeneous and differentiated. There can be no total, all-encompassing uniformity in society.

I conclude that the difference between homogeneous and heterogeneous space, then, is qualitative and conceptual: homogeneous space is perfect because it cannot be manipulated or penetrated by human beings; heterogeneous space is the opposite. Instead of getting stuck on the contradiction of co-existing spaces—perfect, infinite, homogeneous space and imperfect, heterogeneous, (finite) humanmade spaces—we can look at these two kinds of space as ways that humans understand the world. Homogeneous space is unknowable precisely because human beings cannot experience it; whether or not it is factually infinite is impossible to say, because the lack of human knowledge neither confirms nor denies the infinitude of this space. "Infinity" eludes definition; our ability to offer anything beyond speculation is made impossible by the way we conceptualize the term. It is far easier to understand the space that we, as finite human beings, occupy, because we *can* derive direct experiential data that informs our comprehension of the spaces we traverse. That homogeneous space is infinite is an assumption—one that cannot be proved, simply because it cannot be known.

Heterogeneous space—that which is occupied by humans—is tangible and knowable. If one space is unknowable while another is knowable, it follows that there are two distinct spaces that negate the argument for total uniformity in space. What Cavendish, Traherne, and Winstanley teach us indirectly is that social structure and the unpredictable nature of social actors directly refute the supremacy of homogeneous space. Space is experienced and 'produced' in a plethora of ways, restricting spatial uniformity, ironically, to a strictly theoretical realm.

**Appendix 1**



Frontispiece designed by Abraham Bosse for Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651). The Latin verse located at the top of the image is from Job 41.24: "His heart is as firm as a stone; yea, as hard as a piece of the nether millstone."

For greater understanding, the entire chapter describing the nature of the leviathan is as follows:

41.1-34: "Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook? or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down? Canst thou put an hook into his nose? or bore his jaw through with a thorn? Will he make many supplications unto thee? will he speak soft words unto thee? Will he make a covenant with thee? wilt thou take him for a servant for ever? Wilt thou play with him as with a bird? or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens? Shall the companions make a banquet of him? shall they part him among the merchants? Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons? or his head with fish spears? Lay thine hand upon him, remember the battle, do no more. Behold, the hope of him is in vain: shall not one be cast down even at the sight of him? None is so fierce that dare stir him up: who then is able to stand before me? Who hath prevented me, that I should repay him? whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine. I will not conceal his parts, nor his power, nor his comely proportion. Who can discover the face of his garment? or who can come to him with his double bridle? Who can open the doors of his face? his teeth are terrible round about. His scales are his pride, shut up together as with a close seal. One is so near to another, that no air can come between them. They are joined one to another, they stick together, that they cannot be sundered. By his neesings a light doth shine, and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning. Out of his mouth go burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap out. Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething pot or caldron. His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth. In his neck remaineth strength, and sorrow is turned into joy before him. The flakes of his flesh are joined together: they are firm in themselves; they cannot be moved. His heart is as firm as a stone; yea, as hard as a piece of the nether millstone. When he raiseth up himself, the mighty are afraid: by reason of breakings they purify themselves. The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold: the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon. He esteemeth iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood. The arrow cannot make him flee: slingstones are turned with him into stubble. Darts are counted as stubble: he laugheth at the shaking of a spear. Sharp stones are under him: he spreadeth sharp pointed things upon the mire. He maketh the deep to boil like a pot: he maketh the sea like a pot of ointment. He maketh a path to shine after him; one would think the deep to be hoary. Upon earth there is not his like, who is made without fear. He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride."

# Bibliography

## <u>Primary</u>

Anon. *Britania Triumphalis*; *a brief history of the Warres in 1654*. London, 1654.

Anon. *It Is This Day Ordered by the Lords and Commons in Parliament, that the Booke Concerning the Enjoyning and Tollerating of Sports upon the Lords Day Be Forthwith Burned*. London, 1643.

Anon. *Solemn League and Covenant*. London, 1643.

Augustine of Hippo. *On the Free Choice of the Will, On Grace and Free Choice, and Other Writings*. Edited and translated by Peter King. Cambridge UP, 2010, pp. 3-126.

Bacon, Francis. "New Atlantis." *Three Early Modern Utopias*, edited by Susan Bruce. Oxford UP, 1999, pp. 149-186.

Baxter, Richard. *The Essential Works of Richard Baxter*. Edinburgh, 1829.

Bosse, Abraham. "Frontispiece to *The Leviathan* by Thomas Hobbes. *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leviathan_%28Hobbes_book%29

Bruno, Giordano. *On the Infinite, the Universe, and the Worlds: Five Cosmological Dialogues*. Translated by Scott Gosnell. Huginn, Munnin & Co, 2014.

Castiglione, Baldassare. *The Book of the Courtier*. Translated by George Bull. Penguin Books, 1976.

Cavendish, Margaret. *Bell in Campo*. London, 1662.

- - - . *The Blazing World.* London, 1666.

- - - . *Convent of Pleasure*. London, 1668.

- - - . *The Female Academy.* London, 1662.

- - - . *Grounds of Natural Philosophy Divided into Thirteen Parts: with an Appendix*

*Containing Five parts*. London, 1668.

- - - . *Observations upon Experimental Philosophy*. London, 1666.

