'LOOKE ABOUT YOU': THE CONSTITUTION OF THE 'LEVELLER' SUBJECT IN AN ETHICAL EXPERIENCE OF ENGAGEMENT, ENGLAND 1640-1660.

by

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A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in partial fulfilment of
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Master of Arts

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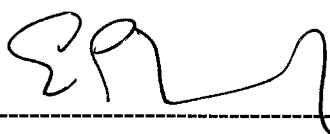

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Abstract

Within the revolutionary events of the English Civil War the political conditions of the war produced significant modifications in how individuals engaged in political activity. These modifications and the conflict they engendered were shaped by discourses produced within a vast print marketplace of pamphlets, sermons, treatises and newsbooks. In studying the tracts of this period, this work has isolated the moral debate on 'the Leveller' and the debate's interrelation to the practices of a 'sort of men' who formed a political organization to pursue a specific set of goals and ideals. Central to the practices of this organization was the promotion of an Agreement of the People as a model for settling the commonwealth. The examination of this group is organized by a Foucaultian methodology, whereby it analyses the way an ethical experience of engagement produced, within 'practices of the self,' the conditions for the leveller to constitute himself as an ethical subject of his political activity. Organizing the thesis within a different theoretical paradigm has enabled it to suggest the way the leveller introduced important changes to modes of political subjectivity based upon a problematization of the 'self' in ethical practice.

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I would like to thank Robert Goheen for being a constant companion during every stage of this thesis - from working out the outline of my topic, through the research and organization and, finally, the process of writing. He was always ready to provide his time, his effective skills of motivation and inspiration, and his acute ability as an editor. I have benefited from his company not only as a supervisor, but as a thinker and a friend. For guiding me through the administrative process, and working on my behalf in setting up a timely examination, I would like to thank Joan White and Professor Elliott. My family has been a constant source of support. Brandy, as a wife and mother, has devoted considerable time and sacrifice to my efforts and without her I would be lost. My parents, Howard, Deborah and my sisters helped in very important ways, emotionally and financially. Lastly, to my kids, who were often told to 'leave daddy alone' and 'to be quiet,' I not only thank them for this help, but I want to thank them for the times they did not, when wrestling with my son or listening to my daughter's stories was a stimulating break.

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List of Abbreviations

Clarke Papers	C. H. Firth, ed., *The Clarke Papers*, 4 volumes. (London: Camden Society, 1891 - 1901).
Haller	William Haller, ed., *Tracts on Liberty in the Puritan Revolution, 1639-1647*, 3 volumes. (New York: Octagon Book, Inc.,1965).
Haller and Davies	William Haller and Godfrey Davies, eds., *The Leveller Tracts 1647-1653*, (New York: Columbia University Press,1944).
Harleian Miscellany	*The Harleian Miscellany or a collection of scarce, curious, and entertaining pamphlets and tracts . . . found in the late Earl of Oxford's Library*, 10 vols., 1808-13.
McMichael and Taft	Jack R. McMichael and Barbara Taft, eds., *The Writings of William Walwyn* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989).
Morton	A. L. Morton, ed., *Freedom in Arms: A Selection of Leveller Writings* (New York: International Publishers, 1975)
Sharp	Andrew Sharp, ed., *The English Levellers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
TRHS	*Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*
Wolfe	Don M. Wolfe, ed., *Leveller Manifestoes of the Puritan Revolution*, (New York: Humanities Press,1944).
Woodhouse	A. S. P. Woodhouse ed., *Puritanism and Liberty: Being the Army Debates (1647-49) from the Clarke Manuscripts* (London: Dent, 1986).
Wootton	David Wootton, ed., *Divine Right Democracy: An Anthology of Political Writings in Stuart England* (London: Penguin Books, 1986).

Editorial Note

When quoting from seventeenth century texts, I have retained the original spelling and punctuation. However, I have occasionally modified erratic punctuation; random words and passages that were capitalized or in italics have also been modified. This editorial practice was not followed in quoting from Marchamont Nedham's work *The Case of the Commonwealth of England, Stated,* where the spelling is modified due to the editorial practice applied by Philip A. Knachel, the editor of the reprinted edition that I used. The prefixes E and 669.f. are used to signify the British Library pressmark for a tract included in the Thomason Tract collection. While most of the tracts used come from this collection, in a few exceptions the prefix W signifies a tract that can be located in the collection Early English Books, 1641-1700.

CHAPTER ONE: 'THE LEVELLERS'

On April 29, 1649, the funeral of Roger Lockyer was the focal point of an extraordinary scene on the streets of London.[1] The *Moderate* reported the following scene:

> Mr. Lockier that was shot Friday last at Pauls, was this day brought from Smithfield through the heart of the City to the new Church yard, the manner of his Funeral was most remarkable, considering the person to be in no higher quality then a private Trooper: In short thus, Between five and six of the clock in the afternoon, the body of the deceased came attended and was accompanied with many thousand Citizens, who seemed by countenance much dejected, and more discontented for the death of the said party. About 1000 went before the Corps, by five and six on file together, the Corps then came, with six Trumpets dolefully sounding a souldiers Knell as in their cases usuall, (although this more extraordinary;) the Troopers horse advanced in the Reer of this Regiment, clothed all over in mourning, and led by a Footman, (a Funeral Honor, equal to a chief Commander.) The Corps was adorned with bundles of Rosemarie on each side, one half of each was stained in blood and the sword of the deceased with them; some thousands succeeded these in Rank and Fil, and the Women brought up the Reer. Another thing which the City took great notice of, was, That most of this great number that thus attended the Corps, had Sea-Green, and black Ribbons in their Hats, or pinned to their Black Ribbons on their Brests. By that time the Corps came to the new Churchyard, some thousands of the higher sort, (that said they would not endanger themselves, to be publikely seen marching through the City,) were there ready to attend it with the same Colours of Sea-Green and Black, as the other. Some people derided them with the name of Levellers, as they past by, but their civilities would not admit of any notice to be taken of them. Others, That King Charles had not half so many Mourners to attend his Corps, when interred, as the Trooper. Others, That this was a high Affront to Parliament and Army, and admitted the City would not shut the Gates upon them: The Corps

[1] Lockyer was a soldier and agitator from Col. Whalley's regiment who had been singled out as the leader of a small mutiny of soldiers and shot according to martial law. For a detailed description of the mutiny see Ian Gentles, *The New Model Army* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 326-329. Christopher Hill referred to the funeral of Lockyer as "one of the greatest political demonstrations of the Revolution." Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (London: Penguin Books, 1975), 70.

interred, the mourners repaired home to their several habitatiens.[2]

Who were these mourners, numbering close to four thousand on this day, adorned in green and black, drawn from different social classes and aspersed as "Levellers" by those who watched the procession? Contemporary tracts give us a conflicting set of descriptions, 'honest' and 'public-spirited,' 'upright' and 'active' for the common freedom and safety of England, or 'turbulent,' and 'mad,' and a 'faction' of 'self-seeking' men motivated by 'ambition,' 'pride' and 'covetousness.' Depending upon the tract one reads, they are either a 'sort of men' who promote an *Agreement of the People* that is the most just and safe means to settle the common freedom, safety and peace of the Kingdom, or a 'sort of men' who promote an *Agreement of the People* that will destroy the fundamental constitution of England by introducing confusion and principles that will impede a settlement and overthrow all government in the Kingdom.[3]

Perhaps the fact that 'the Levellers' were discussed within a period of unprecedented conflict, both material and symbolic, can explain these conflicting descriptions, as England experienced a civil war in the field, and a war in the spoken and

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[2] *The Moderate*, 42 (Tuesday April 24 to Tuesday May 1, 1649) E 552 (20); The funeral was similarly described in other weekly news-sheets, including: *Mercurius Pragmaticus* (Tuesday, April 24 to Tuesday, May 1, 1649) E 552 (15); *The Man in the Moon*, 3 (April 23 to April 30, 1649) E 552 (8); *The Kingdomes Weekly Intelligencer*, 309 (April 24 to May 1) E 552 (1).

[3] William Walwyn remarked: "But what sort of men ever offered at, or discovered so rationall a way for men to come to so sure a foundation for peace and freedom, as we have done and long insisted on, namely by an Agreement of the People." William Walwyn, *The Fountain of Slaunder Discovered* (1649), McMichael and Taft, 378. Compare this with the different suggestions made in William Ashhurst, *Reasons Against Agreement with a late Printed Paper, intituled, Foundations of Freedome: Or, The Agreement of the People* (1648), E 536 (4).

written word to fix the meaning and define the structures of politics and religion. Throughout the sources of the period, particularly the 22,000 tracts collected by George Thomason, the historian is confronted with a multiplicity of voices and tract after tract attempts to synthesize these voices into factions, parties, sects and 'sorts of men.' The various characterizations of 'the Levellers' is part of this space, and the distinction between action justified by its relation to 'public good' or action that contributes to 'confusion' and the destruction of order is one of the many significant issues circulating throughout the period. To account for the contrast in terms used to characterize 'the Levellers,' historians have studied it as propaganda and ideological conflict between different parties competing to define the terms of settlement, the structure of the government and the nature of participation within that structure, or, additionally, for some historians, a conflict between social classes, determined within economic positions, waging a battle to create a political structure that could support and propagate their economic interests.

This thesis is an effort to think beyond these themes, to suggest that there is something 'more' that can be interpreted within the conflicting discussions of 'levelling' practice and it is that 'more' that the project aims to explain. However, first we will discuss the historiography of this group, and then we will establish the starting-point, in the seventeenth-century debate on 'the Leveller,' for asking a different set of questions about the tracts that engaged in this debate.

The Historiographical Creation of 'the Levellers'

J. G. A. Pocock summarized the creation of 'the Levellers' as a historiographical category, including its relation to another historiographical creation in the twentieth century, 'the Putney debates':

> We know how this term was employed to discredit a movement of more or less identifiable individuals, though it is less clear how far these adopted a term originally pejorative - as so often happens - to proclaim and identify themselves. As is perhaps not the case with 'the Ranters', we have evidence of a network of people acting together to determine and pursue shared purposes, and we find several of them, known to us independently of the Clarke papers, present at Putney and taking part in debates which appear to have been among officers and soldiers, but in which they intervened as civilians and members of a group we have resolved to term 'the Levellers.'[4]

One of the most significant features of twentieth century historiography on the English Revolution has been the emergence of substantial research into this movement or network of people, organized by historians as 'the Levellers.'

The historiography on the Levellers that emerged in this century was precipitated, and made possible, by several achievements in late-nineteenth century historical scholarship. First, the scholarship of Samuel Gardiner and Charles Firth introduced this group of men, particularly John Lilburne, into their detailed narratives of the Revolution. Neither Gardiner nor Firth treated the Levellers with the same comprehensive scope or with the same sympathy that would emerge in the twentieth century, but, in their work on

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[4] J. G. A. Pocock, "The true Levellers standard revisited: an afterword," in Michael Mendle, ed., *The Putney Debates of 1647: The Army, the Levellers and the English State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 283.

the tracts of the period, they identified this network of people and produced a starting point for recognizing many key tracts that would figure in later scholarship.[5] Firth's discovery and publication of *The Clarke Papers*, which included transcripts of the major debates in the General Council of the Army, produced the second major development. *The Clarke Papers* not only bequeathed to the twentieth century historian the infamous Putney Debates between the army leaders, agitators and members of the Leveller group, but also the most substantial source we have about the internal activities of the agitators. This is encapsulated in their letters, petitions and in their participation in the weekly meetings of the General Council of the Army. Gardiner's inclusion of the Levellers and the agitators within his narrative of the revolution, along with Firth's introduction to the *Clarke Papers* and his monumental work on the New Model Army, produced the possibility that future historians could work on the Thomason Tacts and the *Clarke Papers* and expand the scholarship on the Levellers and give them a preeminent place in the historiography of the English Revolution.

In the twentieth century, two major developments were instrumental in producing Leveller historiography. The first major development for scholarship on the Levellers was the publication of several collections reprinting the tracts of the group. In *Puritanism and Liberty*, A.S.P. Woodhouse extracted the Putney Debates from within *The Clarke Papers* and provided substantial extracts from the tracts of the period to

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[5] The fact that both Gardiner and Firth worked on the Thomason Tracts before they were catalogued by G. Fortescue makes their efforts to read and connect many diverse tracts to construct the origins of a Leveller oeuvre even more remarkable. Subsequently, with the help of the catalogue, historians would enlarge this oeuvre.

provide some of the context that surrounded the debates.[6] In extracting these debates from *The Clarke Papers,* Woodhouse was able to emphasize the participation of the Levellers in the debates and in the context of the debates in a way that Firth's publication could not. The connection between the Putney debates and the Levellers would become the major focal point for future scholarship. Within the same period, Don Wolfe reprinted the Levellers' mass petitions and the *Agreements of the People* in his collection *The Leveller Manifestoes.*[7] This collection contains the essential documents for studying the constitutional solutions proposed by the group and the central petitions which contain their political, economic and religious concerns and contain their solutions for those concerns. William Haller and Godfrey Davies produced the collection, *The Leveller Tracts,* which supplanted the volume by Wolfe by including tracts which contain less constitutional content and more descriptive content on the internal practices of the group.[8] From this starting-point four more volumes of Leveller tracts would be published leading up to our present time.[9] Together, these collections form the basic starting point

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[6] A. S. P. Woodhouse ed., *Puritanism and Liberty: Being the Army Debates (1647-49) from the Clarke Manuscripts* (London: Dent, 1986).

[7] Don M. Wolfe, ed., *Leveller Manifestoes of the Puritan Revolution,* (New York: Humanities Press,1944).

[8] William Haller and Godfrey Davies, eds., *The Leveller Tracts 1647-1653,* (New York: Columbia University Press,1944).

[9] A. L. Morton, ed., *Freedom in Arms: A Selection of Leveller Writings* (New York: International Publishers, 1975); G. E. Aylmer, ed., *The Levellers in the English Revolution* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1975); Jack R. McMichael and Barbara Taft, eds., *The Writings of William Walwyn* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989); Andrew Sharp, ed., *The English Levellers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

for any student of 'the Leveller's' and the tracts included constitute the "bibliographical landmarks that the modern student takes for granted."[10]

The second major development toward creating 'the Levellers' was the production of three monographs devoted to the study of this group: Theodore Pease's *The Leveller Movement*, Joseph Frank's *The Levellers*, and H. N. Brailsford's *The Levellers and the English Revolution*.[11] Each of these monographs worked on the Thomason Tracts' collection to expand the bibliography of Leveller tracts and provide the essential analysis of how these tracts could be connected to a network of people who established a political organization according to a set of common goals and ideas. Pease focussed on the legal and constitutional ideas of the Levellers as they related to what he saw as the central political issue of the period, namely parliamentary sovereignty. Frank's work on the Levellers offers the most comprehensive treatment of the tracts they produced. For Frank, the central appeal of the Levellers is their production of a secular political theory and their elaboration of a notion of individualism that he sees them borrowing from a Renaissance and Reformation intellectual tradition. Brailsford's study of the Levellers lacks the detailed textual analysis of Pease and Frank but, in many ways,

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[10] Blair Worden, "The Levellers in history and memory, c. 1660-1960," in Michael Mendle, ed., *The Putney Debates of 1647: The Army, the Levellers and the English State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 259.

[11] Theodore Calvin Pease, *The Leveller Movement* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1965); Joseph Frank, *The Levellers* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1955); H. N. Brailsford, *The Levellers and the English Revolution* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961).

is a more appealing study. The book's lack of a systematic argument is more than balanced by the impassioned prose and the vigour that sustains Brailsford's narrative organized by the themes of conflict and battle. Today, we may be hesitant to ascribe to this conflict the same class dichotomy that informed Brailsford's interpretation, but we remain indebted to him for his description of the passion and the strife which surrounded the emergence of the Levellers and pitted them against the Parliament and the Army leadership. In each work, the Levellers' role in pushing the constitutional ideas of Parliament forward and framing them within their *Agreements of the People* is emphasized, and together they provide the most complete study of the Leveller organization that emerged in London and of the range of goals that this group pursued. These three works have combined to ensure that the Levellers can remain a focal point for the study of the revolution for future generations of historians. These three monographs and the collections that have reprinted the essential Leveller tracts remain the starting point for any historian of this group. For my part, even as I pursue a study within a fundamentally different theoretical paradigm, constructing my bibliography began with these works, as did my interest in the Levellers.

The historiography of the Levellers is integrally linked to two major themes of early-modern English historiography: the first is the effort to introduce a more varied interpretation of early-modern politics by focussing on popular forms of participation; the second is the study of political radicalism in the early modern period.

Traditional historiography considered politics in early-modern England as the activity of an elite who comprised the "political nation," defined as "the members of both

houses of parliament, the governors of counties and towns, and the enfranchised classes in the constituencies"[12] The traditional emphasis on studying a 'political nation' has recently been challenged by historians attempting to examine and describe a more dynamic structure of political experience. Increasingly, historiography has turned to studying previously neglected groups to impart to them a 'politics.'[13] The most detailed way this has been done is in the local study of a variety of social settings, the village, the parish, the neighbourhood to suggest that a higher percentage of the populace actively participated in a multitude of local offices.[14] These works have necessitated that we recognize the centrality of the 'locality' in the formation of economic, political and cultural relationships between individuals. For the individual in this period, community was defined within a small network of people, spaces and institutions. In London,

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[12] Tim Harris, "Introduction," in Tim Harris, ed., *The Politics of the Excluded, c1500-1850* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).

[13] A recent collection of essays bears witness to this emerging historiographical field, Harris, *The Politics of the Excluded.*

[14] In addition to the essays in the book cited above, notable examples include: Derek Hirst, *The Representative of the People?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975); Valerie Pearl, *London and the Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961): 45-69; Patrick Collinson, *De Republica Anglorum: or, History with the Politics Put Back* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Joan R. Kent, *The English Village Constable, 1580 - 1642* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986); Keith Wrightson has significantly contributed to this in his books and many essays; a recent example is, "The Politics of the Parish in Early Modern England," in Paul Griffiths, Adam Fox and Steve Hindle, eds., *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996). For an example of how this can be pursued in the late medieval period see R. B. Goheen, "Peasant Poltics? Village Community and the Crown in Fifteenth-Century England," *American Historical Review* 96 (Feb. 1991): 42-62.

community was determined for the individual by his street, ward, parish, and trade.[15] This urban situation is similar to the experience of villagers in the countryside, leading Keith Wrightson and David Levine to suggest that "as a constellation of institutions focussing their interaction, as a network of ties between kin, friends, and neighbors, the village community had a special claim on their loyalties, a special place in their sense of personal identity."[16] Within these urban and rural communities there was an extensive range of participation of local householders in governance, an important point being made by a number of recent works by historians. These studies have expanded our notions of who constituted the 'governors' and how the relationship between them and the 'governed' was experienced.

The historiographical picture established by all these monographs - of the participatory nature of local government[17], the widespread participation in judicial

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[15] Jeremy Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society: A London Suburb in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 60-1, 187, 207; Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), 63.

[16] Keith Wrightson and David Levine, *Poverty and Piety in an English Village: Terling, 1525 - 1700* (New York: Academic Press, 1979), 75.

[17] Mark Goldie, "The Unacknowledged Republic: Officeholding in Early Modern England," in Tim Harris, ed., *The Politics of the Excluded, c1500-1850* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 153-194. Steve Hindle, "The Political Culture of the Middling Sort in English Rural Communities, c1550-1700," in Tim Harris, ed., *The Politics of the Excluded, c1500-1850* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 125-152.

functions[18], the importance of crowds[19], of rumour[20], of riot and demonstrations[21], and the "social depths of politics"[22] in the village, parish, county and neighbourhood - provides a very different picture of early modern politics than traditional historiography does. To use one example, historians have studied the crowd to focus on riots as popular forms of resistance. This focus has developed studies on the importance of Shrove Tuesday for apprentices and of collective action for villagers to act against threats to subsistence, to act on behalf of common rights, to act for the enforcement of traditional market regulations, or to act against disafforestation and fen drainage.[23] Historians

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[18] Cynthia B. Herrup, *The Common Peace: Participation and the criminal law in seventeenth century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Steve Hindle, "The Keeping of the Public Peace," in Paul Griffiths, Adam Fox and Steve Hindle, eds., *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 213-248.

[19] Tim Harris, *London Crowds in the Reign of Charles II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

[20] Ethan H. Shagan, "Rumours and Popular Politics in the Reign of Henry VIII," in Tim Harris, ed., *The Politics of the Excluded, c1500-1850* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 30-66; Dagmar Friest, *Governed by Opinion: Politics, Religion and the Dynamics of Communication in Stuart London, 1637-1645* (New York: Taurus, 1997), ch. 5.

[21] R. B. Manning, *Village Revolts: Social Protest and Popular Disturbances in England, 1509-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988); John Walter, "Grain riots and popular attitudes to the law," in John Brewer and John Styles, eds., *An Ungovernable People: The English and their law in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (London: Hutchinson, 1980); Buchanan Sharp, *In Contempt of All Authority: Rural Artisans and Riot in the West of England 1586-1660* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); See also the essays in Paul Slack, ed., *Rebellion, Protest and the Social Order in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

[22] Collinson, *De Republic Anglorum*, 15.