- - - . *Philosophical Letters.* London, 1664.

- - - . *Poems and Fancies.* London, 1653.

- - - . *The Worlds Olio.* London, 1671.

Charles I of England. *The Book of Sports as Set Forth by K. Charles the I with Remarks*.

London, 1633.

- - - . *King Charles His Speech Made upon the Scaffold at Whitehall-Gate Immediately*

*before his Execution*. London, 1649, pp. 1-8.

Cushman, Robert. "Reasons and Considerations Touching the Lawfulness of Removing

Out of England into the Parts of America." *Puritans in America: A Narrative*

*Anthology*. Edited by Alan Heimert and Andrew Deblanco. Harvard UP, 1985, pp.

41-44.

Dante Alighieri. *The Divine Comedy*. Edited by Eugenio Montale and translated by Allen

Mandelbaum. Everyman's Library, 1995.

Desiderius Erasmus. "On the Freedom of the Will." *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation*. Edited and translated by E. Gordon Rupp, et al. Westminster Press, 1969, pp. 29-100.

Dryden, John. "Heroic Stanzas." *John Dryden: A Critical Edition of the Major Works*, edited by Keith Walker. Oxford UP, 1987, pp. 1-6.

Euclid of Alexandria. *The Elements*. Edited and translated by Thomas L. Heath. Dover Books, 2013.

Godwin, Francis. *The Man in the Moone*. Edited by William Poole. Broadview Press, 2009.

Higden, Ranulph. *Polychronicon*. London, 1480.

Hobbes, Thomas. *The Elements of Law Natural and Politic*. Cambridge UP, 1928.

- - - . *The Leviathan*. Edited by Christopher Brooke. Penguin Books, 1985.

Hoby, Thomas, translator. *The Courtyer of Count Baldessar Castilio*. By Baldassare Castiglione. London, 1561.

James I of England. *The Political Works of James I*. Edited by C. H. McIlwain. 1918, pp. 61-63.

Kepler, Johannes. *Epitome of Copernican Astronomy and Harmonies of the World*.

Translated by Charles Glenn Wallis. Prometheus Books, 1995.

Leibniz, G.W. *Leibniz-Clarke Correspondence*. Edited and translated by Roger Ariew,

Hackett Publishing, 2000.

- - - . *Theodicy: Essays on the Goodness of God, Freedom of Man, and the*

*Origin of Evil*. Edited by Austin Farrer. Translated by E.M. Huggard. Open Court

Classics, 1986.

Locke, John. *Two Treatises of* Government. Edited by Peter Laslett. Cambridge UP,

1988.

Mandeville, Bernard. *The Fable of Bees: And Other Writings*. Edited by E.J. Hundert.

Hackett Publishing, 1997.

Martin Luther. "On the Bondage of the Will." *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and*

*Salvation*. Edited and translated by E. Gordon Rupp, et al. Westminster Press,

1969, pp. 101-334.

Marvell, Andrew. "An Horation Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland." *The*

*Complete Poems*, edited by Elizabeth Story Donno and Jonathan Bate. Penguin,

2005, pp. 55-57.

More, Thomas. "Utopia." *Three Early Modern Utopias*. Edited by Susan Bruce. Oxford

UP, 1999, pp. 1-134.

Milton, John. *The History of Britain.* London, 1677.

- - - . *Paradise Lost*. Edited by William Kerrigan, John Rumrich, and Stephen M. Fallon,

    Modern Library, 2008.

Neville, Henry. "Isle of Pines." *Three Early Modern Utopias*. Edited by Susan Bruce.

    Oxford UP, 1999, pp. 187-212.

Newton, Isaac. *The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*. Translated by

    Andrew Motte. London, 1729.

Nicholas of Cusa. "On Learned Ignorance." *The Book of the Cosmos: Imagining the

    Universe from Heraclitus to Hawking*. Edited by Dennis Danielson. Basic Books,

    2001, pp. 104-117.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Gay Science, with a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of

    Songs*. Translated by Walter Arnold Kaufmann. Random House, 1974.

Pascal, Blaïse. *Pensées*. Translated by A.J. Krailsheimer. Penguin Books, 1996.

Plato. "Gorgias." *Plato: Complete Works*. Edited by John M. Cooper. Hackett Publishing,

    1997.

Plato. *Symposium*. Translated by Robin Waterfield. Oxford UP, 1994.

Plotinus. *The Enneads*. Translated by Stephen MacKenna. Larson Publications, 1992.

Sebonde, Raymond de. *Natural Theology*. Paris, 1430.

Pufendorf, Samuel. *The Whole Duty of Man, According to the Law of Nature*. Translated

by David Saunders. Liberty Fund, 2003.

Sidney, Algernon. *Discourses Concerning Government*. London, 1698.

Smith, Adam. *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Edited by Ryan Patrick Hanley. Penguin, 2010.

Sprat, Thomas. *The History of the Royal Society of London*. London, 1667.

*The Bible.* Authorized King James Version. Edited by Thomas Nelson. Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985.

Thomas Aquinas. *Summa Theologica*. Translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province. Catholic Way Publishing, 2014.

Traherne, Thomas. *Centuries of Meditations*. Printed for Bertram Dobell. London, 1908.

- - - . *Christian Ethicks*. Edited by Carol L. Marks. Cornell UP, 1968.