[23] Keith Lindley, "Riot Prevention and Control in Early Stuart London," *TRHS*, 5th series, 33 (1983), 109-126.; Brian Manning, *The English People and the English Revolution*, 2nd edition (London: Bookmarks, 1991), 181-211, 266-280; David Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), ch. 5.

working on these instances of the crowd have made it difficult to maintain the view that these crowds, and their participants, were "devoid of political consciousness and their writings or utterances do not employ a political vocabulary" and, instead, see them embracing "a set of expectations about the proper exercise of authority."[24] However, the institution of the crowd was not only one for violence and riot, but crowds were "invited to celebrate the accession of a new monarch, royal coronations, political anniversaries, hear royal proclamations, witness royal entries or civic inaugurations, watch public executions, and even participate in imposing justice on convicted criminals (this was the logic behind the pillory, of course)."[25] In the everyday practices of the community, and on the occasions of collective action, a much wider group can be seen participating in politics than is suggested by the traditional notions of a 'political nation.' This leads Tim Harris to conclude:

> not only did the mass of the population possess political opinions which they were capable of articulating - often powerfully - in a public forum, but they could also be active participants in the political process themselves. Many of those we think of as being excluded were actually included, either in a formal, institutionalized way, or in an extra-institutional sense.[26]

The study of the Levellers and the politics of the English Revolution has been a focal point for reconsidering the role of non-elites in politics. In recent decades, historians have produced systematic studies that consider the events which followed the convening of Parliament in 1640 as something new in the history of popular participation

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[24] Manning, *Village Revolts*, 2-3; John Walter, *Understanding Popular Violence in the English Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 5.

[25] Harris, "Introduction," 13.

[26] Ibid., 1.

in politics.[27] From the pioneering work of Christopher Hill and Brian Manning the events of the period are no longer considered to be dominated by the decisions made by elites. Brian Manning summed up this approach defining his study of the "middle sort of people" in the revolution as setting out "to discover the role of popular grievances, popular movements and popular aspirations in the revolutionary struggles of the decade 1640 to 1649."[28] Manning has postulated that the 'middling sort of people,' their attitudes and intervention, were decisive in shaping the course of the English Revolution and he has developed this theme in two major studies. The first, *The English People and the English Revolution,* studied urban and rural demonstrations in the 1630s and early 1640s and the role of the populace in the outbreak of the civil war and the production of divisions between parties. The second, *1649: The Crisis of the English Revolution,* studied the post-war conditions and the way "people from outside the governing class - private soldiers, apprentices, women, and numbers of the middle ranks of society - intervened in the great affairs of politics and religion."[29] In this work, the Levellers were a focal point for Manning to describe the instrumental role played by the middling-sort of people.[30] Similarly, in *Revel, Riot and Rebellion*, David Underdown studied 'popular politics' to impart to the 'populace' a formative role in producing the events of the

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[27] For a comprehensive discussion of this historiography and the debates it has included see R. C. Richardson, *The Debate on the English Revolution,* Third Edition (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

[28] Manning, *The English People and the English Revolution*, 2.

[29] Brian Manning, *1649: The Crisis of the English Revolution* (London: Bookmarks, 1992), 9.

[30] Ibid., 173-213.

Revolution. He studied patterns of allegiance through a myriad of social, cultural and economic factors and analysed the way popular Parliamentarianism and popular Royalism were developed according to regional variation and "local differences in social structure, economic development and culture."[31] What is clear from his work is that the populace were conscious of their choices and based their decisions on their own interpretation of the events. They formed these interpretation according to their own experiences within the culture and social environment of their local communities. The role of the 'populace' continues to be developed by historians, including two important recent works, John Walter's *Understanding Popular Violence in the English Revolution* and Keith Lindley's *Popular Politics and Religion in Civil War London*. John Walter suggested that the period of 1640 to 1642 was a period of politicisation that created "a new political space for popular agency," and he organized his study of this into a micro-history of the popular demonstrations in Colchester. [32] Keith Lindley has similarly constructed a book around developing the nature of 'popular politics', suggesting that

> within one-year, from May 1640 to May 1641, most of the salient features of a popular intervention into national politics, that periodically helped shape events during the rest of the decade, became visible and familiar. The year witnessed the rise of mass politics as Londoners rioted and demonstrated, organized mammoth petitions, and lobbied both King and parliament.[33]

These studies share a concern for stressing the emergence of 'popular politics' in the revolution, and for the instrumental role the 'populace' played in dictating the outcome of

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[31] Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion*, 4.

[32] Walter, *Understanding Popular Violence*, 291.

[33] Lindley, *Popular Politics*, 4.

the war and the post-war settlement.

The Levellers are studied as a sophisticated and organized group who emerged from this 'popular politics' and the first organization to put into a more systematic form the aspirations and views of the 'middling-sort of people.' Brailsford devoted his study of the Levellers to this theme, suggesting that the importance of the Levellers was that "a group hitherto inarticulate and unorganized is forcing its way for the first time into history - the middle sort of people, the craftsmen, the tradesmen and the peasants."[34] Since his study of the Levellers, it is increasingly difficult to maintain this view as historians have shown that the 'middling sort' were not inarticulate prior to the emergence of the Leveller movement, but this does not make the movement less important or less interesting in the study of 'poplar politics.' Instead, it provides historians with more options for studying what Brailsford defined as a movement that "organized" a "third force" in revolutionary politics - beside Parliament and the Army - one that was "drawn from the lower middle class, the skilled craftsmen and the small farmers."[35] Although it no longer appears as the "first time in history" that the middling-sort participated in politics, the Levellers remain an interesting focal point for studying political practice. As G. E. Aylmer suggested, "no where before the 1760s, or even perhaps before 1789, do we find the combination of radical journalism and pamphleteering, ideological zeal, political activism, and mass organization" that can be

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[34] Brailsford, *The Levellers*, 527.

[35] Ibid., 9.

found in the Leveller movement in the revolutionary period.[36] As this statement suggests, the Levellers have been a central topic in studies of political radicalism in the early-modern period.

The historiography of seventeenth century radicalism is based on studying the central question: What were the radical ideas that flourished during the period and informed political practice? The groups studied within the umbrella of radicalism were a minority leading many historians to suggest that their influence on Parliamentarians and the army was minimal, and that their overall importance in the events of the revolution has been over-emphasized by the historians of these groups. Increasingly, historians have argued that the civil war was not caused by radical notions held by Parliamentarians and the events leading to the abolition of the monarchy are often portrayed as the hesitant initiatives of conservatives.[37] As F. D. Dow summarizes the reaction of some historians to those who deny the importance of radicalism: "some writers have continued to assert that even though radicalism did not conquer the citadels of power in mid-seventeenth-century England, popular pressure and radical agitation deeply affected the political and intellectual climate of these years."[38]

No historian has done more to maintain the importance of the various sects and

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[36] G. E. Aylmer, "Introduction," in G. E. Aylmer, ed., *The Levellers in the English Revolution* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1975), 9.

[37] For a very good brief discussion of these views and the debates it produced see F. D. Dow, *Radicalism in the English Revolution 1640-1660* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 1-9. For a good example of the case made for radicalism see Brian Manning's introduction to the second edition of his *The English People and the English Revolution*, 7-48.

[38] Ibid., 2.

groups who participated in the revolution than Christopher Hill. In *The World Turned Upside Down,* Hill studied what he called "the revolt within the Revolution" and he provided a detailed sketch of "the fascinating flood of radical ideas" during the revolutionary period.[39] Throughout the pages of his book, the Levellers, Diggers, Fifth Monarchists and religious sects are studied in terms of their contribution to "the idea that the world might be *permanently* turned upside down."[40] Hill provides a concise summary of his interest in these groups when he says:

> There were, we may oversimplify, two revolutions in mid-seventeenth-century England. The one which succeeded established the sacred rights of property (abolition of feudal tenures, no arbitrary taxation), gave political power to the propertied (sovereignty of Parliament and common law, abolition of prerogative courts), and removed all impediments to the triumph of the ideology of the men of property - the protestant ethic. There was, however, another revolution which never happened, though from time to time it threatened. This might have established communal property, a far wider democracy in political and legal institutions, might have disestablished the state church and rejected the protestant ethic.[41]

Based significantly around Hill's work, and the work by historians he has influenced, the study of the Levellers, Gerrard Winstanley and the Diggers, the Ranters and the Fifth-Monarchist millenarians has become a significant subject where historians attempt to assess tradition and innovation and the long term consequence of radical ideas about government, natural law, social contract, sin and so on. Nevertheless, the study of these groups has provoked many recriminations from historians who question the importance of these groups and the study of them, which we can note in the following reaction of

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[39] Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down,* 15

[40] Ibid., 17

[41] Ibid., 15.

Mark Kishlansky to Hill's work, *The Experience of Defeat*:

> The centre of [Hill's *The Experience of Defeat*] remains the cranks, crackpots, screwballs and fanatics, the nutters and kooks who appear in the wake of every genuine movement for social reform and who become the principal barrier to lasting change . . .Nothing has done more to diminish the centrality of the English Revolution that did occur than obsessive concentration upon the English Revolution that didn't occur.[42]

For those of us who share Hill's sympathy for this 'lunatic fringe,' his work remains the primary bulwark against historians who would suggest a more narrow view of revolutionary politics. Hill has produced an empirical body of work that is difficult to ignore by focussing exclusively on Parliament, the Army and the religious elite.

While the study of the role of the Levellers within the events of the period, including their relationship with the army, the populace of London and parliamentary leaders, has been significant, the focal point of Leveller scholarship has been on their radical political theory and ideology. We can generalize this emphasis according to two themes. In the first, the Levellers appear as the proponents of a radical liberal and democratic set of ideas about the nature of government and the political subject.[43] In the second, they become the expression of a petty bourgeois ideology, whereby their political ideas stem from their socio-economic position - that of a middling sort, and their ideology is studied as the expression of class interest and an attempt to construct a political

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[42] Quoted in Richardson, *The Debate on the English Revolution*, 184.

[43] This focus is evident in the work of Pease and Frank. Theodore Pease defined the central initiative of the Levellers as "the establishment of a democratic government limited and bounded by law" (Pease, *The Leveller Movement*, 1), while according to Frank, "The central purpose of the Leveller party was to establish a constitutional democracy in England" (Frank, *The Levellers*, 245).

structure amenable to their economic interests.[44] In the first theme, the main emphasis is on a set of natural rights that historians see the Levellers trying to codify in their *Agreements of the People*, in their petitions and which they elaborate on in their tracts.[45] These include liberty of conscience, liberty of the press and equality before the law. The second theme does not necessarily challenge this list, but studies the extent to which these ideas stem from a set of economic interests which manifest themselves in the Levellers' attack on tithes, monopolies, imprisonment for debt and a host of other social problems. The type of liberty the Levellers are seen to be propagating is one that would produce a political system in which the 'industrious sort,' or small merchant producers, could pursue their economic interests free from the constraints of a monarchial structure that supports a set of economic privileges for a noble class.[46] This helps to explain for these historians the background to the Levellers' notion of parliamentary sovereignty, the elimination of the negative votes of the House of Lords and the King and the production of a legal system that would protect the independent householder rather than maintain the status of lawyers, nobles and religious leaders. While these two themes agree on a set of

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[44] This emphasis can be found in the work of Manning, *1649: The Crisis of the English Revolution*; Brailsford, *The Levellers*; Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*.

[45] For a brief synopsis of this interpretation of the Agreement see, David Wootton, "Leveller democracy and the Puritan Revolution," in J.H. Burns, ed., *The Cambridge history of political thought, 1450-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 412.

[46] This view has been forcibly propounded by Hill in his study of the contrast between the ideas of the Levellers and the more communistic ideas of the Diggers. Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, ch.7. See also the distinctions made between the Levellers' as representative of the middling-sort and the Diggers, *1649: The Crisis of the English Revolution*, 60-64, 102-132.

core interpretations of the Levellers' ideology, including the emphasis on liberty and the decentralization of political power, they disagree over whether or not it can be attributed to a shared social basis, or whether or not it is the result of a shared humanist background that includes Protestant and Renaissance traditions.[47] Where the debate between these varied perspectives conflicts most forcibly is over the discussion of the Levellers position on the franchise.

The debate on the franchise is dominated by C.B. Macpherson's thesis in *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*.[48] Prior to Macpherson's work, it was taken for granted by historians that the Levellers represented a modern democratic ideology that included a desire for manhood suffrage. Macpherson scrutinized the Levellers' three versions of an Agreement of the People, the debates at the Putney church, and statements made by the Levellers in their tracts, to formulate an argument that there is no evidential basis for suggesting that manhood suffrage was the type of franchise that the Levellers supported. Instead, Macpherson argued that the Levellers' franchise proposals consistently excluded a large segment of the male population in

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[47] We should note that another important debate between historians is over whether or not secularism and rationalism are more important in Leveller ideology than religious origins of their ideology. Proponents of the Levellers as secular thinkers dominate this debate. See Pease, *Leveller Movement*, 217; Frank, *Levellers*, 245-6; Brailsford, *The Levellers*, 537. The argument for the importance of religion can be found in William Haller and Godfrey Davies, "Introduction," in William Haller and Godfrey Davies. eds., *The Leveller Tracts 1647-1653* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944), 3; J. C. Davis, "The Levellers and Christianity," in Brian Manning, ed., *Politics, Religion and The English Civil War* (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), 225-250.

[48] C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), ch.3.

addition to their exclusion of women. The principal exclusion that Macpherson suggests in their franchise proposals is of servants, including wage-earners, alms-takers and vagrants or beggars.[49] Macpherson summarized his argument the following way:

> It is argued that the Levellers always intended not a manhood franchise in the ordinary modern sense of the term, but a franchise excluding servants and alms-takers; and they saw no inconsistency between this exclusion and their assertion of the natural rights of every man to vote, because of certain assumptions they made about the nature of freedom.[50]

The thesis set out by Macpherson was instrumental for those historians who sought to ground the Levellers' ideology within a social basis of bourgeois identity and differentiate this ideology from the noble elite and the poor as it is exemplified in the ideas of the Diggers.

Since Macpherson produced his work, his thesis has gained significant support, but it has also been challenged by many historians who still argue that the Leveller's supported manhood suffrage. Two main counter arguments have emerged addressing Macpherson's thesis. First, the argument that the Levellers were democrats who were forced to make a set of compromises in their position. This argument emphasizes the first Agreement as the basic statement of Leveller ideology and it sees the subsequent two Agreements as including modifications designed to gain a wider support among the elite.[51] Second, the argument that the Levellers intended to give the vote to all heads of

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[49] Ibid., 137-159.

[50] Ibid., 111.

[51] This argument is set out by J. C. Davis, "The Levellers and Democracy," in Charles Webster, ed., *The Intellectual Revolution of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1974),70-78; A. L. Morton, *The World of the Ranters* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1970), ch. 7.

households, excluding only living-in servants, vagabonds and women.[52] Both these arguments see the Levellers as more inclusive than Macpherson does and they deny that the Levellers intended for wage-earners and the recipients of poor relief to be excluded. These debates continue to inform the study of the Levellers' political theory and the position one adopts very much depends upon the tract one decides to emphasize, the amount of homogeneity that one ascribes to the Leveller movement and the work one does in working out the complicated and ambiguous seventeenth century usage of terms such as democracy, servants, the poor and so on. What the historians of the Leveller movement have come to agree upon is that a network of people organized themselves together to promote an agreement of the people that was a practice which came in conflict with Parliament's attempt to settle the commonwealth. Behind the promotion of this agreement there was a sophisticated organization and shared set of values regarding the centrality of law, the need for social and legal reform, the demand for religious toleration and the importance of parliamentary sovereignty and the House of Commons as the representative of 'the People.'

Notwithstanding the importance of these studies of the Levellers, Michael Walzer's *The Revolution of the Saints* remains the most sophisticated and intellectually challenging analysis of radical politics in early-modern England.[53] Walzer defined the

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[52] This is the argument outlined by Keith Thomas, "The Levellers and the Franchise," in G. E. Aylmer, ed., *The Interregnum: The Quest for Settlement 1646-1660* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1972), 57-78.

[53] Michael Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints: A Study in the Origins of Radical Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965).

central aim of his work as the study of how "the idea that specifically designated and organized bands of men might play a creative part in the political world, destroying the established order and reconstructing society" emerged and led to modifications in political practice.[54] In the Calvinist saint Walzer saw the emergence in history of the "character of a revolutionary" or "the active, ideologically committed radical."[55] For Walzer, the combination of social, economic and political processes and the emergence of a Calvinist ideology produced the "new politics of revolution"; it was a mode of politics that demanded a "new man" with Calvinist ideology providing the background for the saint to make his "personality" his "own most radical innovation."[56] Walzer's work borrows heavily from the work of Max Weber and the connections he established between puritanism and economic activity during this period, but Walzer directed his application of this method to the connections between puritanism and political activity. For Walzer, the men who created this ideology and put it into practice were the intellectual elite of English society, the ministers and Parliamentarian gentry. In seeing "puritanism as the earliest form of political radicalism" and central to the production of the English Revolution, he explicitly ignored the individuals who figured in the work of Christopher Hill and other historians of radicalism.[57] As Walzer described his exclusion:

> I have by and large ignored those tiny sects on the left-wing, so to speak, of English Protestantism, whose members have so often been treated if not as the

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[54] Ibid., 1.

[55] Ibid., 2, 4.

[56] Ibid., 2, 3.

[57] Ibid., vii.

> counterparts then at least as the ancestors of modern democrats, socialists, and communist. . . However important they are to latter-day genealogists, the sects (even, the Levellers) are of very minor importance in seventeenth-century history.[58]

Walzer's work is a challenging intellectual study of radical politics and the English Revolution. It provides an analysis of political activity and thought that I think makes it the preeminent book on the subject and the starting point for asking challenging questions about the English revolution. This thesis is built on the possibilities set out by Walzer more than any other historical work. My quarrel with him, as we will see, is significant and touches the fundamental categories used to study history, but we will also note the number of meeting points that are established between my work and his. My thesis also rejects his exclusion of the Levellers as "unimportant."[59] There are very important themes and motifs that are shared between the Levellers and the puritan ministers and Parliamentarians which are worth studying, as is the application of these themes by the Levellers to a fundamentally different type of political practice, carried out by a different social group. My thesis shares with Walzer the focal point of studying how a group of individuals organized together for political practice within the problematic of being serviceable to God and the commonwealth. It shares his interest in how that service was directed toward both a critique of the established institutions and the promotion of a new model for government. Similarly, this thesis will show that this process involved an important problematization of political identity and moral character. However, my

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[58] Ibid., viii.

[59] Ibid., viii.

interest is in establishing how these motifs were instrumental to the political subjectivity of the Levellers, and how their response to these problems is important for the political history of this period. However, to pursue this line of questioning, this thesis will not trace the way 'subjectivity' is embodied in an ideology that controls and directs political practice, but the way the 'subjectivity' of the Levellers was constituted in an ethical experience of engagement, embodied in practices of the self and not in ideology. To establish the starting point for asking a different set of questions and pursuing a different method of study, it is necessary to briefly outline the way 'the Leveller' was the topic of an intense debate in the pamphlets produced during the revolutionary period.

The Pamphlet Debate on 'the Levellers'

At the time of Lockyer's funeral, in 1649, the English people, particularly residents of London, were very familiar with the use of term 'Leveller,' and the colour green, to signify a group of civilians and soldiers participating in the debates and affairs of the nation. One could see or hear about 'Levellers' within a number of central social sites where the residents of London met with one another: in St. Paul's Churchyard and the bookstalls that littered the area surrounding the cathedral, in Newgate and in trials at the Old Bailey, in the Tower, around Westminister, at meetings in taverns throughout the city.

The earliest recorded usage of the term 'Leveller' to refer to a 'sort of men' was in late 1647. There is some evidence that the army grandees coined the term while their

headquarters were at Putney, using it to refer to both the agitators in the army and their civilian friends.[60] Its first recorded usage in print is in a declaration from the King when he suggested that, in the army, "the Levellers doctrine, is rather countenanced then punished."[61] During the same time, between November and December, newsbooks, along with other tracts, began to use the term. The newsbook *Mercurius Pragmaticus* suggested the term be used to refer to the "Adjutators" as it explained: "we must leave off the names of Adjutators now, and take up a new one, since his *Majesty* in his *Declaration* hath Christned those Pagan Counsellors, by the name of Levellers."[62] Another newsbook suggested that the agents of the five regiments of horse "have given themselves a new name, viz. Levellers, for they intend to set all straight, and raise a parity and community in the kingdom."[63] Employing this particular term, 'the Leveller,' suggested links to the use of the term in the early seventeenth-century to refer to those who pulled down enclosures. According to this usage, it was suggested that these 'sort of men' were promoting an equality of right and the elimination of distinctions between people, while also promoting an equality of estates and communal ownership of land.

The production of the new term emerged out of a pre-existing discourse on 'sectaries' in the army and in the London gathered churches. *A Bloody Independent Plot*

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[60] This suggestion can be found in John Lilburne, *The Legal Fundamental Liberties of the People of England* (1649), E 560 (14), 36.

[61] *His Maiesties Most Gracious Declaration* (1647) E 414 (6), 3. I was pointed to this quote by Worden, "The Levellers in history and memory," 281.

[62] *Mercurius Pragmaticus* (Tuesday November 9 to Tuesday November 16, 1647) E 414 (15), 70.

[63] Quoted in Worden, "The Levellers in history and memory," 280.

Discovered suggested a commonality between "Agitators, Levellers, Anabaptists, Brownists, and other Sectaries and London Agents."[64] John Lilburne and Richard Overton, who had previously been well-established targets in discussions on 'sectaries,' were implicated as the leaders of this group, thus ensuring a continuity with earlier discussions of sectarianism. The third part of Thomas Edwards' *Gangraena* specified a connection between Lilburne and Overton and their leadership over a group within the London population of Independent 'sectaries.'[65] It was very common for tracts to refer to "John Lilburne's generation," while another tract used the term "Lilburnists" to refer to same group that became, by 1649, well-known to the reading public as 'the Levellers.'[66]

Fixing a new term emphasized the break between this 'sort of men' and Parliament. It was commonplace to identify this group of 'Levellers' with the agitators in the Army. *The Character of the Agitator* suggested this connection and described the agitator as "a late spurious Monster of John Lilburnes generation."[67] Therefore, the shift to the term 'Leveller' was used to divide a distinctive group from the larger Parliamentary parties - Presbyterian and Independent - and the Army leadership, who

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[64] *A Bloody Independent Plot Discovered* (1647), E 419 (2).

[65] Thomas Edwards, *Gangraena* (Exeter: The Rota, 1977), part 3, 148-158.

[66] *Questions Propounded To all well-affected wealthy Citizens and others with relations to the present Distempers in, and proceedings of the Army* (1647), E 393 (23), 5; William Prynne, *The Levellers levelled to the very Ground* (1647), E 428 (7), 2.

[67] *The Character of the Agitator* (1647), E 414 (3), A2. Another tract made this explicit connection between the two as it characterized the agitator, "he hath continuously his sword in one hand, and one of Lilburne's Epistles in the other." *The Agitator Anatomized, or the Character of an Agitator* (1648), E 434 (6), 2.

were acting in solidarity with the agitators or agents in the army. As one tract describes it:

> this sort of men who (like other factions, content in time to own those names which the scorn of others first puts upon them) are called Levellers, were at first mingled with the best Patriats, and Assertors of our Freedom, that if they themselves had not violently burst forth, there had never been known a separation, but they had equally with them shar'd the glory of our Settlement, and never been noted Common disturbers.[68]

The Case of the Commonwealth of England, Stated suggested that "they began to appear considerable in view," in 1647, having "divided in affection from the Parliament."[69] *A Serious Aviso to the Good People of this Nation, Concerning that Sort of Men, called Levellers* says they "made themselves another body," while another tract informed Parliament that the "generation of men which are truly called Levellers," is " a Faction grown out of Your own Bowels."[70] Similarly, *Certaine Considerations Touching the Present Factions in The Kings Dominions* makes the distinction between Parliament's "well-affected party" and Lilburne's "well-affected party."[71]

For these tracts, the significance of this new 'body' of men who had broken from the Parliament and the army grandees was their claim to speak for 'the people' and act on

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[68] J. Philolaus, *A Serious Aviso to the Good People of this Nation, Concerning that Sort of Men, called Levellers* (1649), E 555 (28), 4-5.

[69] Marchamont Nedham, *The Case of the Commonwealth of England, Stated,* Edited by Philip A. Knachel (Charlottesville: The University of Press of Virginia, 1969), 96.

[70] Philolaus, *A Serious Aviso to the Good People of this Nation, Concerning that Sort of Men, called Levellers* (1649), 5; *An Anatomy of Lievt. Col. John Lilburn's Spirit and Pamphlets* (1649), E 575 (21), A2.

[71] *Certaine Considerations Touching the Present Factions in The Kings Dominions* (1648), E 466 (3), 12.

their behalf by suggesting their own model for settling the Kingdom, an *Agreement of the People*. Historians have taught us to understand the relation of the ideas proposed in these Agreements to the larger theoretical discussions in other tracts, and to understand the extent to which a certain set of notions, about the franchise and so on, were quite different from what the majority in England thought and suggested. Parliament declared *The Agreement of the People* of 1647 "destructive to the being of Parliaments, and Fundamental Government of the Kingdom."[72] *The Character of the Agitator* described the agitator, and by implication 'the Leveller,' as the "universal Enemy to all Order and Government, both in Church and State. Hee will have, and acknowledge, no King, Parliament, Majestrate, or Superior Power in the State but himself."[73] This "generation of men" are out to destroy the King, and the Agitator is "a meere Atheist in his heart, a Heretick in his braine, a Devil in his tongue, a Jesuit in his Consulations, a traytor in his Agitations."[74] This agitator is "agitated," "turbulent in spirit," of "excentrick Motions," and as one commentator was to say of the Levellers, "what these people aim at and how they would settle is as hard for me to determine as in what point of the compass the wind will sit next, since they are every jot as giddy and rapid in their motions."[75]

The ideas within these Agreements were not the only point of attack, nor

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[72] *An Ordinance of both Houses concerning the chusing of Common-Councell men and other Officers of the City of London,* (December 17, 1647) in C.H. Firth, ed., *Acts and ordinances of the interregnum, 1642-1660*, vol.1 (London, H.M.S.O., 1911),1046.

[73] *The Character of the Agitator*, 4.

[74] Ibid., 5.

[75] Ibid., 4; Nedham, *The Case of the Commonwealth*, 96.

necessarily the most important. What was also questioned was 'the Levellers' as moral agents in their exercise of freedom: a freedom they exercised to suggest a settlement of their own and offer it to 'the people' outside Parlimentary leadership and direction, to suggest the method of getting subscriptions, and to suggest those who qualified as the subscribers. Discussing these practices Nedham suggested that these 'sort of men' were spreading "strange principles of pretended freedom among the common soldiery and people."[76] Discussing the presumption of 'the Levellers' to "direct their wisdom what to do" and to define "what is liberty, and what is not, and how it ought to be established," he styled their practices as "bold and impudent behaviour." [77]

Thereby, one finds terms with considerable moral significance involved in the discussion of acting as a 'Leveller.' Common assumptions about 'faction', which implied practices of deceit and self-interest, were invoked in these discussions, exemplified in *The Discoverer*, which suggested they were a "Generation of men (going under the name Levellers)" who "have corrupted and deceived the minds of people, and drawn them to disaffect the present Government, and to make Commotions and hurliburlies in the Land."[78] Accordingly, their "seditious plotting and conspiring against our Religion, Lawes, Liberties," is disguised because they cover it under "the specious pretence of seeking to settle the Commonwealth upon Ground of peace, freedom, and safetie."[79]

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[76] Nedham, *The Case of the Commonwealth*, 97.

[77] Ibid., 97.

[78] *The Discoverer* (1649), E 558 (2), A2.

[79] Ibid., A3.

Another tract suggested it was "a presumptuous delusion, for a few men to represent any thing to the Peoples representative in the name of the whol, before the whole, or halfe, or any considerable part of the People hath intrusted, or desired them to doe it."[80] Not only would the Agreements of the People be discussed in this way, but the large petitions organized by this group came under similar attacks. We can find, in *Walwins Wiles*, many of the positive and negative terms used to discuss these practices as it discusses John Lilburne:

> I am very apt to beleeve, and hope, that there are yet some seeds of God remaining in him, which (though for the present very strangely subdued, and kept under the clouds of ambition, heat, and choller, passion, forwardnesse, and height of spirit, pride, vain-glory, and affectation, rendring him for the present fierce, heady, high-minded, lofty, peevish, revengful, implacable, very unlovely, and unlike our Lord Jesus, to whose service he doth pretend,) will (notwithstanding all this) at last break forth in beauty & strength, in much sorrow, repentance, and humiliation, in much humility, meekness, and sweetness of spirit, in much gentleness, patience and long-suffering, in much wisdome, prudence, and lowlinesse of mind, which will at last grow up and ripen unto a rich and plentifull harvest of honour and praise unto God.[81]

The mid-seventeenth-century participant could not escape these debates dividing participants, ideas and modes of acting according to moral differentiation, centred on notions of the proper relationship one was to have with God, with law, with government, and with one's brethren. Those attacked, divided off from others, and aspersed as 'Levellers,' were conscious of the attention in print devoted to designating their practices and ideas with the pejorative implications outlined above. They answered these aspersions, often referring to themselves as 'Levellers, falsly so called.' What one notes

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[80] *The Free Man Plea for Freedom* (1648), E 443 (10), 1.

[81] *Walwins Wiles* (1649), Haller and Davies, 310-311.

in these tracts is that they too refer to themselves as a 'sort of men' and fully admit to being the same group referred to in these attacks. Thus, even when a tract takes the form of a personal defence, and Lilburne, Overton and Walwyn all produced these, they consistently link the defence of themselves to their participation within this group. Their disagreement is not over the existence of a 'sort of men' that can be discussed, but over the terms in which their group and their practices should be defined and they produced a different set of terms in which their practice, and their identity, should be interpreted.

The most obvious case of this is the tract *A Manifestation*. The title page says it is from John Lilburne, William Walwyn, Thomas Prince, Richard Overton, "And others, comonly (though unjustly) Styled Levellers."[82] The title page informs its audience that it is "Intended for their full vindication from the many aspersions cast upon them, to render them odious to the World and unserviceable to the Commonwealth. And to satisfie and ascertain all Men whereunto all their Motions and Endeavours tend, and what is the ultimate Scope of their Engagement in the publick affairs."[83] The tract is designed as a response to the "improper glosses that are put upon every thing we do or say." As the tract characterized these "Rumours," they

> are spread, and industriusly propagated as well amongst them that know us, as them that know us not, the first being fed with jealousies that there is more in our designes then appears, that there is something of danger in the bottom of our hearts, not yet discovered: that we are driven on by others, that we are even discontented and irresolved, that no body yet knows what we would have, or where our desires will end; whilst they that know us not are made to believe any strange conceit of us, that we would Levell all mens estates, that we would have

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[82] *A Manifestation* (1649), McMichael and Taft, 335.

[83] Ibid., 335.

> no distinctions of Orders and Dignities amongst men, that we are indeed for no government, but a Popular confusion; and then againe that we have bin Agents for the King, and now for the Queen; That we are Atheists, Antiscripturists, Jesuites and indeed any thing, that is hatefull and of evill repute amongst men.[84]

For the tract, the "ends of such Rumours are purposely to make us uselesse and unserviceable to the Commonwealth" and since that is the threat, "we are necessitated to open our breasts and shew the world our insides."[85]

This thesis is centred on studying how 'the Leveller' was problematized in the pamphlet literature of the civil war[86], a problematization that developed a specific set of answers by the Levellers to questions raised by modifications in political practice and the challenges posed by the political conditions of the civil war: How can we recognize someone as serviceable? How does one make himself serviceable to the commonwealth? What is the importance of being serviceable to the commonwealth?

The starting-point is not the individual, but the interconnection between a set of practices during the period, and a debate over the moral terms in which these practices should be defined. This choice of method will make it possible to develop an analysis of the constitution of a particular type of 'political subjectivity' and the practices which specified and defined a set of relationships - with God, with government, and with one's

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[84] Ibid., 337.

[85] Ibid., 337

[86] I have used two strategies to select tracts for my research from the vast literature of the period. First, I worked from within the bibliographies created by historians who have studied the Levellers, especially the collections that reprint their tracts. Second, I worked through the catalogue and selected tracts that interested me and which suggested, as I my research question became more specified, an applicability to my project. The clearest example is concerning tracts that discussed 'the Leveller' with positive and negative connotations.

brethren - as integral to that identity. It will entail a rejection of the traditional historiographical usage of the term 'the Leveller' to signify a form of self-conscious political practice and thought during the English Revolution, and, for these historians, the analytical starting point for studying how certain ideology and how a certain group of individuals affected the revolutionary period. Organizing the topic within a different theoretical paradigm enables this thesis to study how, why, and in what form 'levelling' was constituted as a moral domain of differentiation and choice. The event in question is not the English Revolution, or the position of the Leveller party within the events of this period, but a study of an event in the history of subjectivity, analysing the modes through which the 'problematization' of 'the Leveller' introduced "one more way in our tradition whereby the self is not merely given but is constituted in a relationship to itself as subject."[87] The next chapter will discuss the theory that makes this a possible mode of analysis and how it will be directed toward the political activity of 'levelling' during the English Revolution

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[87] Michel Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics," in Michel Foucault, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, edited by Paul Rabinow (New York: The New Press, 1994), 280.

CHAPTER TWO:

THE HISTORY OF SUBJECTIVITY: THEORY AND METHODOLOGY

From the beginning of my research, my aim was not to write a history of political theory or a historical reconstruction of political behaviour, but to apply a Foucaultian approach in an effort to think differently about political practice and thought in the English Revolution. It is my intention to study politics not in relation to a set of institutions, type of behaviour, or set of ideas but as a 'form of experience', where experience is understood as the "correlations between fields of knowledge, types of normativity, and forms of subjectivity in a particular culture."[1] Thus, the study of politics as experience becomes an analysis of the formation of knowledges that refer to it, the systems of power/resistance that regulate its practice and the forms within which individuals recognize and constitute themselves as 'political' subjects.

This general overview of the Foucaultian approach, which should not be construed as a total comprehensive philosophic system, but a schema of three independent and interdependent modes of studying the historical constitution of the human subject, is based on set of fundamental theoretical notions. To understand the approach outlined above and its specific use in this thesis, I will briefly outline the negative aspects of the Foucaultian approach, or those traditional concepts which are rejected, and the positive aspects, or the basic premises which underlie, and produce, the

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[1] Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure: The History of Sexuality*, Vol.2, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 4.

study of 'forms of experience' in the systematicity of three axes. This will enable me to describe how this thesis is situated within this schema, whereby it involves all three, while privileging the axis of ethics.

The Negative

Throughout his various works, interviews, and essays Foucault consistently shifted his emphasis, developed and employed new concepts, while seemingly abandoning concepts he developed and employed in older works. There is no shortage of works devoted to the topic of Foucault's oeuvre, and the following is not an attempt to study the topic with the same depth as has been done by Foucaultian scholars.[2] Regardless of the important and profound shifts in Foucault's corpus, a number of fundamental notions are consistent throughout his work. Foucault provided many instances, especially in interviews, his course lectures, and essays, of a concern to outline the linkages between his various larger studies, and it is these which I have relied on to construct the description that follows.

Foucault is consistent in his insistence that the 'transcendent subject' be replaced by critical-historical studies of the constitution of subjectivity, whereby all

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[2] There is an extensive literature on Foucault that has constructed interpretations of his oeuvre. I have found the following the most useful: Gary Gutting, *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Scientific Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Sean Hand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986); Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, 2d ed., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

anthropological universals about the human individual are questioned. The study of history is based on the introduction of "discontinuity into our very being" and the rejection of all constants, so that "nothing in man- not even his body - is sufficiently stable to serve as the basis for self-recognition or for understanding other men."[3] In order to carry out the task of studying the constitution of the human subject, Foucault was very explicit in what one must reject:

> The first methodological rule for this sort of work is thus the following: to circumvent anthropological universals to the greatest extent possible, so as to interrogate them in their historical constitution (and of course also the universals of a humanism that would put forward the rights, privileges, and nature of a human being as an immediate and nontemporal truth of the subject). It is also necessary to overturn the philosophic procedure of moving back toward the constitutive subject in which one is seeking an account of what any object of knowledge in general may be; what is required, on the contrary, is to return toward the study of the concrete practices by which the subject is constituted in the immanence of a domain of knowledge.[4]

Whether one is employing his archaeological method or his genealogical method, and more often one would be employing both, the starting point is a rejection of the premise that the human subject as an agent prefigures the production of history, arguing, in contrast, that human subjects, as the site of possible forms of agency, are historically created in multiple and contingent ways. For Foucault, agency does not result from the self-consciousness of the human subject, but is produced in the interplay between systems

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[3] Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, edited, with an introduction, by Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 153.

[4] [Foucault, Michel], "Foucault, Michel, 1926-," in Gary Gutting, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 317.

of knowledge, strategies of power and resistance, and ethical 'practices of the self.' The notion, located in the 'philosophy of the subject' and the traditional practice of history, that the development of self-consciousness and identity prefigures the ability to act is categorically rejected. As Foucault described his approach to history in contrast to traditional approaches:

> Currently, when one does history - the history of ideas, of knowledge, or simply history - one sticks to this subject of knowledge, to this subject of representation as the point of origin from which knowledge is possible and truth appears. It would be interesting to try to see how a subject came to be constituted that is not definitively given, that is not the thing on the basis of which truth happens to history - rather, a subject that constitutes itself within history and is constantly established and reestablished by history.[5]

All the various theories and methodologies produced by Foucault, on 'discourse,' 'power' and 'ethics', are his response to a body of philosophical theory which rejects the ahistorical nature of the human subject and his rational capacity. Once the 'human subject' and 'reason' become historicized, historical investigation becomes, according to Foucault, a study which analyses the proposition "that we are difference, that our reason is the difference of discourses, our history the difference of times, our selves the difference of masks."[6] Following these theoretical rejections, it is necessary to outline how one might follow the Foucaultian approach of creating "a history of the different

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[5] Michel Foucault, "Truth and Juridical Forms," in Michel Foucault, *Power*, edited by James D. Faubion (New York: The New Press, 2000), 3

[6] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and The Discourse on Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 131.

modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects."[7]

The Positive

The rejection of a study formed on the basis of a 'transcendental subjectivity' becomes "archaeological" or the study of "the instances of discourse that articulate what we think, say, and do as so many historical events."[8] From this foundational premise, Foucault devises an approach where the historian sets out to describe and reveal 'modes of subjectivization' and 'modes of objectivization'. As already noted, the foundation is not the constitutive subject, endowed with a disembodied reason, or subjectivistic reason, who can act knowingly and intentionally to order an external world of objects and states of affairs. Rather, the foundation is the study of an embodied reason, where subjectivity and intentionality, objects and states of affairs, are not external to, but constituted within, 'practices' of life and systems of language.

Foucault defined his approach as 'critical history of systems of thought' which is not meant to be a history of ideas or a history of mentalities. In such a study, thought is considered an action, studied as a 'practice' of speaking and doing, in which a subject and an object are posited within various relations. In contrast to a history of ideas, one does not set out to describe the formal, or logical, conditions of these relations, nor determine

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[7] Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power" in Michel Foucault, *Power*, edited by James D. Faubion (New York: The New Press, 2000), 326.

[8] Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?," in Michel Foucault, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, edited by Paul Rabinow (New York: The New Press, 1994), 315.

the "empirical conditions that at a given moment might have permitted the subject in general to become conscious of an object already given in reality."[9] A 'critical history of thought' sets out to determine the conditions of possibility for the human subject to become an object within a field of knowledge, and the 'practices' by which it was problematized as an object. This constitutes the study of 'modes of objectivization.'

In addition, for a 'critical history of thought,' it is also a question of determining the 'mode of subjectivization' whereby one studies the conditions under which a subject, in relation to constituted objects, becomes the subject of a particular type of knowledge. By studying practices of speaking and doing the historian can suggest the correlative constitution of the human being as the subject and the object within various types of knowledge. In contrast to studying the 'ideas' produced by a historical figure, it is a matter of analysing the modes of regulating and producing discourses that constitute a specific domain of objects, while simultaneously studying the constitution of the 'subject' that can and must know these objects. Foucault summarized the critical objective of his studies as a study "not [of] behaviours or ideas, nor societies and their 'ideologies,' but the *problematizations* through which being offers itself to be, necessarily, thought - and the *practices* on the basis of which these problematizations are formed."[10] It is crucial that one note the fundamental reversal that is worked out here by Foucault. 'Being' does not prefigure its instantiation in modes of thinking and doing, which can be studied as historically analysable practices constituting forms of subjectivity within a materiality of

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[9] [Foucault], "Foucault, Michel," 314.

[10] Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, 11.

time and space.

Foucault's study of problematization relies on the methodological principle of studying 'practices' and not the representations produced by historical agents or the propositional contents of the texts they produce. When Foucault analysed punishment in *Discipline and Punish* he did not start with the question of what was punished or why, but by asking how did they punish and what discourses were produced to organize and justify this way of punishing? Similarly, in his study of madness he did not start with the period's notions of what constituted sanity or insanity, but studied how these divisions were effected in practices of internment and the production of discourses that served to justify and provide reasons for these practices of internment. One does not study 'practice' as it may be determined by institutions, produced by ideologies or the result of pragmatic circumstances, but attempts to reveal the extent to which 'practices' "possess their own specific regularities, logic, strategy, self-evidence, and 'reason'."[11] As Foucault characterized this, "it as a question of analyzing a 'regime of practices' - practice being understood here as places where what is said and what is done, rules imposed and reasons given, the planned and the taken-for- granted meet and interconnect."[12] Therefore, 'practice' in precise terms is the study of 'what was done' and 'what was said' in the materiality of their interdependence. The constitution of the subject and the object is the result of these practices, which are discursive and non-

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[11] Michel Foucault, "Questions of Method," in Michel Foucault, *Power*, edited by James D. Faubion (New York: The New Press, 2000), 225.