- - - . *Poetical Works of Thomas Traherne*. Edited by Gladys I. Wade. London, 1965.

Vico, Giambattista. *La Scienza nuova*. Naples, 1725.

Wilkins, John. *The Discovery of a World in the Moone or a Discourse Tending to Prove That 'tis Probable There May Be Another Habitable World in That Planet*. London, 1638.

Winstanley, Gerrard. "An Appeal to all Englishmen." *Winstanley: 'The Law of Freedom' and other Writings*. Edited by Christopher Hill. Cambridge UP, 1973, pp. 109-124.

- - - . "A Declaration from the Poor Oppressed People of England." *Winstanley: 'The Law of Freedom' and other Writings*. Edited by Christopher Hill. Cambridge UP, 1973, pp. 97-108.

- - - . *An Humble Request, to the Ministers of both Universities, and to all Lawyers in every Inns a-court.* London, 1650.

- - - . "England's Spirit Unfoulded." *Winstanley: 'The Law of Freedom' and other Writings*. Edited by Christopher Hill. Cambridge UP, 1973, p. 392.

- - - . "Fire in the Bush." *Winstanley: 'The Law of Freedom' and other Writings*. Edited by Christopher Hill. Cambridge UP, 1973, pp. 211-272.

- - - . "The Law of Freedom in a Platform." *Winstanley: 'The Law of Freedom' and other Writings*. Edited by Christopher Hill. Cambridge UP, 1973, pp. 273-389.

- - - . *The New Law of Righteousness.* London, 1649.

- - - . *True Levellers Standard*. *Winstanley: 'The Law of Freedom' and other Writings*. Edited by Christopher Hill. Cambridge UP, 1973, pp. 75-96.

**<u>Secondary</u>**

Aït-Touati, Frédérique. *Fictions of the Cosmos: Science and Literature in the Seventeenth Century*. Translated by Susan Emanuel. U of Chicago P, 2011.

Alexander, Amir. *Infinitesimal: How a Dangerous Mathematical Theory Shaped the*

*Modern World*. Scientific American Press, 2014.

- - - . *Proof! How the World Became Geometrical*. Scientific American, 2019.

Alexander, Catherine. "The Garden as Occasional Domestic Space." *Signs*, vol. 27, no. 3,

2002, pp. 857-871.

Appelbaum, Robert. *Literature and Utopian Politics in Seventeenth-Century England.*

Cambridge UP, 2004.

Arthur, Richard T.W. *Leibniz*. Polity Press, 2014, pp. 142-165.

Ackroyd, Peter. *Rebellion: The History of England from James I to the Glorious*

*Revolution*. Thomas Dunne Books, 2014.

Atwood, Emma K. "'All Places Are Alike': Marlowe's *Edward II* and English Spatial

Imagination." *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, vol. 43, no. 1,

2013, pp. 49-70.

Arthur, Richard T.W. "Space and Relativity in Newton and Leibniz." *The British Journal*

*for the Philosophy of Science*, vol. 45, no. 1, 1994, pp. 219-240.

Backhouse, Roger E. *Penguin History of Economics*. Penguin Books, 2002.

Balakier, James J. *Thomas Traherne and the Felicities of the Mind*. Cambria Press, 2010.

Barbalet, Jack. "Self-Interest and the Theory of Action." *The British Journal of*

*Sociology*, vol. 63, no. 3, 2012, pp. 412-429.

Barrow, John D. *The Book of Nothing: Vacuums, Voids, and the Latest Ideas about the Origins of the Universe*. Vintage Books, 2002.

Behme, Thomas. "Pufendorf's Doctrine of Sovereignty and its Natural Law Foundations." *Natural Law and Civil Sovereignty: Moral Right and State Authority in Early Modern Political Thought*. Palgrave-MacMillan, 2002, pp. 43-58.

Berlin, Isaiah. *Freedom and Its Betrayal*. Edited by Henry Hardy, Princeton UP, 2014.

Bootle, Attie. "Enclosure Polemics and the Garden in the 1650s." *SEL*, vol. 51, no. 1, 2011, pp. 135-157.

Boyle, Deborah. *The Well-Ordered Universe: The Philosophy of Margaret Cavendish*. Oxford UP, 2016.

Braddick, Michael J. "Civil War and Revolution in England, Scotland, and Ireland." *Oxford Handbook of the English Revolution*. Edited by Michael J. Braddick, Oxford UP, 2015, pp. 3-20.

Brady, Michael Emmett. "On Adam Smith's Anti-Utilitarianism in *The Wealth of Nations*." *SSRN*, 2015, pp. 1-27.

Broomhall, Susan and Sarah Finn, editors. *Violence and Emotions in Early Modern Europe*. Routledge, 2016.

Cameron, Deborah. *Verbal Hygiene*. Routledge, 2012.

Campbell, Mary Baine. *Wonder and Science: Imagining Worlds in Early Modern Europe*. Cornell UP, 1999.

Carey, Brycchan. "'A New Discovery of a New World': The Moon and America in Seventeenth-and Eighteenth-Century European Literature." *Literature in the Age of Celestial Discovery: Copernicus to Flamsteed*, edited by Judy A. Hayden. Palgrave-MacMillan, 2016, pp. 167-182.