[12] Ibid., 225.

discursive, and they represent the point of interplay or linkage between modes of action and of thinking.

The term *problematization* is not used to denote an arrangement of representations but thought as an action embodied in 'practices,' both discursive and non-discursive, which constitute the conditions of possibility for something to be problematized as a subject and object of knowledge. In order to do this, 'thought' is analysed in relation to a multiplicity of actions of "speaking, doing, or behaving in which the individual appears and acts as knowing subject, as ethical or juridical subject, as subject conscious of himself and others."[13] The individual as a knowing subject is constituted by the activity of thought which establishes, in many forms, "the play of true and false."[14] The individual as a social and judicial subject is constituted by the activity of thought as it establishes the "basis for accepting or refusing rules."[15] Finally, the individual is constituted as an ethical subject insofar as the practice of thought establishes "a relation with oneself and with others."[16] This final axis within the matrix of experience is where the individual is urged to constitute himself as subject in relation to codes that prescribe rules and values of subjectification and types of behaviour that may or may not be consistent with those rules and values. These studies, taking practice as the

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[13] Michel Foucault, "Preface to *The History of Sexuality, Volume Two*," in Michel Foucault, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, edited by Paul Rabinow (New York: The New Press, 1994), 201.

[14] Ibid., 201.

[15] Ibid., 201.

[16] Ibid., 201

methodological starting point, were systematized according to the specificity and interconnections of the three axes: of knowledge, of power, and of ethics. His studies of madness, delinquency and sexuality were different examples through which Foucault studied the way the human subject, as the locus of a possible experience, is implicated in structures of knowledge, relations of power, and forms of relation to oneself and to others.

Foucault's historico-critical investigations were constructed as specific 'local studies,' meaning "that they always bear upon a material, an epoch, a body of determined practices and discourses."[17] However, they do so to study questions that have a 'generality' in Western societies. He interprets the relationship between sanity and insanity, or sickness and health, or crime and the law, and the problem of the role of sexual relations to be problems of 'general import.' This list certainly does not exhaust the problems that one may interpret as having a 'general import', but merely reflects the interests of Foucault, and one can imagine that an inexhaustible possibility exists for the construction of questions of generality in the history of Western societies. These problems of 'general import' are not considered by Foucault to have a "metahistorical continuity over time" but rather "that they have continued to recur up to our time."[18] Accordingly, Foucault suggests that, in the study of these problems,

> what must be grasped is the extent to which what we know of it, the forms of power that are exercised in it, and the experience that we have in it of ourselves constitute nothing but *determined historical figures*, through a certain form of

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[17] Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?," 318.

[18] Ibid., 318.

> problematization that defines objects, rules of action, modes of relation to oneself." [my italics][19]

It is important to be clear that 'modes of problematization' do not denote a study of "anthropological constants" nor "a chronological variation" but the study of questions of "general import in their historically unique form."[20] Foucault arrives at a description of his work whereby the methodological coherence is the study of practice and the theoretical coherence is the study of "historically unique forms" of 'subjectivity' constituted in structures of knowledge, power relations, and ethics.[21]

Ethics: Technologies of the Self

While the history of the relations between the subject and truth, understood as a study of the modes through which the subject is constituted as an 'object' for a domain of knowledge is the foundation of the Foucaultian project, he suggested that one can study the subject according to two meanings of the term: "subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge."[22] This definition of the term 'subject' has a relation to the three axes - knowledge, power, ethics - that Foucault used to organize three approaches to the study of the constitution of

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[19] Ibid., 318.

[20] Ibid., 318.

[21] Ibid., 319.

[22] Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 331.

subjectivity. Looking at how this relates to his work can serve as an introduction into the axis of ethics, and the study of the subject that is "tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge."[23]

In his studies of madness, illness and delinquency, he set out to study the first meaning, or the human being as "subject to someone else by control and dependence" and he studied modes of the objectivization of the human being into a subject in scientific disciplines and normative systems. One method of doing this was to study the objectivizing of the subject in "modes of inquiry which try to give themselves the status of sciences."[24] For example, the objectivizing of the speaking subject in philology and linguistics, the objectivizing of the productive subject, or labouring subject, in the analysis of wealth and of economics, or the objectivizing of the living subject, the fact of 'life,' in natural history or biology. These three examples form the basis of his work, *The Order of Things*, but the study of modes of objectivization constituted by scientific practices are also present in his studies of madness, illness, delinquency and sexuality in relation to such scientific disciplines as psychiatry, biology and criminology.

A second mode of studying the objectivization of the subject is through the study of 'dividing practices' in which the subject is objectivized in normative systems; examples include the mad and the sane, the sick and the healthy, and so on. Foucault's interest is in the way 'subjectivity' is constituted in relations between the exercise of power and certain domains of knowledge. When Foucault turned to study the

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[23] Ibid., 331.

[24] Ibid., 326.

relationship between power and knowledge, power was not conceived only as a repressive force located in institutions or social classes. He also studied it as a complex, polymorphous set of techniques and strategies exercised in certain social practices. The effect of these practices is the production of certain forms of subjectivity. Thus, Foucault establishes the notion of the power/knowledge apparatus understood as "strategies of relations of forces supporting, and supported by, types of knowledge."[25] This is the line of inquiry which he pursued in his works *Madness and Civilization*, *The Birth of the Clinic*, *Discipline & Punish* and *The History of Sexuality, Volume One*.

In his last two books, and in the essays, interviews and course lectures he gave shortly before his death, Foucault outlined a third approach to studying modes of objectivization of the subject, and it is this mode of inquiry which will applied in this thesis.[26] The third approach to the history of subjectivity was an analysis of "the way a human being turns him- or herself into a subject."[27] In contrast to his previous studies, this was not going to be studied in relation to the normative objectivization of the human being as a subject in 'dividing practices' or the constitution of fields of scientific objectivity through which the human being is objectivized as a subject. This approach

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[25] Michel Foucault, "The Confession of the Flesh," in Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, edited by Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 196.

[26] The two books I am referring to are, Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, and Michel Foucault *The Care of the Self: The History of Sexuality*, Vol.3, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1988). His essays, course lectures and interviews have been collected and translated in Michel Foucault, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, edited by Paul Rabinow (New York: The New Press, 1994).

[27] Foucault, "The Subject and Power," 327.

does not take 'coercive practices' to be the starting point of analysis, but 'practices of the self' in which the human being objectivizes himself as an 'object' of self-knowledge. These practices produce "instituted models of self-knowledge" which Foucault introduced and called *ethics*.[28] Foucault focussed his work on this question by studying the modes through which the human being learned to recognize himself as a subject of 'sexuality' and was forced, and led, to recognize himself as a subject of pleasure, desire, lust and temptation.

This constitutes starting with the study of 'technologies of the self' as historically analysable practices during a given historical period, to analyse the modes through which the subject is constituted as its own object. Foucault defined this as a study of "the formation of procedures by which the subject is led to observe itself, to analyse itself, to decipher itself, to recognize itself as a domain of possible knowledge."[29] The study of 'technologies of the self' is organized as a study of the 'practices' in a given period which permitted, and often forced, "individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being."[30] The study of such 'self-forming' or ascetic practices is the key to understanding how the subject constituted itself as an object of knowledge through "an exercise of the self on the self by which one attempts to develop and transform oneself,

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[28] Michel Foucault, "Subjectivity and Truth," in Michel Foucault, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, edited by Paul Rabinow (New York: The New Press, 1994), 87.

[29] [Foucault], "Foucault, Michel," 327.

[30] Michel Foucault, "Technologies of the Self," in Michel Foucault, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, edited by Paul Rabinow (New York: The New Press, 1994), 225.

and to attain a certain mode of being."[31]

It is important to understand, and this has been a debated point among scholars, the way Foucault studies 'self-forming' practices but does not return to the concept of a 'constitutive subject' as it is conceived in the 'philosophy of the subject.'[32] If we refer back to the earlier discussion of Foucault's rejection of this premise, we have noted that he rejected in all his works the method of starting with a theory of the 'transcendental subject' and then studying the production of a certain form of knowledge on the basis of this theory. When Foucault turns to studying 'self-constituting' practices, he is not studying them as the product of a 'transcendental subject.'

Foucault rejected this theory in order to study the constitution of a subject, or different forms of subjectivity, including the mad subject, the healthy subject, the delinquent subject and the sexual subject, within systems of knowledge, power relations, and ethical practice. Discussing his rejection of a 'transcendental subject' in reference to 'self-forming activity,' Foucault explicitly drew attention to his rejection of a 'transcendental subject,' in the study of 'self-forming' practices, specifying that "you do not have the same type of relationship to yourself when you constitute yourself as a

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[31] Michel Foucault, "The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom," in Michel Foucault, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, edited by Paul Rabinow (New York: The New Press, 1994), 282.

[32] Mark Poster suggests this problem in his essay 'The Tyranny of Greece," in Mark Poster, *Critical Theory and Poststructuralism* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1989): 87-103. Deborah Cook responds to Poster's suggestions in *The Subject Finds a Voice: Foucault's Turn Toward Subjectivity* (New York: P. Lang, 1992). This issue, independent of Cook or Poster, is treated substantially by Gilles Deleuze in *Foucault*, 94-123.

political subject who goes to vote or speaks at a meeting and when you are seeking to fulfill your desires in a sexual relationship."[33] While he admits there would be many instances of overlap and mutual interferences, the human being is engaged in many different relationships to him- or herself and none of these is related back to, or grounded in, the notion of an ahistorical 'being.'

To further illustrate this point in regard to the study of 'ethical practice,' Foucault makes it clear that the study of how the subject constitutes itself "in an active fashion through practices of the self" does not entail the view that these 'practices' "are something invented by the individual himself." Instead, they are studied as "models that he finds in his culture, his society, and his social group."[34] The study of 'practices of the self' or 'self-forming practices' is not a return to the study of a historical figure on the basis of a theory of the 'constitutive subject.'

In order to construct the methodology of studying the constitution of the subject in terms of 'practices of the self' Foucault made a distinction between the study of morality and the study of ethical practice. Morality is distinguished by Foucault as pertaining to a 'moral code' or "a set of values and rules of action that are recommended to individuals through the intermediary of various prescriptive agencies" including the family, churches, and political institutions.[35] Foucault also suggests that 'morality' refers to the behaviour of individuals in relation to the code, including the extent to which they

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[33] Foucault, "The Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom," 290.

[34] Ibid., 291.

[35] Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, 25.

obey or transgress the values or conduct prescribed in a code and the way they obey or resist an interdiction. Accordingly, Foucault remarks that "in studying this aspect of morality, one must determine how and within what margins of variation or transgression individuals or groups conduct themselves in reference to a prescriptive system that is explicitly or implicitly operative in their culture, and of which they are more or less aware."[36]

Foucault uses the term ethics to denote a third element, and this is the activity that individuals undertake in order to make themselves into an ethical subject. Thus, there are rules of conduct and the actual conduct that can be measured by these rules. However, there is also "the manner in which one ought to 'conduct oneself'."[37] There are different ways for the "acting individual to operate, not just as an agent, but as an ethical subject of this action."[38] Within in any moral code, no matter how rigid, there are many ways to be faithful.

The historian can write the history of moral behaviours, or the history of moral codes, but an additional study is possible, what Foucault defines as "a history of the way in which individuals are urged to constitute themselves as subjects of moral conduct."[39] This history is "concerned with the models proposed for setting up and developing relationships with the self, for self-reflection, self-knowledge, self-examination, for the

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[36] Ibid., 25-26.

[37] Ibid., 26.

[38] Ibid., 26.

[39] Ibid., 29.

decipherment of the self by oneself, for the transformations that one seeks to accomplish with oneself as object. Thus, a history of forms of moral subjectivation and of the practices of self that are meant to ensure it."[40]

The term ethics, as it is used by Foucault, denotes the practice through which individuals constitute themselves as moral subjects of their own actions, or the self's relationship to the self, and he characterized this as having four main components: the *ethical substance* or the part of oneself, or the behaviour and the acts, that are the relevant domain for ethical judgement and the object to be worked on in ethical practice; the *mode of subjectivation* understood as the way in which the individual is invited or incited to recognize and establish his moral obligation, such as divine law, natural law, a rational rule and so on; the *ethical work* or *ascetic* practices which constitutes the self-forming activity or the practices and actions one performs on oneself in order to work on the ethical substance and establish one's conduct in relation to the code and to transform oneself into an ethical subject; and, finally, the *telos*, the goal or mode of being which one aims to accomplish in their ethical activity, examples of which could include purity, immortality, freedom or self-mastery.[41]

The analysis of these four areas, their independence and interdependence, is projected toward a history of the way individuals have constituted themselves as 'ethical

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[40] Ibid., 29.

[41] The best starting point for Foucault's description of these four aspects is, Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, 26-28. They are also discussed in Michel Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics," in Michel Foucault, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, edited by Paul Rabinow (New York: The New Press, 1994), 263-265.

subjects.' Foucault summarizes it as a study of the "process in which the individual delimits that part of himself that will form the object of his moral practice, defines his position relative to the precept he will follow, and decides on a certain mode of being that will serve as his moral goal."[42]

Foucault suggests that every morality comprises two elements - codes of behaviour and forms of subjectivation. These two elements are not "entirely dissociated" from one another, but they also can develop "in relative independence from one another."[43] As a result, in certain moralities, the main emphasis is on the code, "on its systematicity, its richness, its capacity to adjust to every possible case and to embrace every area of behaviour."[44] In moralities of this nature, one could focus attention on the way authority enforced the code, the modes through which the code was learned, the penalties for transgressing the code and study the conditions through which subjectivation "occurs in a quasi-juridical form."[45] As Foucault relates it, in such a system "the ethical subject refers his conduct to a law, or set of laws, to which he must submit, at the risk of committing offenses that may make him liable to punishment."[46] However, Foucault rejects the assumption that this 'codification' completely dominates modes of subjectivation which are produced within practices of the self, in the ascetics of working

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[42] Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure*, 28.

[43] Ibid., 29.

[44] Ibid., 29.

[45] Ibid., 29.

[46] Ibid., 29-30.

on oneself in relation to one's ethical judgements. Additionally, Foucault theorized that, in some moralities, "the strong and dynamic element is to be sought in the forms of subjectivation and practices of the self" and a system of codes regulating behaviour are more marginal. This forms the basic conclusion of his study of Greek sexual ethics. [47] As such, within a culture of this type the individual is principally forced to relate his behaviour to a relationship he ought to have to himself, and "the emphasis is on the forms of relations with the self, on the methods and techniques by which he works them out, on the exercises by which he makes of himself an object to be known, and on the practices that enable him to transform his own mode of being."[48] Foucault suggested that one can find such an 'ethics orientated' morality in Greek and Roman culture, and he examined how, in their culture, the formation of an ethical subject of sexual practice was not constituted in relation to a code, even though their were certain codes relating to sexual behaviour, but in an 'aesthetics of existence.'

In the seventeenth-century, one might be inclined to consider that, within the framework of Christian morality, the forms of codification are dominant and that subjectivation is produced within a quasi-juridical form. The seventeenth century individual certainly lived within a culture in which a set of prescriptive agencies - the church, the state, the family - bound the individual to refer his actions to a strong and systematic ensemble of regulations for conduct. However, according to Foucault, despite the apparent systematicity of the Christian code, the history of Christian moral practice

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[47] Ibid., 30.

[48] Ibid., 30.

involved multiple modes in which subjectivation was produced, in part, in practices of the self. Recognizing the importance of strong elements of codification will be necessary at various points of this study, but the focus will be on the productive role played by practices of the self which led the individual of this period to constitute himself as an ethical subject of his political activities in the English Revolution.

Politics and Moral Problematization in the English Revolution

Studying the constitution of an 'experience' of political subjectivity entails a shift away from the study of the various different ways seventeenth-century writers constructed theories of the political order and the political subject. This is not a history of the various different ways the political subject has been theoretically and ethically outlined, if we mean by that the project of specifying types of constitutional forms and then establishing the position of the individual in that form, including the prescriptive codification of various rights and duties as 'subject.' It is set out as a study of the practices by which individuals were forced to direct their attention on themselves, to decipher, recognize, and acknowledge themselves as political subjects, establishing a certain relationship to themselves which enabled them to discover, in their political activity, a certain mode of being.

Between 1640 and 1660, England was the scene of significant political conflict, a conflict which forced upon individuals modes of participation that in many respects, but not all, were new. One mode of participation, unprecedented in scope and context, was

the production, distribution and reading of printed texts, so that England, particularly London, was flooded with texts taking multiple different forms (speeches, sermons, news-books, treatises, libels and pamphlets). These texts treated a considerable array of topics, including discussions of theological doctrine, theories of government and the place of the individual within the structures of governance. Most of these tracts were produced by those who wanted, as Milton suggested of himself and others, to "write that which they forsee may advance the publick good."[49] The production of discourse was interrelated with other significant political practices, of fighting for the army, or organizing and subscribing to a petition, or meeting within the tavern or parish church to organize, with others, a set of strategies and goals for political action. While many of these political activities were based on very traditional modes of political participation, the extraordinary circumstances of the civil war period made it increasingly difficult to define the proper relation between what status, both social and political, one had, what political conduct was justified, and to what goals one was supposed to direct his action. This introduced a set of problems for forming oneself as the ethical subject of one's own political action. Debates on the practices of 'the Levellers' are one element of this much more general problematization of political activity.

When Milton described the city of London, its print market, its role in the civil war as the

City of refuge, the mansion house of liberty, encompast and surrounded with his

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[49] John Milton, *Areopagitica,* in John Milton, *Complete Prose Works of John Milton,* Volume Two, edited by Ernest Sirluck (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 486.

> [God's] protection; the shop of warre hath not there more anvils and hammers waking, to fashion out of the plates and instruments of armed Justice in defence of beleagur'd Truth, then there be pens and heads there, sitting by their studious lamps, musing, searching, revolving new notions and idea's wherewith to present, as with their homage and their fealty the approaching Reformation,[50]

we find a description of a particular mode of freedom produced within the structural space of England's 'shop of warre.' In Milton and in many other tracts, the discussion of this freedom produces a set of forms and conditions for one to perform a set of practices on one's thoughts, conduct, behaviour and passions, in order to make one an ethical agent of one's own action. This freedom coexisted, and was dependent upon, notions that the present conflict made participation a duty and a necessity. One finds the tract *Considerations for the Commons, in This Age of Distractions* suggesting that their "present breaches call for a contribution from everyone," and suggesting that they "apply" themselves "to the common good."[51] Similarly, the tract *Some Few and Short Considerations On the present Distempers* was confident that "the title which I have as an honest man, and the right which I have as a free man, of speaking what I think conducible to the weale publicke, hath invited me in the crowd of others who blot paper."[52] For many tracts, the 'present Distractions,' 'the Troubles,' or 'the Common Cause' dictated that one be useful and serviceable to the public good. With this in mind,

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[50] Ibid., 553-554.

[51] *Considerations for the Commons, in This Age of Distractions* (1642), E 112 (17), 2.

[52] *Some Few and Short Considerations On the present Distempers* (1642), E 240 (47), 1.

Considerations for the Commons, in This Age of Distractions wonders how they might come "to know our duty" and to know, with regard to the conflicting parties, "how we are to dispose of ourselves either in the assisting of the one side, or in resiting of the other."[53]

In the 1640s then, we find a certain body of individuals acting according to notions of the 'duty' one had to engage on behalf of the commonwealth, but also a concern about the 'freedom' one had in the practices which make up this engagement. As a result, the freedom which formed the background to volunteering for the army, subscribing to a petition, being part of the production of a written tract, or engaging in debates on how the kingdom should be settled, was problematized according to a set of notions of how the individual ought to manage his available freedom. *A Manifestation* remarked that "a Common Duty lyes upon every man to be cautious and circumspect in behalfe of his Country, especially while the Government thereof is setling."[54]

This caution and circumspection, the care one was to take in one's political activity, entailed that one refer one's actions to an examination of conscience. In this examination of conscience, participation in this space of both 'freedom' and 'duty' was part of a general problematization of political activity during the period. In this problematization, one finds a concern with defining a relation to oneself that makes a certain mode of political action possible and acceptable. It entailed performing a certain

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[53] *Considerations for the Commons, in This Age of Distractions* (1642), E 112 (17), 2.

[54] *A Manifestation* (1649), McMichael and Taft, 336.

number of practices on oneself in order to form oneself as the ethical subject of one's own political participation. For the individuals participating in this ethical 'experience' the pertinent question was not to participate or to abstain, for participation was willingly accepted as a duty that one dare not, without significant moral repercussions, avoid. However, participation in the public affairs, as we shall see, entailed a form of problematization, in which moral reflection was directed toward proposing how one ought to take 'care' how one exercises the freedom one has to act on behalf of the Commonwealth. In this model of political activity, the individual was summoned to exercise his action, not only in reference to juridical models of codification, but according to a relationship he established with himself in the ethical work of the self on the self.

By specifically studying this within the debates on 'levelling' it will be possible to see how, within the examination of one's conscience, an ethical experience of 'engagement' in public affairs was constituted within the tracts and practices of revolutionary England. By studying of the notion of 'the Leveller' this project will attempt to determine the modes of subjectivation to which it referred, including the ethical substance, the types of subjection, the ethical work and the moral teleology. This entails studying the moral reflection on the freedom the individual had to engage in the settlement of the Kingdom according to a 'field of problematization' in which 'the Leveller' was constituted as a domain of moral choice and valuation. It will entail a study of the notion of 'affection' which will enable us to recognize the ethical substance or object for moral reflection; the notions of 'necessity' and 'opportunity' through which

we can recognize the modes of subjection through which one established the moral valorization of his 'engagement;' the self-forming practices through which the individual analysed himself and shaped his conduct in order to make himself into an ethical subject; and finally, the notion of the 'public-spirited man' that characterised the telos, or mode of being, which was the goal for the ethical subject.

CHAPTER THREE: THE SELF AND ENGAGEMENT

The civil war produced new conditions of political activity which modified the relations between status, functions, powers and duties. The emergence of the levellers as an organized political movement was directly linked to these modifications and the model of political activity imposed by the war and the discourse elaborating on the war. Political activity was modified according to an interrelated process that problematized political activity as an 'engagement' and problematized the 'self' in ethical practice. According to this model of 'engagement' and the ethical agent of 'engagement,' the levellers constituted themselves as political agents capable of directing their political activity toward a critique of the governing elite, a critique that was organized around the practice of producing the Agreement of the People. This model of political work made it possible for the levellers to expand traditional modes of participation for their social class, but this is not adequately explained in drawing a universal distinction between a pre-revolutionary structure which denied to those without elite status modes of participating and a revolutionary period which witnessed the "rise of mass politics" and the introduction of political participation to hitherto pre-political social groups.[1]

In the early-modern period the term 'politics' was usually reserved for describing 'matters of state' or 'matters of government,' taking government in its restricted usage as the combined institutions of the State. James I spoke of this when he remarked that "the

[1] Keith Lindley described the beginning of the revolutionary period, from May 1640 to May 1641, as "the rise of mass politics" in his recent book *Popular Politics and Religion in Civil War London* (London: Scolar Press, 1997), 1.

head cares for the body: so does the king for his people. As the discourse and direction flows from the head, and the execution according thereunto belongs to the rest of the members, every one according to their office, so it is betwixt a wise prince and his people."[2] In a recent book which studies this particular issue, David Zaret distinguishes between pre-revolutionary communicative practice and the communicative practices produced during the revolutionary period.[3] He characterized this pre-revolutionary period in terms of norms of secrecy and privilege that "imposed severe restrictions on popular discussion of political issues" whereby "communicative principles precluded the view that the public was a space for open discussion in which all persons had a right to participate."[4] The problem with such a description is the abstract terms which are being used, effectively stifling the dynamic and complex relations involved. Multiple relations existed in pre-revolutionary England for communicative practice - in the crowd, in the meeting points of the town or parish, between neighbours, between the members of the community and the magistrate. This communicative practice involved an open discussion about the 'peace' of the community and about the 'disturbers of the peace,' who were defined according to notions about types of practices and subjects who threatened the 'order' of the community.

When the seventeenth century wanted to describe modes of participation that

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[2] James VI and I, *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies*, Wootton, 99.

[3] David Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture: Printing, Petitions, and The Public Sphere in Early-Modern England* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000).

[4] Ibid., 98.

were not strictly private, or related to the internal functioning of the household, the term 'public,' or 'publicke affairs' was used. Thus, while 'politics' suggested secrecy and privilege, to be seen and known by a few, as the statement 'mystery of government' fully encapsulates, the term 'public' or 'publicke affairs' referred to those aspects of the commonwealth that were open and visible, and it referred to those aspects of 'government' that the public participated in. The closed and exclusive sphere of the King's court, Parliament and the highest courts of Justice, was juxtaposed with the openness of the parish, town and county.[5] John Hooker told the mayor of Exeter that he was "head of the whole common weale," and the "president of the publick state."[6] At a meeting of the vestry of Swallowfield, the men in attendance remarked that they would act as "'officers whatsoever concerning her majesty's service and all other officers for the public affairs of the tythings and the inhabitants.'"[7] The relation between 'politics' and 'publicke affairs' was supported by conflicting statements and expectations which came from English monarchs.

The strenuous efforts made by Tudor and Stuart Monarchs, along with their

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[5] This has been explored recently by Ian W. Archer, "Popular politics in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries," in Paul Griffiths and Mark S. R. Jenner, eds., *Londinopolis* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 26-46; Keith Wrightson, "The Politics of the Parish in Early Modern England," in Paul Griffiths, Adam Fox and Steve Hindle, eds., *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 10-46; Mark Goldie, "The Unacknowledged Republic: Officeholding in Early Modern England," in Tim Harris, ed., *The Politics of the Excluded, c1500 - 1850* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 153-194.

[6] Quoted in Goldie, "The Unacknowledged Republic," 176.

[7] Quoted in Ibid., 177.

Parliaments and Judges, to maintain 'politics' as a secret and invisible to the 'public' has long been emphasized by historians of the period. In 1573, Elizabeth issued a royal proclamation forbidding "'all her subjects of all degrees . . . to stire unquietness in her people by interpreting the laws of this realm after their brains and fancies.'"[8] Edward VI, in a proclamation of 1551, ordered his subjects

> to live every man within the compass of his degree, contented with his vocation, every man to apply himself to live obediently, quietly, without murmur, grudging, sowing of sedition, spreading of tales and rumours, and without doing or saying of any manner of things . . . that may touch the dignity of his majesty, his council, his magistrates or ministers . . . or in any wise contrary to his majesty's laws, statutes, or proclamations.[9]

In 1641, William Thomason suggested to those bringing petitions to Parliament that "'private men'" should not meddle with "'mysteries of government'" and told them "'it is not in you to challenge so much light unto yourselves, as to judge of laws being made, much less to determine and set down magisterially unto them, what constitutions they are to frame.'"[10] Thomason suggested that private men should be content to be "'informants'" and not "'reformers.'"[11]

The Crown shared the expectation that private men would act as informants. If we return to the Proclamation from Edward VI, we find it commanding subjects to be

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[8] Quoted in Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture*, 51.

[9] Quoted in Ibid., 53

[10] Quoted in Brian Manning, *The English People and the English Revolution* Second Edition (London: Bookmarks, 1992), 114.

[11] Quoted in Ibid., 114.

"'obedient,'" "'quiet,'" "'without murmur, grudging, sowing of sedition,'" or "'spreading of tales and rumors.'"[12] The concept in this period that organized all these terms, and many more, was 'Peace.' In *Countrey Justice*, one finds the concept of Peace defined as "the amitie, confidence, and quiet that is betweene men, And hee that breaketh this amitie or quiet, breaketh the peace."[13] The 'conservation of the Peace' could require the magistrate, the church, or the King to monitor almost any action a person performed, and the common law was very much organized and administered around the maintenance of what the period referred to as the 'Peace.' However, in order for this 'Peace' to be maintained, the State relied on the local residents of the community to perform many of the most important judicial acts in accusing, investigating, and indicting those who 'breached the peace.'[14] The punishment of those who 'breached the Peace' was made 'public' by the sovereign, both in the elaborate spectacle of the scaffold, and in the pillories and stocks of each local community. The monarchs of the period made their policies about the 'Peace' public in royal proclamations and in sermons delivered by the clergy; they made themselves, their courts, and the peace of the commonwealth points of

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[12] Quoted in Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture*, 53.

[13] Michael Dalton, *Countrey Justice* (1619; reprint, London: Professional Books Limited, 1973), 7.

[14] The implications of this, using Sussex as a case study, form the basis of Cynthia Herrup's work, *The Common Peace: Participation and the criminal law in seventeenth century England.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

public ceremony.[15] James I echoed this when he warned his son that a King is "one set on a stage, whose smallest actions and gestures, all the people gazingly do behold."[16] The monarchs made the security and safety of their body, and their realm, a 'publicke affair.' As James I remarked in *A Discourse of the Manner of the Discoveries of the Powder Treason*:

> There is a time when no man ought to keep silence. For it hath ever bene held as a generall rule, and undoubted Maxime, in all well governed Commonwealthes...That when either their Religion, their King, or their countrey was in an extreme hazard, no good countreyman ought then to withhold either his tongue or his hand, according to his calling and facultie, from ayding to repell the injurie, repress the violence, and avenge the guilt upon the authors thereof. But if ever any people had such an occasion ministered unto them, it is surely this people now, nay this whole Isle, and all the rest belonging to this great and glorious Monarchie. . . no private man could thinke his life more happily and gloriously bestowed, then in the defence of any one of these three, That is, either *pro Aris, pro Focis*, or *pro Patre patriae*; And that the endangering of any of these, would at once stirre the whole body of the Commonwealth, not any more as divided members, but as a solide and individuall lumpe.[17]

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[15] David Cressy has studied the elaborate cycle of celebrations which existed in this period, including the celebration of the monarch's accession and celebrations commemorating the defeat of the Spanish armada and the gunpowder plot. These celebrations reached well back into the past, such as celebrating the capture of the King of France at the battle of Pavia in 1525. David Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989); Similar themes are treated by R. Malcolm Smuts, "Public Ceremony and royal charisma: The English royal entry in London 1485-1642," in A. L. Beier, David Cannadine and J. M. Rosenheim, eds., *The First Modern Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989): 65-93.

[16] James I, *Basilikon Doron* (1616), in *The Political Works of James I*, edited, with an introduction, by Charles Howard McIlwain (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1918), 43.

[17] James I, *A Discourse of the Manner of the Discoveries of the Powder Treason* (1606) in *The Political Works of James I*, edited, with an introduction, by Charles Howard McIlwain (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1918), 223.

These modes of participation intersect with the points where the institutions of the monarchial government left the local communities in control of social administration and modes of communal regulation. Steve Hindle suggests that the "the active cooperation of inferior officers and sections of the public at large" was a necessary component of regulating the local communities.[18] Cynthia Herrup has taught us that "the authority to enforce the law and to punish persons who refused to obey its dictates was not confined to members of the judiciary or magistracy. The propertied segments of the community shared real power over the implementation and effectiveness of the law."[19] This suggests a twofold relationship: on the one hand, in order for the objectives, strategies, and ideals of the monarchy, implemented through various 'magistrates,' to be put into effect, the practices of private subjects were necessary, while, on the other hand, the participation of these private subjects in the process produced the possibility that different objectives, strategies, and ideals would be manufactured. The maintenance of peace, the regulation of order and law, and securing the safety of the realm, did not flow in one direction, emanating from an institution at the top onto passive recipients in the local villages, parishes and so on. The concept of 'Peace' does not have one meaning in this period, but a whole synthesis of meanings, produced by subjects with different status, working from different institutions, and speaking, listening, acting in different positions

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[18] Steve Hindle, "The Keeping of the Public Peace," in Paul Griffiths, Adam Foxe and Steve Hindle, eds., *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 219.

[19] Herrup, *The Common Peace*, 195.

relative to its conservation. Keith Wrightson points to the empirical validity of this claim, and states that "time after time in the later sixteenth and earlier seventeenth centuries the statutory proscription of established local customs resulted in popular reluctance either to accept the law's definition of an offence, or to enforce it where it ran counter to local needs."[20] To Cynthia Herrup, these practices suggest that criminal law was the "inheritance of the community" and the regulation of law was "above all else the responsibility of local residents."[21]

Throughout the local communities of England, the independent male householder had important political responsibilities in the 'publicke affairs' of his community. The language of this period defined these men as the 'chief inhabitants' of the village, parish or ward and their role was achieved by gaining status within the local community.[22] This status had multiple relations to a legal and economic structure which defined 'freemen' but their political responsibilities were not entirely determined by them and were very

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[20] Keith Wrightson, "Two concepts of order: justices, constables and jurymen in seventeenth-century England," in John Brewer and John Styles, eds., *An Ungovernable People: The English and their law in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (London: Hutchinson), 24.

[21] Herrup, *The Common Peace*, 65.

[22] Goldie, "The Unacknowledged Republic," 160; Keith Wrightson, *English Society, 1580-1680* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1982), 170; Steve Hindle, "The Political Culture of the Middling Sort in English Rural Communiies, c.1550-1700," in Tim Harris, ed., *The Politics of the Excluded, c1500 - 1850* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 145.

much constituted within the social relations of the community.[23] These modes of participation provided a significant background for engaging in the political conflict that developed in the early 1640s.

During the civil war new modes of participation emerged and these political relationships within the local communities were forced to adapt to the political conditions of war. However, it is not a question of analysing how one system was replaced by a completely new system, but how these new conditions formed a dynamic relationship with an established structure producing a set of meeting points, debates, conflicts, modifications and reconciliations. The *Protestation* of Parliament is one particular example where this dynamic relationship can be surmised.

In the summer of 1641, 11,000 copies of the Parliament's *Protestation* were sent to every English parish, where all males more than 18 years of age were instructed by Parliament, and organized by the village constables and the ministers of the local parish church, to take the following oath:

> I, A. B., do in the presence of God, promise, vow and protest to maintain and defend, as far as lawfully I may with my life, power and estate, the true reformed protestant religion expressed in the doctrine of the Church of England, against all Popery and popish innovation within this realm, contrary to the said doctrine, and according to the duty of my allegiance, I will maintain and defend His Majesty's royal person and estate, as also the power and privilege of Parliaments, the lawful rights and liberties of the subjects, and every person that shall make this

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[23] Keith Wrightson, "'Sorts of People' in Tudor and Stuart England," in Jonathan Barry and Christopher Brooks, eds., *The Middling Sort of People* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 28-51. Jonathan Barry, "Introduction," in Jonathan Barry and Christopher Brooks, eds., *The Middling Sort of People* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 12-14. Steve Hindle quoted the "chief inhabitants" of Swallowfield parish expressing the wish to be considered "'men of discretion, good Credett, honest Myndes & Chrisitan lyke behaveour.'" Hindle, "The Political Culture of the Middling Sort," 145.

> Protestation in whatsoever he shall do, in the lawful pursuance of the same; and to my power, as afar as lawfully I may, I will oppose, and by all good means endeavour to bring to condign punishment all such as shall by force, practice, counsels, plots, conspiracies or otherwise do anything to the contrary in this present Protestation contained: and further, that I shall in all just and honorable ways endeavour to preserve the union and peace betwixt the three kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland, and neither for hope, fear or any other respects, shall relinquish this promise, vow and protestation.[24]

The oath bound the individual male to protect 'the true reformed protestant religion' against Popery, and according to notions of obedience and allegiance 'maintain and defend His Majesty's royal person and estate, as also the power and privileges of Parliament, the lawful rights and liberties of the subjects. The oath reaffirmed the role of the individual in bringing to punishment 'all such as shall by force, practice, counsels, plots, conspiracies, or otherwise do anything to the contrary in this present Protestation.' This oath bound men in the local communities to continue their practices of acting upon others that were a salient feature of pre-revolutionary power relations in the community. The *Protestation* appealed to a discourse that defined, justified and provided reasons for their actions of examining, differentiating and punishing individuals in their community. The production of that discourse was not presumed to involve the private men in the community. Accordingly, John Geree advised those taking the oath, that "this Protestation gives men no leave to breake their Ranks, it puts not a sword of authority

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[24] Samuel R. Gardiner, ed., *The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution 1625 - 1660*, 3rd edition (Oxford, 1968), 155-156. For description of the organization of subscriptions see, John Walter, *Understanding Popular Violence in the English Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 292-293; Anthony Fletcher, *The Outbreak of the English Civil War* (London: Edward Arnold, 1981), 15-16.

into every private man's hand."[25]

Despite this, the *Protestation* created conflicting interpretations about the modes of participation it sanctioned and was used by many to justify political choices they made independent of Parliament's instructions. In London, at the church St. Thomas the Apostle, when parishioners met on June 11 to take the *Protestation*, one John Blackwell reportedly addressed those present, saying "'we have here made a protestation before Almighty God against all popery and popish innovations, and these rails (laying his hand upon the rails about the communion table) are popish innovations, and therefore it is fit they be pulled down.'"[26] While most of the parishioners left, a small group stayed to debate the issue, resulting in a violent confrontation with those opposing their destruction. In the end the rails were pulled down and destroyed in the churchyard. Similar scenes occurred throughout English parishes, and the *Protestation* was implicated in attacks on church rails, on ministers, on popish neighbours.[27] The *Protestation* was a significant part of the processions that brought large petitions to Parliament, often with those presenting the petitions wearing the Protestation in their hat.[28] This is more spectacular in the demonstrations and spectacle that surrounded the procession of the Five Members in their return to Parliament. Copies of the *Protestation* were a highly

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[25] J. Geree, *Vindiciae Voti. Or a Vindication of the True Sense of the Nationall Covenant, in a brief and moderate Answere to the Protestation Protested* (1641), quoted in Walter, *Understanding Popular Violence*, 294-295.

[26] Quoted in Lindley, *Popular Politics,* 39.

[27] Many examples of this can be found in Lindley, *Popular Politics,* chp.2, 36-91.

[28] For examples of this see, Walter, *Understanding Popular Violence*, 295-296.

visible part of both the organized aspects of the demonstration and the more spontaneous initiatives of those who participated on the streets of London. Thus, copies of it were "on view everywhere, fixed to the tops of pikes and sticks or on muskets, worn in hats, fastened to the breast of coats, or attached to banners."[29]

The *Protestation* was based upon many actions we find in pre-revolutionary practices within the local community, but it also produced the possibility for multiple interpretations as to what action it was binding the individual to take.[30] These modes of continuity and discontinuity between pre-revolutionary political practice and the political conditions introduced by the civil war could be studied through a multiplicity of questions each designed to address varied possibilities. This thesis is interested in the question of the political practice that developed within the leveller movement and there are many points of continuity with traditional structures in the local communities that could be examined. The emphasis will be on the discontinuity that was produced within the political conditions of the civil war, but on the condition that we recognize that the practices emerged from points of continuity with traditional political participation.[31] This

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[29] Lindley, *Popular Politics*, 125-126; Another description of this can be found in David Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 145.

[30] For a similar argument see Underdown, *Revel, Riot, and Rebellion,* 144-145.

[31] For a good discussion of the social basis of the levellers which establishes that the leaders of the movement were men with status in their local communities, see G. E. Aylmer, "Gentlemen Levellers?" in Charles Webster, ed., *The Intellectual Revolution of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1974), 101-108 and Lindley, *Popular Politics*, 392-398. For a discussion of the connections between their practices and traditions within the local communities see Keith Thomas, "The Levellers and the Franchise," in G. E. Aylmer, ed., *Interregnum: The Quest for Settlement 1646-1660*

discontinuity emerged from political conditions that problematized direct participation in framing the 'fundamentals' of religion and the state. The general form of this problematization can be briefly characterized here.

Politics and a 'Common Cause'

In 1643, Parliament adopted the Solemn League and Covenant that was meant to bind the "noblemen, barons, kights, gentlemen, citizens, burgesses, ministers of the Gospel, and commons of all sorts" in a defence of religion and the public liberty, safety and peace of the Kingdom, and so we find in the covenant the agreement that:

> We shall also, according to our places and callings, in this common cause of religion, liberty and peace of the kingdoms, assist and defend all those that enter into this league and covenant, in the maintaining and pursuing thereof; and shall not suffer ourselves, directly or indirectly, by whatsoever combinations, persuasion or terror, to be divided and withdrawn from this blessed union and conjunction, whether to make defection to the contrary part, or give ourselves to a detestable indifferency or neutrality in this cause, which so much concerneth the glory of God, the good of the kingdom, and the honor of the King.[32]

The *Protestation* had also been used to bind its signatories to a 'common cause,' and it is significant that from being an oath taken only by members of Parliament it evolved to an

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(London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1972), 60-61.

[32] Samuel R. Gardiner, ed., *The Constitutional Documents of the Puritan Revolution 1625 - 1660*, 3rd edition (Oxford, 1968), 270.

oath required of all males over 18 years old.[33] The fast sermons, which were a monthly practice throughout the 1640s and printed for general consumption, consistently elaborated on this 'common cause.' As Stephen Marshall preached to the Commons, "the glory of Christ, the establishment of this church and Kingdom, yea, the welfare of all Christendom are all embarked in that vessel the steering whereof is in a great part committed unto you."[34] To the soldiers, Marshall said, "Go now and fight the battles of the Lord . . . for so I will not now fear to call them . . . although indeed at the first nothing clearly appeared but only that you were compelled to take up arms for the defense of your liberties . . . all Christendom . . . do now see that the question in England is whether Christ or Anti-christ shall be lord or King."[35] The war as 'common cause,' one sanctified by God and one all members of the nation were duty bound to participate in, can be seen in the millennial expectations of the period and in the analogy made by supporters of Parliament between their contemporary situation and the situation faced by the Israelites in the Bible. In this sense, Israel was not simply a model but a recapitulation for how the English people and God were to form a covenant for a battle against

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[33] This is evident when contemporaries referred to the Protestation as the "National Covenant." For example, T. Mockett, *The Nationall Covenant. Or, A Discourse on the Covenant Wherein Also the severall parts of the late Protestation are proved to be grounded on Religion and Reason* (1642), E 127 (36); J. Geree, *Vindicia Voti. Or a Vindication of the True Sense of the Nationall Covenant, in a brief and moderate Answere to the Prostestation Protested* (1641), E 170 (9).