Cefalu, Paul. "Thomistic Metaphysics and Ethics in the Poetry and Prose of Thomas Traherne." *Literature and Theology*, vol. 16, no. 3., 2002. pp. 248-269.

Clarke, Randolph. "Free Will and the Conditions of Moral Responsibility." *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition*, vol. 66, no. 1, 1992, pp. 53-72.

Clements, A.L. *The Mystical Poetry of Thomas Traherne*. Harvard UP, 1969.

Clucas, Stephen, editor. *A Princely Brave Woman: Essays on Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle*. Routledge, 2003.

Condon, James J. "Setting the Stage for Revenge: Space, Performance, and Power in Early Modern Revenge Tragedy." *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, vol. 25, 2012, pp. 62-82.

"conscience, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, September 2022,

https://www-oed-com.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/view/Entry/39460?rskey=MRTO1i&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid. Accessed 23 October 2022.

Colie, Rosalie L. "Thomas Traherne and the Infinite: The Ethical Compromise." *Huntington Library Quarterly*, vol. 21, no. 1, 1957, pp. 69-82.

Cressy, David. "Early Modern Space Travel." *Literature in the Age of Celestial Discovery from Copernicus to Flamsteed*. Edited by Judy A. Hayden. Palgrave, 2016, pp. 45-74.

Cunning, David. *Cavendish*. Routledge, 2016.

- - - . *Margaret Cavendish: Essential Writings*. Oxford UP, 2019.

Cunningham, John. "Divided Conquerors: The Rump Parliament, Cromwell's Army, and Ireland." *The English Historical Review*, vol. 129, no. 539, 2014, pp. 830-861.

Cust, Richard. "The Collapse of Royal Power in England, 1637-1642. *The Oxford Handbook of the English Revolution*, edited by Michael J. Braddick, Oxford UP, 2015, pp. 60-76.

Danielson, Dennis. *The Book of the Cosmos: Imagining the Universe from Heraclitus to Hawking*. Basic Books, 2001.

Datson, Lorraine and Michael Stolleis, editors. *Natural Law and Laws of Nature in Early*

*Modern Europe: Jurisprudence, Theology, Moral and Natural Philosophy*.

Ashgate, 2008.

Davis, J.C. "Oliver Cromwell." *Oxford Handbook of the English Revolution*. Edited by

Michael J. Braddick, Oxford UP, 2015, pp. 223-242.

Davis, J.C. and J.D. Alsop. "Winstanley, Gerrard." *Oxford Dictionary of National*

*Biography*, 2014. doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/29755

Detlefsen, Karen. "Margaret Cavendish and Thomas Hobbes on Freedom, Education, and

Women." *Feminist Interpretations of Thomas Hobbes*. Edited by Nancy J.

Hirschmann & Joanne H. Wright. Pennsylvania State UP, 2012, pp. 149-168.

- - - . "Reason and Freedom: Margaret Cavendish on the Order and Disorder of Nature."

*Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, vol. 89, no. 2, 2007, pp. 157-191.

Dreyer, J.L.E. *A History of Astronomy from Thales to Kepler*. Dover Books, 1953.

Elmen, Paul. "The Theological Basis of Digger Communism." *Church History*, vol. 23,

no. 3, 1954, pp. 207-218.

"ethics, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, September 2022,

https://www.oedcom.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/search?searchType=dictionary&q
=ethics&_searchBtn=Search. Accessed June 2021.

Findlay, Alison. "Relative Values: Gendering Time and Space." *Renaissance and*

*Reformation*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2012, pp. 167-183.

"fellowship, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, September 2022,

https://www-oed-
com.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/view/Entry/69111?rskey=Xi1kDN&result=2&isA
dvanced=false#eid. Accessed 23 October 2022.

Flather, Amanda J. "Space, Place, and Gender: The Sexual and Spatial Division of Labor
in the Early Modern Household." *History and Theory*, vol. 52, no. 3, 2013, pp.
344-360.

Fletcher, Angus. *Time, Space, and Motion in the Age of Shakespeare*. Harvard UP, 2007.

French, Henry. "'Gentlemen': Remaking the English Ruling Class." *A Social History of
England: 1500-1750*. Edited by Keith Wrightson. Cambridge UP, 2017, pp. 415-
447.

French, H.R. "Social Status, Localism, and the 'Middle Sort of People' in England, 1620
1750." *Past and Present*, no. 166, 2000, pp. 66-99.

Funkenstein, Amos. *Theology and the Scientific Imagination: From the Middle Ages to
the Seventeenth Century*. Princeton UP, 1986.

Goodare, Julian. "The Rise of the Covenanters, 1637-1644. *The Oxford Handbook of the
English Revolution*, edited by Michael J. Braddick, Oxford UP, 2015, pp. 43-593.

Gough, J.W. *The Social Contract: A Critical Study of Its Development.* Praeger, 1936.

Granada, Miguel A. "Giordano Bruno's Concept of Space: Cosmological and

Theological Aspects." *Space, Imagination, and the Cosmos from Antiquity to the Early Modern Period*. Edited by Carla Palmerino, Delphine Bellis, and Frederik Bakker. Springer, 2018, pp. 157-178.

Gurney, John. "Gerrard Winstanley and the Left." *Past and Present*, no. 235, 2017, pp. 179-206.