[34] Stephen Marshall, *The Song of Moses . . . and the Song of the Lamb* (1643), quoted in Michael Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints: A Study in the Origins of Radical Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), 180.

[35] Stephen Marshall, *A Sacred Panegyric* (1644). Quoted in Ibid., 295.

oppression, tyranny and the Anti-Christ.[36]

Within this model of a 'common cause' there were multiple points of ideological conflict and pragmatic disagreement. Historians have consistently elaborated on the extent to which the members of Parliament, their supporters, and religious leaders voiced conflicting interpretations over what the principal issues were. Between the parliamentarians who emphasized the legal and constitutional issues and the 'godly' who emphasized a reformation in church, a multitude of positions intervened.[37] These ideological and pragmatic differences unfolded within a shared notion of a 'common cause' that was defined by linking the glory of God with the defence of the liberties of the kingdom. Whatever differences we find in opinions expressed within Parliament, in treatises and sermons, one notes the extent to which the members of Parliament and the community of the churches formed a fellowship - one that was cemented in their oaths and covenants, one they renewed daily in their prayers together and monthly in their fasting. These fast sermons were printed for the public who were expected to join in this

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[36] This is discussed in more detail by Sharon Achinstein, *Milton and the Revolutionary Reader* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), 17; Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640 - 1660* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 7.

[37] My understanding of these conflicts is based on David Underdown, *Pride's Purge: Politics in the Puritan Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 7-23, 45-75; Mark Kishlansky, "The Emergence of Adversary Politics in the Long Parliament," *Journal of Modern History* 49 (December 1977): 617 - 640; Manning, *The English People and the English Revolution*, 49-164.

fellowship and army chaplains ensured this fellowship was maintained with the soldiers.[38]

The Souldiers Catechisme, a tract which went through seven editions,[39] is characteristic of this linkage, telling the soldiers and the reading public what their answer should be if asked, "What side are you of, and for whom do you fight?

> A. I am for the King and Parliament: or, in plaine termes;
>
> 1. I fight to recover the King out of the hands of a Popish Malignant Company, that have seduced his Majestie with their wicked Counsells, and have withdrawn him from his Parliament
> 2. I fight for the Lawes and Liberties of my Countrey, which are now in danger to be overthrowne by them that have long laboured to bring into this Kingdome an Arbitrary, and Tyrannical Government
> 3. I fight for the preservation of our Parliament, in the being whereof, (under God) consists the glory and welfare of the Kingdome; if this foundation be overthrowne, we shall soone be the most slavish Nation in the Christian World.
> 4. I fight in the defence and maintenance of the true Protestant Religion, which is now violently opposed, and will be utterly supprest in this Kingdome; and the Popish Religion againe advanced, if the Armies raised against the Parliament prevaile.[40]

Parliament, religious leaders, the army, each invited the 'common people' to

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[38] The role of preaching and of the army chaplains in the parliamentary armies has been emphasized by historians for a long time. Austin Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen: The General Council of the Army and its Debates, 1647-1648* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 19; Ian Gentles, *The New Model Army* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 32, 95-96; Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down* (London: Penquin Books, 1975), 58-59.

[39] This tract was reprinted seven times between 1644 and 1645 and had a wide circulation throughout the army, see Ian Gentles, "The Civil Wars in England," in John Kenyon and Jane Ohlmeyer, eds., *The Civil Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 114. C. H. Firth also noted the importance of this tract among the many in the period that addressed the problem of warfare for a Christian subject, see *Cromwell's Army* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd., 1901), 327-328.

[40] Robert Ram, *The Souldiers Catechisme* (1645), E 1185 (5), 2-3.

voluntarily submit themselves to join in this 'common cause.' John Goodwin explained the practical terms of this participation in a 'common cause,' which was "just, and holy, and good":

> Give me leave in what remains, to excite and stir you up, from the greatest to the least, both young and old, rich and poore, men and women, to quit yourselves like men, yea, and (if it be possible) above the line of men, in this great exigency and stresse of imminent danger that hangs over your heads, and threatens you every houre. . .There is neither man nor woman of us, neither young nor old, but hath somewhat or other, more or lesse, a Mite or two at least to cast into the Treasurey of the Publick safety. Men that have strength of body for the War, and fingers that know how to fight, let them to the Battell, and not feare to look the enemy in the face. Men and women that have only Purses and Estates, let them turne them into men and swords for the Battell. Men that have heads, but want armes and hands for outward execution, let these study and contrive methods and ways of proceedings: Head-worke is every whit as necessary in such a time and exigent, as hand-work is. They that have neither hands, nor heads, nor estates, let them finde hearts to keep the Mountain of God, to pray the enemies down, let the Armies of the Lord up: Let them finde tongues to whet up the courage and resolutions of others. This is a service wherein women also may quit themselves like men, whose prayers commonly are as masculine and doe as great and severe execution as the prayers of men.[41]

It was the model of a covenant as the bond between God and his instruments which organized the war into a 'common cause.' In such a model, while God controlled the selection of the instrument, man, in his voluntary and deliberative act of taking the covenant, made himself serviceable to God and his country. As this is explained by *The Fanatick in his Colours*, "God could never endure forced service, what you do, do with willingnesse of heart, if thou dost it heavily and grudgingly, it is wrought upon thee, not by thee: thou art rather a Patient than an Agent, and therefore offer willingly (if there be

[41] John Goodwin, *Anti-Cavalierisme* (1642), Haller, v.2, 223, 221, 222.

necessity) not only thy head and hand, but life, for the good of King and Kingdome."[42]

Accordingly, political activity was referred to as an 'engagement' in 'publicke affairs.' Using the term 'engagement' suggests this link between action and a set of duties upon which the action is based and a set of promises to which the action is committed.[43] In defence of "the peoples good" John Goodwin remarked that "every member" had "an ingagement lying by way of duty upon it."[44] The notion of the war as a 'common cause' and the participants of this war as members of an association united in a covenant forms the background to the use of the term 'engagement.' When the army and the levellers opposed Parliament, they defined that opposition according to the covenant and 'engagement' that made up the 'common cause.'[45]

This is forcibly exemplified in the *Solemn Engagement* made by the Army in June of 1647, one that bound the soldiers to unite and resist disbandment until their grievances

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[42] *The Fanatick in his Colours* (1661), E 1055 (14), 94.

[43] It is instructive that on the first day of the Putney Debates the central question was over the army's 'Engagements' and whether they could be broken to pursue a settlement by an agreement of the people. Their concern prompted the army to appoint a committee to "consider the Case of the Army stated, and a paper commonly call'd The Agreement of the People, and to consider how farre any thinge contain'd in the same are consistent with the said Engagements and Declarations and Interests" in papers of the Army. *Clarke Papers*, v.1, 415.

[44] John Goodwin, *Right and Might well met* (1649), E 536 (28), 5.

[45] Accordingly, when, in 1648, a group of "many thousand" well-affected published a broadside against "all present Authorities" and invited "all Faithfull Englishmen to put themselves into a Posture of Defending their own and Countries Liberties, and to labour for a speedy establishment of a Just and Equall Government" they termed this action "A New Engagement." *A New Engagement, or, Manifesto* (1648) 669. f. 12. (99).

and the liberties and safety of the commonwealth were secured.[46] It was within the production of these notions of the 'common cause' and 'engagement' that the army produced their statement that:

> we were not a mere mercenary army, hired to serve any arbitrary power of a state, but called forth and conjured by the several declarations of Parliament to the defence of our own and the people's just rights and liberties. And so we took up arms in judgement and conscience to those ends, and have so continued them, and are resolved according to your first just desires in your declarations, and such principles as we have received firm your frequent informations, and our own common sense, concerning these our fundamental rights and liberties, to assert and vindicate the just power and rights of this kingdom in Parliament for those common ends premised, against all arbitrary power, violence and oppression, and all particular parties and interests whatsoever.[47]

Throughout the next three years, the levellers would define the 'sort of men' called 'the Levellers' not as a party or faction, but in reference to this model of an 'engagement' whereby a group of men formed an association of free men. The Levellers developed their practices in reference both to Parliament's declarations and the army's *Solemn Engagement* in 1647. It is instructive that a Leveller Remonstrance of 1649 is modelled as "Their Solemn Engagement for redeeming, Setling, and Securing the Peoples rational, and just Rights, and Liberties, against all tyrants whatsoever, whether in Parliament, Army, or Councel of State."[48] *A Defence for the honest Nonsubstantive*

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[46] *A Solemne Engagement of the Army under the Command of his Excellency Sir Thomas Fairfax*. (1647) E 392 (9).

[47] *A Representation of the Army* (1647), Woodhouse, 404.

[48] *The Remonstrance Of many Thousands of the Free-People of England. Together with The Resolves Of the Young-men and Apprentices of the City of London, in behalf of Themselves, and those Called Levellers* (1649), E 574 (15).

Soldiers of the Army interprets the army's solemn engagement, suggesting the way the levellers modelled their own 'engagements': "They associated themselves together only as a company of free Commons of England, to stand together upon the just principles, and laws of nature and nations, to recover their own and all the peoples just rights and liberties."[49] The levellers were basing their claim to speak for 'the People' within the same general field of problematization which included the Parliament's practices in the early 1640s and the army's practices starting in 1647. It was organized around notions of a 'common cause' which produced a duty upon everyone who was able, but a duty that must be willingly and voluntarily undertaken in the form of a covenant. This structure of political work organized the relationship one formed in his 'engagement' to God, the law, the government, and 'the People.'

As a result, the distinction upheld in previous modes of political action, between 'discourse' and 'execution,' between a sphere of 'publicke affaires' and 'politics,' became increasingly difficult to maintain within this form of political activity. 'Publicke affairs' came to comprise a much more comprehensive field for discourse and political activity. William Walwyn is one example of this. Where we find Walwyn discussing the "disposition in me that I have engaged my self in any publick affairs," he cites some examples of the practical application of his 'engagement' whereby "I set my self daily more and more to do his [Christ's] will: and that in a more publick way then formerly."[50]

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[49] *A Defence for the honest Nonsubstantive Soldiers of the Army* (1648), Wolfe, 243.

[50] William Walwyn, *A Whisper in the Eare* (1646), McMichael and Taft, 175-176.

He gives the following account of some of his 'engagements':

> I, with others, moved for reformation, in doing whereof, how I laboured to have preserved the continuance and well being of our minister. . .our next indeavours were for the whole ward, wherein after much labour, we so prevailed, that the well affected carryed the choice of Alderman and common councell men, and all other officers in the Ward: my next publicke business was with many others, in a remonstrance to the Common Councell, to move the Parliament to confirm certain infallible maximes of free Government: wherein the power of Parliament was plainly distinguished from the Kings Office.[51]

Walwyn worked in his parish and ward, in continuity with pre-revolutionary modes, to participate in deciding upon the minister and officers for local government.[52] However, extraordinarily, he expanded his political work to include helping frame some "infallible maximes of free Government."[53] This practice involved a set of expectations about political participation that were made possible by the notion of a 'common cause.' William Allen, an agitator, offers a similar description of a new set of expectations: "I think that the things in hand hee names are things of great weight, having relation to the setling of a Kingdome, which is a great worke; truly the worke wee all expect to have a share in, and desire that others may alsoe."[54] He continued by remarking that "we are

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[51] Ibid., 176-177.

[52] The revolutionary period did open many of these processes up, from what historians call closed vestries to open vestries. The effects of this in London are discussed in Lindley, *Popular Politics*, Chp. 4, 158-197.

[53] Walwyn, *A Whisper in the Eare*, 177.

[54] *Clarke Papers*, v.1, 213.

most of us butt young Statesmen."[55] The notion of a 'common cause' and the model of an 'engagement' one had a duty to perform produced possibilities for political practice that the levellers, among others, would develop and expand throughout the 1640s.

Within this civil war, organized as an 'engagement' within a 'common cause,' the moral agent was problematized according to choices imposed by the 'common cause' and not according to status within the local communities. This is exemplified in the difference between describing the political subject as one of the 'well-affected' or as one of the 'chief inhabitants,' a characterization typical in pre-revolutionary discourse. This model of 'engagement' forced the individual to make himself a moral agent of his own action, to make himself serviceable to the 'common cause' as he ought to. The extent to which the term 'well-affected' referred only to the 'chief inhabitants' was a problem which produced conflicting interpretations.

Politics and the Moral Agent

In this model of political activity as an 'engagement' within a 'common cause' the relations between political activity and status were problematized. The political subject was differentiated through three morally exemplary figures: the well-affected, the malignant, and the neuter. *A Diurnall of Dangers* remarked that the Kingdome was divided into two sides, 'Malignant' and 'well-affected' and between these two parties

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[55] Ibid., 213. Austin Woolrych tells us that "'Statesmen' in contemporary usage meant student or expositors of the art of politics, rather than practitioners at a high level;" Austin Woolrych, *Soldiers and Statesmen*, 161.

"half as many Neuters."[56] As *Englands Birth-Right Justified* remarked, the 'well-affected party' can be "discerned by their voluntary aide to the Parliament" while, in accordance with "Equitie, Law, Justice, and Conscience" the "badge of a Malignant" should be given to a man

> for being disaffected to common Freedome, and having either in purse or person declared his disaffection thereunto, in any ways assisting the Common enemy, who hath drawn his sword, to destroy the freedome of the Commonwealth, which by the Law of this Land is granted unto the Free People thereof.[57]

Similarly, *A Diurnal of Dangers* defines neuters as "men so basely indifferent, and of such timerous natures, that aiming to serve God and Mammon, (it being too hard a task) they resolve truly to serve neither, but write themselves the servants of the Time."[58] Neuters, according to *Gold Tried in the Fire* are "such as manifest disaffection or opposition to common-freedome."[59] The terms of division - malignant, well-affected and neuter - were used to define a person in relation to his moral choice regarding the 'common cause' and not in relation to a status one had in the orders of society.

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[56] *A Diurnall of Dangers* (1642), E 112 (4), 1.

[57] *Englands Birth-Right Justified* (1645), Haller, 258, 270. The term 'well-affected' was often used to describe the individuals presenting petitions, for example *The Humble Petition of divers well-affected Persons of the Cities of London and Westminster, the Borough of Southwark, Hamblets, and Parts Adjacent. In the behalf of Lieut. Coll. John Lilburn, M. Wiliam Walwin, M. Thomas Prince, and M. Richard Overton, now Prisoners in Tower* (1649) 669. f. 14. (20); *The Humble Petition of divers well-affected People inhabiting in the Cities of London and Westminister, the Borough of Southwark, Hamblets and Parts Adjacent. Promoters and approvers of the Petition of the 11 of September, 1648* (1650), 669. f. 15. (55).

[58] *A Diurnall of Dangers,* 1.

[59] *Gold Tried in the Fire; or, The Burnt Petitions Revived* (1647), McMichael and Taft, 278.

We can analyse this problem according to the list of functions that Goodwin suggested for the common person on behalf of the cause: "strength of body," "purses and estates," "head-worke," "prayer."[60] Possibilities for political activity included work by their heads, their tongues, their hands and their hearts. This modelling of participation could still, and for many it certainly did, involve a set of distinctions between orders and sorts of individuals. The model suggests the common gender positions of the period, and where women are accorded a function it is to the extent that they can act "like men."[61] Within the modes of male participation, 'strength of body,' head-worke' and 'purses and estates' were all subjected to differentiations between social orders, exemplified by the practice of maintaining strict social divisions in impressing men for the army.[62] Throughout the period then, this 'common cause,' which was said to involve everyone, still operated in a modelling of political work that included traditional assumptions about the degrees between men, and between men and women.

However, there is a fissure in the extent to which status strictly set out what one was capable of doing and the extent to which status dictated what function one was to

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[60] Goodwin, *Anti-Cavalierisme*, 221-222.

[61] Ibid., 222; John Lilburne said of his wife, discussing her political action, "though a Feminine, yet of a gallant and true masculine Spirit." John Lilburne, *Jonahs Cry out of the Whales belly* (1647), E 400 (5), 4.

[62] For example, for the New Model Army, "any man, or the son of any man, rated at £5 in goods or £3 in lands could not be pressed." Similarly, clergymen, scholars, students at law or university, esquires' sons and a list of many more professions were exempt. As Ian Gentles concludes, "The long list of people and occupations exempt from impressment made it clear that it was the poor who were being targeted." Gentles, *New Model Army*, 31-32.

perform. The framework for this was related to God's practice, as it was interpreted from scriptures, of choosing the instruments for his work from the lower segments of the social order. Stephen Marshall highlighted this when he spoke of "Moses a Shepherd, a man slow of speech," being made by God into "a fit man to deliver a whole nation out of bondage and captivitie."[63] Marshall pointed to Gideon, Saul, David and Amos to cite other scriptural examples of this possibility. What was important in this discussion was the role individuals played in making themselves 'serviceable.' So, while God controlled the selection of his instruments, God could only choose men who had made themselves, in their voluntary 'engagement,' serviceable.[64] Thus, Goodwin told his audience that

> if you know how to create more strength then you have, or to improve your selves seventy times seven fold above the proportion of any your present abilities, I beseech you doe it; at least *be willing* (as the Apostle beares the Corinthians witnesse they were, in a case not altogether unlike) *above that you are able*, that so you may be sure to give out your selves to the utmost of your ability, the more freely.[65]

This mode of engaging above one's abilities had far-reaching effects in the modes of participation, in fighting, in petitioning, in producing a tract. We find the tract *Gold Tried in the Fire* defining the petitioners it sets out to defend as those "who have laid out themselves, both in their persons and purses, far above their abilities."[66] In 1653, a group of women, petitioning on behalf of John Lilburne, appealed to this theme

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[63] Stephen Marshall, *The Right Understanding of the Times* (1647), E 369 (5), 4.

[64] Walzer, *Revolution of the Saints*, 166-171.

[65] Goodwin, *Anti-Cavalierisme*, 222-223.

[66] *Gold Tried in the Fire; or, The Burnt Petitions Revived*, 278.

suggesting, in reference to themselves, that "nothing is more manifest then that God is pleased often times to raise up the weakest means to work the mightiest effects."[67] These themes are present in a letter from the agents of the five regiments justifying their actions in producing *The Case of the Army Truly Stated*:

> From the deep sense of our duty to God, to our native Country, to your Excellency, to this Army and to our selves, and to posterities to come, we find such obligations upon our consciences, written naturally by the finger of God in our hearts, that we cannot behold the honour of God to be impaired, the workes of his hands the land of our nativity, your Excellency, this Army, our selves, or posterities, ready to be swallowed and devoured up in confusion, thraldome and ruine, and to sit still, and not arise in the strength of his might, to continue our best endeavours for the prevention thereof: for, God hath given no man a talent to be wrapt up in a Napkin & not improved, but the meanest vassall in the eye of the Lord is equally obliged and accomptable to God with the greatest Prince or Commander under the Sun, in & for the use of that talented betrusted unto him: and therefore we presume that your Excellency (who does acknowledge your self a creature of, & servant to the same God) that we should, as we have presumed. State the case of the Army, how declined from its first principles of safety, what mischiefs are threatened thereby, and what remedies are suitable for prevention.[68]

When responding to the agents' discussion of their motives for producing the case of the army, Fairfax endorses their actions, saying "that he judged their intentions were honest, and desired that everyone of a publique spirit would be acting for the Publique," emphasizing that 'engagement' was intertwined with the moral agent of 'engagement,' forcing the individual to ensure that he was of a "publique spirit."[69]

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[67] *The humble Petition of divers afflicted Women, in behalfe of M: John Lilburn Prisoner in Newgate* (1653), 669. f. 17. (26).

[68] *A Copie of a Letter from the Agents of the aforesaid five Regiments of Horse, unto his Excellency Sir Thomas Fairfax* (1647), Wolfe, 219.

[69] Ibid., 222.

The problem in the revolutionary period was the extent to which this mode of 'public-spirited' could be adopted by any of those who engaged on behalf of the 'common cause' or was it only possible for a certain social group working within a certain institution. Members of Parliament considered themselves 'public persons' organized according to a relationship with God, with the law, and with governing the commonwealth. This mode of characterization was developed in pre-revolutionary England and were clearly visible in the 1640s.[70] Sermons preached to parliament reenforced the motifs and forms in which parliamentary politics was organized as the activity of 'public-spirited' men. John Ward, in a sermon before the Commons, told them that "private persons are self-centred like clods of the earth, but public persons are turned into other men, and have a public spirit."[71] Stephen Marshall told them, "as they must be godly . . . so they must learn to deny themselves" and "they must be taken off from all private self engagements."[72] The army pursued the possibilities of this practice

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[70] This is exemplified in the relationship between puritanism and the gentry, see Walzer's discussion of this in, *Revolution of the Saints*, 232-267. Zaret also discusses the parliamentarians' characterization of themselves as "public persons," *Origins of Democratic Culture*, 65. Similar themes are suggested in A. N. McLaren's recent study, particularly, in chapter six, where she studies the notion of "public counsel" and the discourses about the link between Parliament and 'godly men.' *Political Culture in the Reign of Elizabeth I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 161-197.

[71] John Ward, *God Judging Among the Gods*, (1645), quoted by Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, 235.

[72] Stephen Marshall, *Meroz Cursed*, (1641), quoted by Walzer, *Revolution of the Saints*, 234. This was also the theme of William Goode's sermon to the House Commons, *The Discoverie of a Publique Spirit* (1645), E 279 (4).

in their claim to be "not a mere mercenary army."[73] On the basis of having aided the Parliament and hazarded their lives for the 'common cause,' the levellers pursued the possibility of this practice in their promotion of mass petitions and in the development of the *Agreement of the People*.

'The Levellers' and the Production of the Agreement of the People

When the civil war ended in 1646, political activity became centred on the problem of producing a settlement for the commonwealth. The problematization of political activity as an 'engagement' in a 'common cause,' including the problematization of the moral agent of that cause, produced the conditions in which settlements could be proposed and it defined the elements that settlements attempted to respond to. The levellers proposed an *Agreement of the People* as a practical solution to the political conditions of the civil war and the need to settle the commonwealth. In its production, we find the mode of 'public-spirited' being adopted by a group of people who engaged for the 'common cause,' not as members of Parliament, but as levellers and soldiers. This necessitated that the individual produce a certain relationship with himself as an ethical subject, which developed in response to the problem of how, and by whom, the commonwealth was to be settled in peace, liberty and safety.

In the practice of producing proposed models, the individual was forced to question himself as an ethical subject. This questioning did not prefigure the production

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[73] *A Representation of the Army*, 404.

of different settlements. It developed as different groups produced a settlement, produced an organization to promote it, and in this practice, produced an experience of themselves as ethical subjects. The individual constituted his political position in relation to a proposed mode of settlement, one that circulated as texts in the print market, one that was the focus of meetings in the taverns and other social sites where soldiers and citizens met to draft it, promote it, and organize subscriptions for it. These texts were held, waved, and pinned to their hats or their breasts to publicize the end for which they engaged. These practices divided the Army, Parliament and the levellers into conflicting and shifting 'parties'- the Newcastle Propositions produced by Parliament, the petitions and the *Agreements of the People* produced by the levellers and the agitators, the *Heads of the Proposals*, the *Declarations* and *Remonstrances*, and the *Agreement of the People* from the army leadership were, at various points, proposed forms of settlement that competed for the support of the 'well-affected.' This involved much more than a battle to determine how to settle the kingdom; it involved a conflict over defining who could be an ethical subject of this "free libertie of acting."[74]

The model proposed by the Agreement of the People specified the ethical subject of this Agreement. The 'well-affected' and the 'fit person' were recognized in every stage as the only possible moral agent of the settlement - whether one is speaking of

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[74] Bedfordshire Man at Putney Debates: "I must make this motion; that all those that uppon a due consideration of the thing doe finde itt to bee just and honest, and doe finde that if they have engaged any thing to the contrary of this itt is unjust and giving away the people's Rights, I desire that they and all others may have a free libertie of acting to any thing in this nature, or any other nature that may bee for the peoples good, by petitioning or otherwise; whereby the fundamentals for a well-ordered Government for the people's Rights may bee established." *Clarke Papers*, v.1, 252.

producing it, organizing its promotion and its subscriptions or subscribing to it. These two terms bring together the mode of problematization discussed earlier, in which the 'well-affected' was one who had worked for the 'common cause' opposite the malignant and the neuter, while the term 'fit person' suggests one who had made himself serviceable and capable of an 'engagement' modelled as a covenant.[75] At a meeting between three levellers and three "Gentlemen Independents," at Nag-heads Tavern, November 1648, they came to an agreement that "the onely way of Settlement is. . . That some persons be chosen by the Army to represent the whole body: And that the well-affected in every County (if it may be) chuse some persons to represent them: And those to meet at the Head-Quarters."[76] The fullest elaboration of how the Agreement was to be propagated comes from the officers' version, and was certainly accepted by the levellers, and probably worked out in the various consultations between the two groups in the months leading up to its publication. A committee was suggested who would be:

> intrusted to nominate and appoint under their Hands and Seales, three or more *fit persons* in each County, and in each Citie, and Borough, to which one Representor or more assigned to be as Commissioners for the ends aforesaid, in the respective Counties, Cities, and Burroughs, and by like writing under their Hands and Seales shall certifie into the Parliament Records, before the fourteenth day of February next, the names of the Commissioners so appointed for the respective Counties, Cities, and Burroughs, which Commissioners or any three, or more of them, for the respective Counties, Cities, and Burroughs, shall before the end of February next, by writing under their Hands and Seales, appoint two *fit and faithfull persons*, or more in each Hundred, Lath, or Wapentake, within the

[75] The term 'fit person' was also used to characterised the Saint who was capable of joining in a covenant that established a church. Thomas Hooker, *A Survey of the Summe of Church-Discipline* (1648), E 440, 46-47.

[76] John Lilburne, *The Legall Fundamental Liberties of the People of England* (1649) E 560 (14), 30.

> respective Counties, and in each Ward, within the City of London, to take care for the orderly taking of all voluntary subscriptions to this Agreement by *fit persons* to be imploy'd for that purpose in every Perish"[my italics][77]

The groups vying to produce a settlement for the Kingdom held competing notions of the ethical subject who constituted a 'fit person.' In their moral reflection on 'engagement' the levellers worked out the mode in which the individual was to make himself serviceable, and it competed with other notions of how a 'fit person' was to be constituted.

The practices of Parliament during the period exhibit a rigorous effort to maintain a strict relationship between status and the capability of effecting a settlement. Not only did they deny the very concept of settling according to an agreement of the people, but placed the right to determine the nature of the settlement in the hands of men who were in their institution. *A Declaration of Some Proceedings* is characteristic in this regard, as it told the levellers "You should have made more use in sincereity and humility to direct your selves." "Be perswaded to study to be quiet, and doe your owne businesse, to live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you; and leave the publique affaires to those, to whom God and the Kingdome hath committed them."[78] The emphasis in this moral reflection was on status and the institution as a dividing line in modes of 'engagement,' so that only one who acted within the institution of Parliament in relation

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[77] *A Petition From His Excellency Thomas Lord Fairfax And the General Council of Officers of the Army . . . Concerning the Draught of An Agreement of the People* (1649) Wolfe, 344.

[78] *A Declaration of Some Proceedings* (1648), Haller and Davies, 133-134.

to a status he had outside Parliament was capable of acting with a 'publique spirit.'

The question of the ethical subject is produced by Parliament's response to the levellers. They declared, in 1647, that *The Agreement of the People* was "destructive to the being of Parliaments, and Fundamental Government of the Kingdom" and treated subsequent agreements with the same designation.[79] They imprisoned Thomas Prince, Samuel Chidley, William Larner, and two other men, for "avowing and prosecuting" a petition and the agreement of the people.[80] Parliament responded to the levellers' 'Large Petition' of March 1648 by having it burnt by the common hangman and some of its promoters imprisoned.[81] In their response to the petitions and practices of the levellers and private soldiers Parliament developed their emphasis on status as the basis for acting as an ethical subject.

Within the discussions surrounding the adoption of an Agreement of the People members of the army leadership similarly evoked pre-revolutionary marks of status to determine the 'fit person.' In the Putney debates on the agreement, Henry Ireton suggested that the 'inhabitants' referred to in the first *Agreement of the People* should refer to only those men who have a "permanent and local interest" in the Kingdom. As

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[79] *An Ordinance of both Houses concerning the chusing of Common-Councell men and other Officers of the City of London,* (December 17, 1647) in C.H. Firth, ed., *Acts and ordinances of the interregnum, 1642-1660,* vol.1 (London, H.M.S.O., 1911),1046.

[80] *The Petition of November 23, 1647*, Wolfe, 239.

[81] The levellers responded by drafting another petition and a petition for the release of the imprisoned petitioners. This conflict is described in *Gold Tried in the Fire; or, The Burnt Petitions Revived,* 275-293. The petition that was the object of this conflict was *The Petition of March, 1647*, Wolfe, 131-141.

he elaborated on this

> I thinke that noe person hath a right to an interest or share in the disposing or determining of the affaires of the Kingdome, and in chusing those that shall determine what lawes wee shall bee rul'd by heere, noe person hath a right to this, that hath nott a permanent fixed interest in this Kingedome.[82]

Property constituted the 'permanent interest' in the Kingdome and this emphasis on the propertied class as the 'fit persons' of the agreement reenforced the relationship between status and political activity that we find in the in the local communities in the pre-revolutionary period.

This emphasis on defining the 'fit person' in reference to status is embodied in the conflicts that developed between the leaders of the army and the private soldiers who worked to produce their own models. Private Richard Arnold was killed because he supported the levellers' *Agreement of the People* and because, along with other soldiers, he carried it with him to a rendezvous of the army. This rendezvous, on November 15, 1647, was held in Corkbush field, between Hertford and Ware, to inform the private soldiery of the recent efforts of the General Council to produce a peace settlement and get them to unite behind an Army Remonstrance. John Rushworth recorded the conflict that led to Arnold's death:

> The general expressed himself very gallantly at the head of every regiment, to live and die with them for those particulars which were contained in a remonstrance read to every regiment; and notwithstanding the endeavours of Major Scot and others to animate the soldiers to stand to a paper, called, The Agreement of the People, they generally, by many acclamations, declared their affections and resolutions to adhere to the general; and as many as could in a short time they had allowed, signed an agreement drawn up for that purpose, concerning their being

[82] *Clarke Papers*, I, 301-302. A similar emphasis was made during the debates by Cromwell, see pages 313-314.

> ready from time to time to observe such orders as they should received from the general and council of the army.
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> But it may not be forgot, that upon the general's coming into the field, Colonel Eyre, Major Scot, and others, were observed insinuating divers seditious principles unto the soldiers, incensing them against the general and general officers . . . Some inferior persons were likewise committed for dispensing factious papers, as the Agreement of the People, etc. among the private soldiers, and finding those people who pretend most for the freedom of the people, had dispersed divers of those papers amongst Colonel Lilburne's regiment of foot, the most mutinous regiment in the army, strict command was given for them, to tear them, and cast them away, which was done; and Captain-Lieutenant Bray, who was the only officer above a lieutenant left among them, the rest being driven away by the mutinous soldiers, and one of them wounded, was taken from the head of that regiment, and committed to custody; it being alleged, that he had led on the soldiers to that rendezvous, contrary to orders. And afterwards, a council of war being called in the field, divers mutineers, for example sake, were drawn forth, three of them were tried and condemmed to death; and one of them [Private Richard Arnold] whose turn it fell by lot, was shot to death at the head of the regiment, and others are in hold to be tried.[83]

Conflict was not confined to the fields in which the army met; it manifested itself in the debates of The General Council and in the production of letters, addresses and petitions produced for the reading public.[84] At St. Albans, in 1648, a soldier from every troop of Colonel Rich's Regiment met "to consider of the most speedy way to offer the Petition to

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[83] John Rushworth, *Historical Collections*, 8 vols (London, 1721), vii, 875-6. Reprinted in Keith Lindley, ed., *The English Civil War and Revolution: A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 1991), 158-159.

[84] We find examples of this when the agitators proposed suggestions for managing the councils of the army, in internal letters between agitators, and petitions from agitators against specified army leaders. *Clarke Papers*, v.1, 22-23, 82-94, 139-140.

all the Souldiers for their Subscription."[85] Their meeting was interrupted when three captains and other officers "rushed violently into the place, where they met, and imprisoned all their persons, and carryed them to Windsor, where they remain Prisoners."[86] *The Armies Petition of A New Engagement of many in the Army* published an account of this meeting, including the petition that was being constructed, and an account of the conflict that ensued between the private soldiers and the officers. The tract suggested that the officers' action necessitated a 'new engagement' by the private soldiers, especially those who had been the agitators, and it reminded the soldiers that they were instruments for the 'common cause.' In these conflicts and disagreements between the army leadership and the private soldiers, one of the central questions was over who could act as an ethical subject.

In relation to these conflicts, the levellers outlined a different set of notions about the relationship between political activity and status.[87] In their characterization of the 'fit

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[85] *The Armies Petition: Or A New Engagement of many in the Army* (1648) E 438 (1), 3. The discussion of this meeting comes after the tract discusses the role played by the agitators in producing the Army's *Solemn Engagement* of November, 1647. The tract further discusses the dissolution of the agitators by the army leadership and subsequent actions by the officers against the principles of the *Solemn Engagement*. This is the context of the claim to construct a "New Engagement" by private soldiers.

[86] Ibid., 3.

[87] The levellers characterization of who could subscribe as a 'fit person' was structured by conditions imposed in using the model of a covenant. The individual had to be able to enter into a voluntary agreement and this necessitated that the individual be able to exercise freedom in their political activity. Cultural assumptions in the period considered the exercise of freedom as only possible for individuals who were independent from the control of others. When Hooker described the practice of making a covenant to form a church, it could be done by persons "who were wholly free, each from the other. There can no necessary tye of mutually accord and fellowship come, but by free

person' the emphasis was on an ethical subject who was distinguished by his 'public-spirit.' Accordingly, private soldiers and members of the community could act as ethical subjects based on an ethical relationship they produced with themselves. This accounts for their insistence, with the agitators, that those who had engaged as members of the army be included as 'fit persons,' despite most of them not being the type of property holders who were considered to have a 'permanent fixed interest.' Rainborough, responding to Ireton, asks "what shall become of those many [men] that have laid out themselves for the Parliament of England in this present warre, that have ruined themselves by fighting, by hazarding all they had?"[88] Sexby explains this position when he remarked, "I thinke there are many that have nott estates that in honesty have as much right in the freedome [of] their choice as any that have great estates."[89] The levellers suggested that one could make himself 'fit,' producing the possibility, experienced in the production of the Agreement of the People, that more individuals were 'fit' to subscribe to the agreement than traditional property qualifications would dictate. It was also a significant challenge to Parliament's characterization of the 'fit person' as one who had a place in its institution.

The moral problematization of 'the Levellers' developed from within the practice of

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ingagement, free (I say) in regard to any humane constraint." Hooker, *A Survey of the Summe of Church-Discipline*, 47. On this basis, the levellers excluded women from the category of 'fit persons' along with servants and alms-takers, since they considered them to be unable, because of socio-economic relations, to exercise freedom in their political choices and engage in a voluntary agreement.

[88] *Clarke Papers*, I, 330.

[89] Ibid., 330.

producing the Agreement of the People and was directly linked to the modifications in political practice created by the political conditions of the 'common cause.' In the practice of producing this agreement, two principle concerns problematized 'the Leveller' as the ethical subject of this agreement - "whether they are *fit* to do it" and "whether they *ought* to do it."[90] In addressing these concerns, the leveller was forced to problematize himself and the practices that formed his 'engagement.' This problematization responded to one of the central questions produced in the debate about who could establish a settlement for the nation: How can one recognize himself as a public-spirited man?

It was according to a field of problematization that a set of concepts and a set of self-forming practices were organized as the relevant elements for the leveller's ethical experience of 'engagement.' This problematization constituted the possibility for the leveller to take 'care' of himself in his acts of freedom and it constituted the possibility of experiencing himself as 'public-spirited.' It is in relation to this problematization and the procedures it outlined for the leveller - to observe himself, to analyse himself, to decipher himself, and through ethical work, transform himself to attain a certain mode of being - that it was possible for him to recognize himself as a 'fit person' and as morally valorized in his political activity. It was an experience that was centred in practices of producing a relation with oneself.

[90] J. Philolaus, *A Serious Aviso to the Good People of this Nation, Concerning that Sort of Men, called Levellers* (1649), E 555 (28), 4-5.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE ETHICAL EXPERIENCE OF ENGAGEMENT: MODE OF SUBJECTION AND ETHICAL SUBSTANCE

Participating in a 'common cause' produced the possibility for individuals to constitute themselves as political agents according to an ethical experience of 'engagement.' An experience that was not based on moral conceptions located in a code providing a strict definition of what was permitted and what was forbidden, but in a ethical relationship to the self. The ethics we have been discussing was still structured by a framework in which the political acts of the individual were related to a very strong ensemble of codifications formed by divine law, natural law and civil law. A systematic ensemble of codes and instituted modes of action was organized around the concepts of rebellion and 'Peace,' ordering the relationship between the King, his institutions and his people. The codes organised around 'rebellion' and 'Peace' did not cease to be important and the individual was compelled to refer his conduct to these laws.[1] As one treatise put it, "the name of a Rebel is justly so odious, that, I will not say, no good Christian, no

[1] This was often expressed in the common juxtaposition of 'government' and 'chaos.' As one tract described it, "Since no kinde of Government whatsoever can subsist or continue without Order and Obedience, I hold it convenient to speak of these two in the first place. All things have been maintained from the Creation to this day, by the same omnipotent power that created them, otherwise they had been annihilated or reduced to their former Chaos; and daily experience doth shew, that all things without Order run to ruine and confusions." *Severall Politique and Militarie Observations* (1648), E 438 (9), 1. As the levellers expressed this in relation to their own action, "we are for Government and against Popular Confusion, we conceive all our actions declare, when rightly considered, our aim having bin all along to reduce it as near as might be to perfection" and not abolish all government as many charged. *A Manifestation* (1649), McMichael and Taft, 339.

truly Religious, but no good moral civil honest man can hear it without an inward dislike and detestation of those persons and their practices."[2] As such, "all disobedience is Rebellion: yea all neglect of duty, and the doing of any thing that ought not to be done."[3] However, when the war began between the King and the Parliament, each party justified its practices by using the concept of rebellion against its adversary and the authority that would impose these codifications became contested.

From Parliament's perspective, the King's coronation oath signified a trust conferred on him which linked the King's office to God and his subjects, and this bound him to observe the laws of God, the laws of nature and the laws of the civil state. A breach of that trust in the form of the King acting according to his own will and passions and not the common good produced Tyranny and sanctioned a defensive war.[4] Within this argument one finds significant novelty, but it also borrowed heavily from a long tradition, one that includes both Christian and classical sources, on the nature of Tyranny. This discourse established the modes in which the individual was forced by moral obligations to God, to the community and to himself to defend his church, his community and himself against Tyranny and oppression. In this argument the predominant emphasis

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[2] Christopher Harvey, *The Right Rebel. A Treatise Discovering the true use of the Name by the Nature of Rebellion; With the properties and Practices of Rebels* (1661), W: H1043, 4.

[3] Ibid., 11.

[4] The historiography on the development of this argument is extensive. For a good brief description of the arguments produced by Parliament and by theorists supporting Parliament's position see John Sanderson, *'But the people's creatures': The philosophical basis of the English Civil War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), 10-37; F. D. Dow, *Radicalism in the English Revolution 1640-1660* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 10-19.

was placed on the relationship with the self that enabled a person to form himself as an ethical subject and be serviceable to his commonwealth in a war against an oppressive tyrant. To form himself as an ethical subject, the emphasis was placed on a set of procedures and techniques which were suggested and prescribed to individuals to work on their actions and thoughts. According to these practices of the self, the ethical subject made of himself an object to be known and produced, through relations of self-knowledge, a certain mode of being.

The levellers were significant participants in this process, and we find in their practices, and the moral reflection on their practices, one possible mode of experiencing oneself as the ethical subject of one's political activity. This ethical experience of 'engagement' was formed in relation to the possibilities of being free to perform a certain number of activities: how one engaged according to that freedom the levellers and their opponents considered an ethical problem. The next two chapters will set out the concepts that were used in this moral inquiry to suggest the conceptual field that structured the moral experience of levelling.

Mode of Subjection: 'Looke About You'

The model of political activity as participation within a 'common cause' organized 'engagement' as a duty, and so the critical question was not whether or not one engaged, but whether or not one engaged as he 'ought to.' Referring political activity to participation in a 'common cause' imposed 'engagement' as a duty; it forced

the individual to act according to his fidelity for the cause, and it forced the individual to direct his action against tyranny and oppression. Starting in 1647, the levellers directed their 'engagement' for the 'common cause' against Parliament and the leaders of the army and, in 1649, against the government of the new republic. They organized this 'engagement' in their promotion of petitions and more forcibly in their promotion of an Agreement of the People. What principles did they refer to for managing their 'engagement' for the 'common cause' against Parliament and the army? What principles did the leveller adopt to authorize, direct and morally valorize the political choices he made according to his fidelity for the 'common cause'? These questions introduce the mode of subjection understood as "the way in which the individual establishes his relation to the rule and recognizes himself as obliged to put it into practice."[5]

The individual managed his fidelity for the 'common cause' not by referring his conduct to a code that clearly defined a precise form for his political acts, but a practice that was called "looke about you."[6] The practice of 'looke about you' established for the individual the mode in which he directed his political activity, established the moral validity of his political acts, and established the conditions for making choices about his 'engagement' for the 'common cause.' It was according to this practice and a set of

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[5] Michel Foucault, *Use of Pleasure: The History of Sexuality,* Vol.2, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 27.