- - - . "Gerrard Winstanley's *New Law of Freedom*: Context and Continuity." *Utopian Moments: Reading Utopian Texts*. Edited by Miguel A. Ramiro and J.C. Davis. Bloomsbury Academic, 2012, pp. 47-52.

Haakonssen, Knud, editor. *Cambridge Companion to Adam Smith*. Cambridge UP, 2006.

- - - . "The Moral Conservativism of Natural Rights." *Natural Law and Civil Sovereignty: Moral Right and State Authority in Early Modern Political Thought*. Palgrave-MacMillan, 2002, pp. 27-42.

Habakkuk, H.J. "Landowners and the Civil war." *The Economic History Review*, vol. 18, no. 1, 1965, pp. 130-151.

Harding, Robert J.D. "Hollar, Wenceslaus." *Oxford National Dictionary of Biography*, 2004. doi-org.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/10.1093/ref:odnb/13549

Heller, Hermann. "The Essence and Structure of the State." *Weimar: A Jurisprudence of Crisis*. Edited and translated by Arthur J. Jacobson and Bernhard Schlink. U of California P, 2000, pp. 249-279.

Heninger, S.K. *The Cosmographical Glass: Renaissance Diagrams of the Universe*.

Castle Press, 1977.

Hessayon, Ariel. "Early Modern Communism: The Diggers and Community of Goods."

*Journal for the Study of Radicalism*, vol. 3, no. 3, 2009, pp. 1-49.

Hicks, Andrew. *Composing the World: Harmony in the Medieval Platonic Cosmos*.

Oxford UP, 2017.

Hill, Christopher. *The Century of Revolution, 1603-1714*. Routledge, 1980.

- - - . "God and the English Revolution." *History Workshops*, no. 17, 1984, pp. 19-31.

- - - . *Puritanism and Revolution: Studies in Interpretation of the English Revolution of*

*the 17$^{th}$ Century*. Pittman Press, 1958.

- - - . *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England.* Verso, 2018.

- - - . "Introduction." *Winstanley: 'The Law of Freedom' and other Writings.* Cambridge

UP, 1973, pp. 9-71.

Hill, John Spencer. *Infinity, Space, and Time: Christian Humanism and Renaissance*

*Literature*. McGill-Queen's UP, 1997.

Hirschman, Albert O. *The Passions and Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism*

*Before Its Triumph*. Princeton UP, 1977.

Holstun, James. "Communism, George Hill, and the Mir: Was Marx a Nineteenth

Century Winstanleyan?" *Prose Studies*, vol. 22, no. 2, 1999, pp. 121-148.

Horton, Merrill. "Faulkner, Balzac, and the World." *The Faulkner Journal*, vol. 19, no. 2, 2004, pp. 91-106.

Houston, Chloë. *The Renaissance Utopia: Dialogue, Travel, and the Ideal Society*. Ashgate, 2014.

Houston, R.A. "People, Space, and Law in Late Medieval and Early Modern Britain and Ireland." *Past and Present*, no. 230, 2016, pp. 47-89.

Howard, Jean E. "Shakespeare and the Consequences of Early Capitalism." *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, no. 150, 2014, pp. 30-45.

Hughes, Ann. "'Gender Trouble': Women's Agency and Gender Relations in the English Revolution. *Oxford Handbook of the English Revolution*. Edited by Michael J. Braddick, Oxford UP, 2015, pp. 347-362.

- - - . "Gerrard Winstanley, News Culture, and Law Reform in the Early 1650s." *Prose Studies*, vol. 36, no. 1, 2014, pp. 63-76.

Hundert, E.J. *The Enlightenment's Fable: Bernard Mandeville and the Discovery of Society*. Cambridge UP, 1994.

Hunter, Ian and David Saunders, editors. "Introduction." *Natural Law and Civil Sovereignty: Moral Right and State Authority in Early Modern Political Thought*. Palgrave-MacMillan, 2002, pp. 1-10.

Hughes, Merritt Y, editors. *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton*. Yale UP, 1962.

Hutton, Sarah. "In Dialogue with Thomas Hobbes: Margaret Cavendish's Natural

> Philosophy." *Women's Writing*, vol. 4, no. 3, 1997, pp. 421-432.

- - - . "Taking Liberty: Politics and Feminism in Margaret Cavendish and Catharine

> Macaulay." *Feminist History of Philosophy: The Recovery and Evaluation of*
>
> *Women's Philosophical Thought*. Edited by Eileen O'Neill and Marcy P.
>
> Lascano. Springer Nature, 2019, pp. 337-354.

Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*. Edited by Marcus Weigelt and translated by

> Max Muller, Penguin Books, 2008.

Keefer, Michael H. "The World Turned Inside Out: Revolutions of the Infinite Sphere

> from Hermes to Pascal." *Renaissance and Reformation*, vol. 24, no. 4, 1988, pp.
>
> 303-313.

Kenyon, J.P, editor. *The Stuart Constitution, 1603-1688: Documents and Commentary.*

> Cambridge UP, 1986.

Kermode, Lloyd Edward. "Experiencing the Space and Place of Early Modern Theater."

> *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, vol. 43, no. 1, 2013, pp. 1-24.

Knell, Matthew, editor and translator. *Sin, Grace, and Free Will: A Historical Survey of*

> *Christian Thought, From Anselm to the Reformation*. James Clarke and Co., 2018.

Koyré, Alexandre. *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe*. Johns Hopkins UP,

1957.

Kriegel, Blandine. "The Ryle of the State and Natural Law." *Natural Law and Civil*

*Sovereignty: Moral Right and State Authority in Early Modern Political Thought*.

Palgrave-MacMillan, 2002, pp. 11-26.

Lawlor, Robert. *Sacred Geometry: Philosophy and Practice*. Thames and Hudson, 1982.

Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith.

Blackwell, 1991.

Leishman, J.B. *The Metaphysical Poets: Donne, Herbert, Vaughan, and Traherne*.

Clarendon Press, 1934.

Levey, Samuel. "Leibniz on Mathematics and the Actually Infinite Division of Matter."

*The Philosophical Review*, vol. 107, no. 1, 1998, pp. 49-96.

Lewalski, Barbara Kiefer. *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious*

*Lyric*. Princeton UP, 1979.

Lewis, Eric. "The Legacy of Margaret Cavendish." *Perspectives on Science*, vol. 9, no. 3,

2001, pp. 341–65.

Lovejoy, Arthur O. *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea*. Harvard

UP, 1964.

Low, Martina. *The Sociology of Space: Materiality, Social Structures, and Action.*

Translated by Donald Goodwin. Palgrave-MacMillan, 2016.

Manca, Anna Rita. "Social Cohesion." *Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research*. Edited by A.C. Michalos. Springer, 2014, pp. 6026-6028.

Mansell, Charmian. "Beyond the Home: Space and Agency in the Experiences of Female Service in Early Modern England." *Gender and History*, vol. 33, no. 1, 2021, pp. 24-49.

Marc, Morris. *The Norman Conquest: The Battle of Hastings and the Fall of Anglo Saxon England*. Pegasus Books, 2013.

Marks, Carol L. Introduction. *Christian Ethicks*, by Thomas Traherne. Cornell UP, 1968, pp. xi-lxii.

Martin-Gimelli, Catherine. "All That Glitters: Devaluing the Gold Standard in the Utopias of Thomas More, Francis Bacon, and Margaret Cavendish." *Renaissance and Reformation*, vol. 41, no. 3, 2018, pp. 137-163.

Matar, N.I. "The Political Views of Thomas Traherne." *Huntington Library Quarterly*, vol. 57, no. 3, 1994, pp. 241-253.

Maudlin, Tim. *Philosophy of Physics: Space and Time*. Princeton UP, 2012, pp. 1-34.

McElligott, Jason and David L. Smith, editors. *Royalists and Royalism during the English Civil Wars*. Cambridge UP, 2007.

Mendelson, Sara. "The God of Nature and the Nature of God." *God and Nature in the*

*Thought of Margaret Cavendish*. Edited by Brandie R. Siegfried and Lisa T. Sarasohn. Routledge, 2016, pp. 27-41.

Merchant, Carolyn. *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution*. Harper, 1990.

Merton, Robert K. *Science, Technology and Society in Seventeenth-Century England*. Osiris, 1938.

Miller, James. "Three Mirrors of Dante's *Paradiso*." *University of Toronto Quarterly*, vol. 46, no. 3, 1977, pp. 263-279.

Miller, John. "The Long-Term Consequences of the English Revolution: Economic and Social Development." *The Oxford Handbook of the English Revolution*, edited by Michael J. Braddick, Oxford UP, 2015, pp. 501-517.

Mintzker, Yair. "Between the Linguistic and the Spatial Turns: A Reconsideration of the Concept of Space and Its Role in the Early Modern Period," *Historical Reflections*, vol. 35, no. 3, 2009, pp. 37-51.

Mitrovic, Branko. "Leon Battista Alberti and the Homogeneity of Space." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, vol. 62, no. 4, 2004, pp. 424-439.

"morals, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, September 2022,

www-

oed.com.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/view/Entry/122085?rskey=5VHiZE&result=1

#eid. Accessed June 2021.

Moore, Hannah. *Space, Text, and Gender: An Anthropological Study of the Marakwet of*

*Kenya*. Cambridge UP, 1986.

Morgan, John. "Science, England's 'Interest,' and Universal Monarchy: The Making of

Thomas Sprat's *History of the Royal Society*." *History of Science*, vol. 47, 2009,

pp. 27-54.

Morrill, John. "Cromwell, Parliament, Ireland, and a Commonwealth in Crisis: 1652

Revisited." *Parliamentary History*, vol. 30, no. 2, 2011. pp. 193-214.

Mulligan, Lotte and Judith Richards. "A 'Radical' Problem: The Poor and the English

Reformers in the Mid-Seventeenth Century. *Journal of British Studies*, vol. 29,

no. 2, 1990, pp. 118-146.

Murphy, Kathryn. "No Things but in Thoughts: Traherne's Poetic Realism." *Thomas*

*Traherne and Seventeenth-Century Thought*. Edited by Elizabeth S. Dodd and

Cassandra Gorman. DS Brewer, 2016, pp. 48-68.

Murphy, Walter E. "The Political Philosophy of Gerrard Winstanley." *Review of Politics*,

vol. 19, no. 2, 1957, pp. 214-238.

Nelson, Jennifer. *Disharmony of the Spheres: The Europe of Holbein's Ambassadors*.

Pennsylvania State UP, 2019.

Ogden, Daniel. "Utopias in the Fallen World: Sir Thomas More, the Anabaptists, and

   Gerrard Winstanley." *Culture and Society in Reformation Europe*, vol. 26, 1999,

   pp. 64 72.

O'Neill, Eileen, editor. Introduction. *Observations upon Experimental Philosophy*, by

   Margaret Cavendish. Cambridge UP, 2001, x-xxxvi.

Orr, D. Alan. *Treason and the State: Law, Politics, and Ideology in the English Civil war.*

   Cambridge UP, 2002.

Postles, Dave. "The Market Place as Space in Early Modern England." *Social History*,

   vol. 29, no. 1, 2004, pp. 41-58.

Richardson, R.C. *The Debate on the English Revolution*, 3rd edition. Manchester UP,

   1998.

Rivers, Isabel. *Classical and Christian Ideas in English Renaissance Poetry*. Routledge,

   1994.

Rogers, John. *The Matter of Revolution: Science, Poetry and Politics in the Age of

   Milton*. Cornell UP, 1998.

Ronen, Ruth. *Possible Worlds in Literary Theory.* Cambridge UP, 1994.

Rosen, George. "Left-Wing Puritanism and Science." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*,

vol. 15, no. 4, 1944, 375-380.

Rothman, Aviva. *The Pursuit of Harmony: Kepler on Cosmos, Confession, and Community*. U of Chicago P, 2017.

Rouget, François. "Academies, Circles, 'Salons,' and the Emergence of the Premodern 'Literary Public Sphere' in Sixteenth-Century France." *Making Publics in Early Modern England*, edited by Bronwen Wilson and Paul Yachnin. Routledge, 2010, pp. 53-67.

Russell, Rinaldina. Introduction. *Dialogue on the Infinity of Love*, by Tullia d'Aragona. U of Chicago P, 1997, pp. 1-42.

Ryrie, Alec. "Reformations." *A Social History of England: 1500-1750*. Edited by Keith Wrightson. Cambridge UP, 2017, pp. 180-214.

Sabine, George. Introduction. *The Complete Works of Gerrard Winstanley*. Edited by Thomas N. Corns, Ann Hughes, and David Loewenstein. Oxford UP, 2009, pp. 1-71.

Saiber, Arielle. "Ornamental Flourishes in Giordano Bruno's Geometry." *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol. 34, no. 3, 2003, pp. 729-745.

Sarasohn, Lisa T. *The Natural Philosophy of Margaret Cavendish: Reason and Fancy During the Scientific Revolution*. Johns Hopkins UP, 2010.

- - - . "A Science Turned Upside Down: Feminism and the Natural

Philosophy of Margaret Cavendish." *Huntington Library Quarterly*, vol. 47, no. 4, 1984, pp. 289-307.

Sargent, Lyman Tower. "Millennium and Revolution: Two Themes in Seventeenth Century British Utopianism. *Utopian Studies*, no.2, 1989, pp. 38-49.

Sauter, Michael. *The Spatial Reformation: Euclid Between Man, Cosmos, and God*. U of Pennsylvania Press, 2019.

Schmutz, Jacob. "Medieval Philosophy after the Middle Ages." *Oxford Handbook of Medieval Philosophy*. Edited by John Marenbon. Oxford UP, 2012, pp. 245-270.

Skouen, Tina and Ryan J. Stark. "Introduction." *Rhetoric and the Early Royal Society: A Sourcebook,* edited by Tina Skouen and Ryan J. Stark. Brill, 2015, pp. 1-52.

Seetaraman, M.V. "The Way of Felicity in Thomas Traherne's *Centuries* and *The Poems*." *Critical Essays on English Literature*. Edited by V.S. Seturman. Orient Longmans Press, 1965, pp. 81-104.

"self-interest, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, September 2022, https://www-oed-com.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/view/Entry/175301?redirectedFrom=self-interest#eid. Accessed 23 October 2022.

Sharpe, Kevin. *Remapping Early Modern England: The Culture of Seventeenth-Century Politics*. Cambridge UP, 2000.

Shedd, John A. "Legalism over Revolution: The Parliamentary Committee for Indemnity

and Property Confiscation Disputes, 1647-1655." *The Historical Journal*, vol. 43,

no. 4, 2000, pp. 1093-1107.

Sherry, David. "The Jesuits and the Method of Indivisibles." *Found Sci*, vol. 23, no. 3,

2018, pp. 367-392.

Siegfried, Brandie R. and Lisa T. Sarasohn, editors. *God and Nature in the Thought of*

*Margaret Cavendish*. Ashgate, 2014.

Sillitoe, Peter. "'Thy State is the more Gracious': Courtly Space and Social Mobility in

*Hamlet* and Early Modern Culture." *Shakespeare*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2013, pp. 204-

219.

"slave, n.1 (and adj.)." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, September 2022,

https://www-oed-

com.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/view/Entry/181477?rskey=chmbAI&result=1&isA

dvanced=false#eid. Accessed 23 October 2022.

Smith, David L. "English Politics in the 1650s." *Oxford Handbook of the English*

*Revolution*. Edited by Michael J. Braddick, Oxford UP, 2015, pp. 186-203.

- - - . "Parliaments and Constitutions." *Oxford Handbook of the English Revolution*.

Edited by Michael J. Braddick, Oxford UP, 2015, pp. 243-259.

Smith, David L. and Patrick Little. *Parliaments and Politics during the*

*Cromwellian Protectorate*. Cambridge UP, 2007.

Smith, Julia J. "Thomas Traherne and the Restoration." *The Seventeenth Century*, vol. 3,

no. 2, 1988, pp. 203-222.

Snauwaert, Dale T. and Paul Theobald. "Two Liberal Trajectories of Civic Education:

The Political and Educational Thought of Hobbes and Winstanley." *The Journal*

*of Educational Thought*, vol. 28, no. 2, 1994, pp. 179-197.

"society, n." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, September 2022,

https://www-oed-

com.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/view/Entry/183776?redirectedFrom=society#eid

Accessed August 2021.

"space, n.1." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, September 2022,

www.oed.com/view/Entry/185414. Accessed August 2020.

Spraggon, Julie. *Puritan Iconoclasm during the English Civil War*. Boydell Press, 2003.

"sport, n.1." OED Online, Oxford University Press, September 2022,

www.oed.com/view/Entry/187476. Accessed 23 October 2022.

Stanley, Dick. "The Research Perspective of the Federal Government's Social Cohesion

Research Network." *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, vol. 28, no. 1, 2003, pp. 5-

17.

Stuart, Matthew, editor. *A Companion to Locke*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2016.

Thell, Anne M. "Introduction." *Grounds of Natural Philosophy*, by Margaret Cavendish.

Broadview Press, 2020, pp. 11-42.

Thomas, Emily. "Time, Space, and Process in Anne Conway." *British Journal for the*

*History of Philosophy*, vol. 25, no. 5, 2017, pp. 990-1010.

Thomas, W.K. *The Crafting of* Absalom and Achitophel: *Dryden's 'Pen for a Party'*.

Wilfred Laurier UP, 1978.

Tillyard, E.M.W. *The Elizabethan World Picture*. Routledge, 1959.

Todd, Margot. *Christian Humanism and the Puritan Social Order*. Cambridge UP, 1987.

Tubb, Amos. "The Engagement Controversy: A Victory for the English Republic."

*Historical Research*, vol. 89, no. 243, 2016, pp. 42-61.

Ulmer, Gregory L. "Walden, Choragraphy: Frog Maintenance." *Discourse*, vol. 31, no.

1/2, 2009, pp. 72-85.

Vallance, Ted. "Political Thought." *Oxford Handbook of the English Revolution*. Edited

by Michael J. Braddick, Oxford UP, 2015, pp. 430-447.

Waller, Bruce N. *Consider Ethics: Theory and Readings*. Pearson Learning Solutions,

2016.

Walters, Lisa. *Margaret Cavendish: Gender, Science, and Politics*. Cambridge UP, 2014.

Warner, Michael. *Publics and Counterpublics*. Zone Books, 2002, p.90.

Watson, Gary. "Free Action and Free Will." *Mind*, vol. 96, no. 382, 1987, pp. 145-172.

Watson, Gary, editor. *Free Will*. Oxford UP, 1982.

Webb, Darren. "Contract and Class-Consciousness: Gerrard Winstanley and the Broken

Promises of the English Revolution." *History of Political Thought*, vol. 24, no. 4,

2003, pp. 577-598.

Webster, Erin. "Milton's Pandaemonium and the Infinitesimal Calculus." *English

Literary Renaissance*, vol. 45, no. 3, 2015, pp. 425-458.

Westman, Robert S. *The Copernican Question: Prognostication, Skepticism, and

Celestial Order*. U of California P, 2011.

Whichcote, Benjamin. *Works*, Aberdeen, 1751.

White, R.S. "Natural Law in History and Renaissance Literature." *Natural Law in

English Renaissance Literature*. Cambridge UP, 1996, pp. 1-20.

Wilson Bronwen and Paul Yachnin, editors. *Making Publics in Early Modern Europe:

People, Things, Forms of Knowledge*. Routledge, 2010.

Winter, Ernst F., editor and translator. *Discourse on Free Will: Erasmus and Luther*.

Continuum Books, 2002.

Witztum, Amos and Jeffrey T. Young. "Utilitarianism and the Role of Utility in Adam

Smith." *European Journal of the History of Economic Thought*, vol. 20, no. 4,

2011, pp. 572-602.

Wrightson, Keith. "The Social Order of Early Modern England: Three Approaches." *The World We Have Gained: Histories of Population and Social Structure*, edited by Lloyd Bonfield, Oxford UP, 1986, pp. 177-202.

Wolf, Susan. "Asymmetrical Freedom." *Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 77, 1980, pp. 151-166.

Worden, Blair. *God's Instruments: Political Conduct in the England of Oliver Cromwell*. Oxford UP, 2012.

- - - . *The Rump Parliament, 1648-1653*. Cambridge UP, 1974.

Yachnin, Paul. "*Hamlet* and the Social Thing in Early Modern England." *Making Publics in Early Modern England*, edited by Bronwen Wilson and Paul Yachnin. Routledge, 2010, pp. 81-95.

Yates, Frances A. *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*. U of Chicago P, 1963.

Zwicker, Steven N. *Cambridge Companion to English Literature, 1650-1740*. Cambridge UP, 1998.