[6] For examples of the use of this phrase see, *Looke about You: A word in Season to a Divided Nation* (1647), E 408 (3); *Looke about you, Or The Fault-finder, and Critical Observer, Characterising himself and others* (1647), E 398 (25); *Look about you: or a Goatsworth of good Councel for a Peny: being a variety of Councels, Cautions and Directions* (1654), 669.f. 17. (76).

principles to which it referred that one ordered his choice of methods, the ideas he endorsed and men he would associate with, support, or oppose. It was according to the practice of 'looke about you' that the levellers structured their 'engagement' against Parliament and for an Agreement of the People. Accordingly, *The poore Wise-mans Admonition* advised its leveller audience: "Yee have need to look about you, and that verie quickly, to see into affairs your selves, speedily, and understand how things go, for ye are likely very speedily to be put upon the greatest triall of your wisdom and faithfulnesse that ever men were put upon."[7] John Lilburne defended the choices he made in his 'engagement' against Parliament by suggesting, "I did look well about me before I did what I did."[8]

The expression 'looke about you' established a set of principles one must use to regulate his 'engagement,' and a set of conditions one imposed on his political activity to authorize and morally valorize how he engaged. It structured the individual's choices and decisions by instructing him through a set of principles he found in the universal laws of nature and God. These do not work to form a systematic definition of what is forbidden and what is permitted for one to do in his political activity, but a set of principles that one refers his activity to in order to organize, authorize, and instruct himself in his political activity. The practice of 'look about you' was the mode of subjection that ensured the

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[7] *The poore Wise-mans Admonition* (1647) Morton, 123. Similarly, another tract instructed soldiers "to look well about you." *Sea-Green & Blue, See Which Speaks True* (1649), E 559 (1), 8. One can find this same instruction in *The English Souldiers Standard* (1649), Morton, 232.

[8] *The Picture of the Councel of State* (1649), Haller and Davies, 202.

individual engaged as he 'ought to' and was based on applying the concepts of 'necessity' and of 'opportunity' to his political activity.

'Necessity'

The concept of 'necessity' was transmitted in a set of maxims that were often repeated in the discourse of the period: "Necessity is a law of time and place" or "necessity has no law."[9] These maxims can be traced well back in English history and they held a central place in the common law, and were equally central to natural law discussions of self-preservation.[10] The principle of 'necessity' was both extremely elastic in its application and so embedded in the cultural assumptions of all social groups that it was used by the King to justify modes of absolutism, by Parliament to justify its acts against the King, by peasants to sanction revolt against policies of the state such as enclosure and fen drainage, and by the levellers to justify resistance to Parliament. The concept of 'necessity' was used to regulate and authorize actions based on universal laws of nature and it forced the individual to relate his actions to his own self-preservation rather than regulating his action by the dictates of civil law or civil magistrates. As one tract said of 'necessity,' "the cals of the miseries and extremities of men for reliefe, are more authorizing, more urging, pressing, and binding upon the consciences of men, who

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[9] Glenn Burgess, *Absolute Monarchy and the Stuart Constitution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 50.

[10] Ibid., 50.

have wherewithall to afford to relief unto them, then the formall requests or elections of men to places of trust or interest."[11] As such, "the necessities of men call more effectually, then men themselves" whereby "the common saying, that in cases of extreame necessity all things are common, extend's unto callings also. In cases of necessity, all callings are common, in order to the supply of the present necessity."[12] *An Appeale From the degenerate Representative Body* sets out clearly the concept of 'necessity':

> necessity is a law above all lawes, and this principle conveyeth and issueth forth authority and power, both to generall and particular cases, even to the taking up of unusuall and unexemplary courses for the publique and particular deliverances, and yet such acts warrantable in, and by all sorts and societies of people whatsoever, and the actor, or actors thereof justified.[13]

Two common examples were used in discussions of 'necessity.' The first was the 'ship of state.' The presentation set out by John Goodwin is characteristic of this argument:

> When the Pilot, or Master of a Ship at Sea, be either so farre overcome and distempered with drinke, or otherwise disabled, as through a phreneticall passion, or sicknesse in any kinde, so that he is uncapable of acting the exigencies of his place; for the preservation of the Ship, being now in present danger, either of running upon a quick sand, or spliting against a rock, etc. Any one, or more of the inferious Mariners, having skill, may in order to the saving of the Ship, and of the lives of all that are in it, very lawfully assume, and act according to the interest of a Pilot, or Master, and give orders and directions to those with them in the Ship accordingly, who stand bound at the peril of their lives in this case to obey them.[14]

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[11] John Goodwin, *Right and Might well met* (1649), E 536 (28), 8.

[12] Ibid., 8-9.

[13] Richard Overton, *An Appeale From the degenerate Representative Body* (1647), Wolfe, 160.

[14] Goodwin, *Right and Might well met*, 9.

The second common example was of a commander who turns the mouth of his canons against his own soldiers. This is explained by *The English Souldiers Standard*: "That it is no resisting of Magistracy, to side with the just principles and Law of Nature and Nations: And that the Souldiery may lawfully hold the hands of the Generall who will turn his Canon (meaning his strength, power and authority) against his Army, on purpose to destroy (or enslave) them."[15]

The concept of 'necessity' worked according to two principles: first, the individual or the larger unit had to be facing imminent harm that if unchecked would surely destroy them; second, the individual or larger unit faced imminent danger that was visible and known and not just an opinion one had. *A Declaration of Some Proceedings* examines some petitions produced by the levellers and instructs them to "Complain not of Famine before you feele it, lest you provoke him that can send it. There is a difference between scarcity and Famine."[16] This is set out even more clearly in *Liberty of Conscience*, explaining that 'necessity' can "sufficiently warrant & instruct the people, as certainly and lawfully, though not so readily, to defend themselves from ruine and destruction." But the tract warns that it "must be justly ballanced, and tenderly made use of; it is no doctrine of libertinisme, though libertines should abuse it" Thus "it is not sufficient to say there is imminent danger and necessity, both God and man must see it is

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[15] *The English Souldiers Standard*, 231-232. For another example of the use of this theme see, *Englands Birth-Right Justified* (1645), Haller, v.3, 260.

[16] *A Declaration of Some Proceedings* (1648), Haller and Davies, 125.

so," so one ought to be "both wise & conscientious in the manage of it."[17] As John Goodwin expressed this: "It is an easie matter to pretend a necessity (almost) for every unjust, and unrighteous thing; but not so easie to judge what such a necessity is."[18]

The mode of subjection that was established by the practice of 'looke about you' was organized to ensure that the individual acted as he was authorized to by 'necessity' and that the individual was instructed properly by the 'necessity' he faced. This practice established for the individual the nature of the threat to his self-preservation and the object producing that threat. Accordingly, in his application of the concept of 'necessity,' the individual authorized himself to act and, at the same time, established the tyrant and oppressor to be engaged against in accordance with his fidelity for the 'common cause.' *The mournfull Cryes of many thousand poor Tradesmen*, said to be "the warning Tears of the Oppressed," exemplifies how this practice makes these connections:

> Oh that the cravings of our Stomacks could be heard by the Parliament and City! Oh that the Tears of our poor famishing Babes were botled! Oh that their tender Mothers Cryes for bread to feed them were ingraven in Brasse! Oh that our pinned Carkass were open to every pitiful Eye! Oh that it were known that we sell our Beds and Cloaths for Bread! Oh our Hearts faint, and we are ready to swoon in the top of every Street![19]

The tract sets out these conditions forcibly, blaming both the Parliament and the Soldiers for the economic problems of the country, and then warns them, "O Parliament men, and Souldiers! Necessity dissolves all Laws and Government, and Hunger will break through

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[17] *Liberty of Conscience: Or the Sole mens to obtaine Peace and Truth* (1643), Haller, v.3, 110.

[18] Goodwin, *Right and Might well met*, 16.

[19] *The mournfull Cryes of many thousand poor Tradesmen* (1648), Wolfe, 275.

stone Walls."[20] Accordingly, the economic conditions are described as a threat to the self-preservation of these individuals, and the source of these conditions, Parliament and the Army, is established as the object to be engaged against. The concept of 'necessity,' embodied in the practice of 'looke about you,' established these connections and formed one way for the individual to establish the way he would engage.

Centred on their experience of imprisonment, the levellers established the relation between their obligations to the 'common cause' and how they would engage according to the practice of 'looke about you.' In imprisonment the levellers developed the mode in which 'necessity' was instructing them about the existence of Tyranny and justifying their own resistance to oppression. The House of Lords, the House of Commons and the Council of State created during the new Republic would each become Tyrants who must be resisted on behalf of the 'common cause.' The levellers produced systematic tracts relating to the public the process of their arrest, their examination and the conditions of their imprisonment.[21] For the levellers, the manner in which they were addressed, the illegality of their imprisonment and the assault that it represented on their bodies were the central indicators that the governors of the country were as oppressive as the King and

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[20] Ibid., 278.

[21] Examples of this literature are extensive, especially from John Lilburne. For descriptions of arrests, examinations and imprisonment see especially, *The Picture of the Councel of State*, 191- 245; William Walwyn, *The Fountain of Slaunder Discovered* (1649), McMichael and Taft, 349-382; Richard Overton, *The Commoners Complaint: Or, A Dreadfulwarning From Newgate, to the Commons of England* (1646), Haller, v.3, 375-392; John Lilburne, *The Just Mans Justification* (1647), E 407 (26); John Lilburne, *A new complaint of an old grievance* (1647), E 416 (25);

his prerogative courts had been in pre-revolutionary times.[22] In *The Lawes Funerall*, John Lilburne made this connection,

> looking upon my selfe unaviodably in the roade way of destruction, in the continuance of my causelessse and arbitrary imprisonment, and finding the generality of the House of Commons, (who should be the true and faithfull conservators of the Lawes and Liberties of England) deafe unto Justice, and their eares and hearts sealed up against it.[23]

This formed their call to act not only to gain their freedom from the Gaol, but to organize themselves together to promote the Agreement of the People that would form the basis for a new government. As such, 'necessity' structured how the levellers morally valorized their choice of engaging for an Agreement of the People and engaging against Parliament and the new Commonwealth government.

What established this relation was the practice of 'looke about you' through which the levellers examined the political conditions of the period and their own situation regarding the 'common cause.' This practice is exemplified in the tracts that described their arrests, trials and conditions of imprisonment, and were used to form the basis for a set of choices they made. The following account from Richard Overton is an excellent example of how this mode of subjection worked to establish for the levellers their relation to the 'common cause':

> I told my Jaylors, 'that if they had no Order or Warrant for the remanding back of my person to the Goal of Newgate I would not set one leg before another in

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[22] In addition to the tracts listed in the previous note, particularly good examples of this can be found in, Richard Overton, *An arrow against all tyrants and tyranny* (1646), Sharp, 54-72; Richard Overton, *An Appeale From the degenerate Representative Body*, 160-163; John Lilburne, *The Lawes Funerall* (1648), E 442 (13).

[23] Lilburne, *The Lawes Funerall*, 2-3.

subjection thereunto; but was fully resolved, that if they would have me back to the Goale, they should carry me...having declared my set resolution to my attendant Goalers, away I was borne to the Boate, and when I was landed at Black-Fryers, they would have forced me along up the hill on my feete, yea, they intreated me, but at that time I was not minded to be their DRVDG, or to make use of my feet to carry the rest of my body to the Goale, therefore I let them hang as if they had been none of my own, or like a couple of farthin Candles dangling at my knees, and after they had dragged me in that admire-able posture a while, the one took me very reverently by the head, and the other as reverently by the feete, as if he had intended to have done Homage to His Holinesses great Toe, and so they carried me: but truly Sir, I laughed at the conceit in my sleeve. But this their reverend usage did not continue long, for they grew verie irreverend and deboyst of a sudden, for ever when they were a little wearie, they let my bodie fall upon the stones, and then againe most vallarrouslie like men well appointed for the Cause, they tooke me by the head and shouldiers, and just as if I had been a dead Dog, they drag'd and trayl'd my body upon the stones, and without all reverence to my cloth, drew me through the dirt and mire, and plucked me by the hair of the head, just as if the John of all Sir Johns had got little Martin by the feathers, notwithstanding the peoples severall exclamations against their inhumane incivility and tyrannie towards me, and their severall desires to carrie me in a Chaire: And indeed in case I had been legallie their prisoner, yet had they no authoritie, to keepe me in evil custodie, incivilie or inhumanely to use me, but were bound onely to keep me in safe custody, and therein to use me like a man, and therefore in case they would not have so honoured me, as to have made me a Chairman, they might have carried me in a Porters Basket, or in a Cart, (provided it had not been Westward) or in some other such decent necessary Toole, And in this like unheard of barbarous manner they brought me into the lower roome in Newgate, called the Lodge, and there they threw me down upon the Nords, and having Sir Edward Coke 2. Part instit. Upon Magna Carta the Mr. Briscoe offered to wrest it out of my hands: Then I demanded of him if he intended to rob me, and he told me he would have it from me whether I would or no.

To whom I replyed, that he should not, if to the utmost of my power I could preserve it from him, and I would do my utmost, where upon I clapped it in my Armes, and I laid my selfe upon my belly, but by brute force, they violently turned me upon my back then Briscoe (just as if he had been staving off a Dog from the Beare) smote me with his fist, to make me let go my hold, whereupon as loud as I could, I cryed out, murther, murther, murther. And thus by an assault they got the great Charter of Englands Liberties and Freedoms from me; which I laboured to the utmost of power in me, to preserve and fend, and ever to the death shall maintain, and forthwith without any warrant poore Magna Carta was clap up close prisoner in Newgate, and my poor fellow prisoner deprived of the

comfortable visitation of friends.[24]

In Overton's narrative of his arrest, the concept of 'necessity' is used to produce the Tyrant, the oppressed man and the struggle that is being waged between them. The legal rights of the English subject are ever present to indicate the Tyrant - the lack of a warrant, the difference between "safe custody" and taking the prisoner in "a warlike manner" to the Gaol, the stripping of Magna Carta from the hands of the free Subject.[25] The resistance of the body is equally placed in relation to the law, whereby the lack of a warrant activates the laws of self-preservation forcing the body to resist the agents of the Tyrant. This play of forces, between the Tyrant and the oppressed man, recurs in tract after tract produced by the levellers. The production of these texts was regulated by the practice of 'looke about you,' which established the 'necessity' that authorized the levellers to act, provided them with the knowledge of their situation and produced, for the levellers, the justification and instigation for their choices. This practice formed a mode of subjection constituting how the leveller formed his relationship as an ethical subject to the moral obligation of fidelity to the 'common cause.'

'Opportunity'

The success of the Parliamentary army in the civil war sustained the interpretation

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[24] Richard Overton, *The Commoners Complaint: Or, A Dreadfulwarning From Newgate, to the Commons of England,* 378, 385-386

[25] Ibid., 378.

that the fight against the King was a 'just cause' and God was guiding his subjects against an oppressive King.[26] This in turn produced an 'opportunity' that God had given his English subjects to make themselves free within a 'Free State.' It was, as one tract said, "A blest opportunity offered by Almighty God"[27] A petition by the levellers concluded with these instructions to Parliament: "O now! Now is the opportunity. O! That you might see even in this your dayes the things that belong to your peace and freedom, before they be hid from your eyes."[28]

The term 'opportunity' referred to a second mode in which an individual supervised his political activity and established his relation to the 'common cause.' This can be characterized according to two themes: first, no matter what one did, the success of his action was dependent on it coinciding with the 'opportunity' God provided; second, one must prepare oneself so that when an 'opportunity' comes from God he will be able to make use of it properly. John Preston explained this in a sermon: "to every action, and to every purpose, there is a certaine opportunity; and be a man so well fitted,

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[26] In the 1640's, a news marketplace operated to inform the reading public of the details of every battle, confrontation and skirmish between the armies in the field. This marketplace was driven by many impulses, including curiosity and concern, but the strongest motive formed around the question of God's providence. The importance of this is suggested in the titles of many tracts, one example of which will serve here, *Memorable Dayes and Works of God in the Yeare past, 1645. A Catalogue of the Cities, Castles, Towns and Forts taken by the Parliaments Forces* (1646), E 314 (6).

[27] *Tolleration Justified, and Persecution condemn'd* (1646), McMichael and Taft, 156

[28] *The Petition of November 23, 1647*, Wolfe, 241

yet if he misse of that opportunity, he shall not bring his enterprise to passe."[29] The individual could never predict when these 'opportunities' would arise, but when in a conjuncture of time God provided an 'opportunity' it was a call to action that one was supposed to make use of. "There is a time that if a man speake, hee makes himself a prey to the wrath of men . . . And there is a time wherein if a man doe not speake, he makes himself a prey to the wrath of God."[30]

The period of the civil war was one such 'opportunity' according to many and this was forcibly set out particularly by those who preached fast sermons to the House of Commons. Thomas Goodwin preached to the Commons, in 1642, that it was "an opportunity such as the last hundred years . . . have not afforded the like."[31] This was the theme of Stephen Marshall's sermon, *The Right Understanding of Time*. Marshall expanded on this theme by discussing the study of time and dividing its study into different compartments of knowledge, such as astrology or history. The most important theme addressed by Marshall was the practical knowledge of the times, his auditors' need: "to know the times, as to understand the moment and exigence of all affaires which fall within the times in reference to their owne dutie, that they may improve all occurrences which fall out to the right end."[32] This knowledge is not "a mental or

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[29] John Preston, *A New Covenant* (1625), quoted in Christopher Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1958), 235.

[30] Quoted in Ibid., 236.

[31] Thomas Goodwin, *Zerubbabel's Encouragement to Finish the Temple* (1642), E 147 (13), 51.

[32] Stephen Marshall, *The Right Understanding of the Times* (1647), E 369 (5), 8.

speculative understanding of humane affairs, or things belonging either to Church or Commonwealth," but "a Practicall Knowledge, which is a wise abilitie to manage all the understanding that they have in reference to their dutie."[33] The sermon develops this topic in reference to the Children of Issachar who were "men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to doe."[34] This forms the model of Marshall's description of wisdom and the wise man, so that wise man is one "that hath the interpretation of a thing, knowes what is to bee done, what is to bee refused, and when things are to bee done most fitly or opportunely."[35] This wisdom was to be found in every possible area of the individual's activity, it applied to the affairs of government no less than to the activities of the husbandmen in the field. This sermon, addressed to the parliamentarians, is characteristic of the strategy developed in reference to 'opportunity,' establishing a mode for the individual to establish his relation to political duty.

The concept of 'opportunity' established for the individual the relation he had to the duties imposed by the 'common cause.' It directed him in his practice of 'looke about you' by organizing the political choices he made for his engagement according to whether or not his methods, tactics, or goals were 'seasonable.' *The Crafts-mens Craft* offers an example of this, suggesting of the levellers: "we are neither for Delay, where it is dangerous; nor for hast, where it makes war: But as for good things, so for a fit and

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[33] Ibid., 9-10.

[34] Ibid., 2.

[35] Ibid., 11.

convenient season, which we judge to be now."[36] Tracts of the period were produced as "A Word in Season," or "Seasonable" observations, while actions and goals were judged according to whether they were "seasonable" or "unseasonable."[37] *A Plea for Common-Right and Freedom* cautioned against letting "opportunities of doing good" be passed by.[38] Accordingly, in *A Manifestation,* Lilburne, Overton, Walwyn and Prince vindicated how they had engaged in public affairs by referring to way 'opportunity' structured their activity:

> Wee should never enterpose as we have done, in behalfe of the Commonwealth: But when so much has been done for recovery of our Liberties, and seeing God hath so blest that which has been done, as thereby to cleer the way, and to afford an opportunity which these 600 years has been desired, but could never be attained, of making this a truly happy and wholly Free Nation; We think our selves bound by the greatest obligations that may be, to prevent the neglect of this opportunity, and to hinder as much as lyes in us, that the bloud which has been shed be not spilt like water upon the ground, nor that after the abundant Calamities, which have overspread all quarters of the Land, the change be onely Notionall, Nominall, Circumstantiall, whilst the real Burdens, grievances, and Bondages, be continued, even when the Monarchy is changed into a Republike.[39]

The levellers established their criticism of Parliament and the army according to the way they conceived both to have not used the present 'opportunity' to establish the

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[36] *The Crafts-mens Craft* (1649), E 561 (11), 5.

[37] William Walwyn provides an example of this when he discusses a debate he was involved in over whether or not it was the right "season" for a particular petition that was being drafted. William Walwyn, *Walwyns Just Defence* (1649), Haller and Davies, 352. In his study of petitions and the practice of producing them, David Zaret suggested that this was a common theme in debates over whether or not a petition should be produced. David Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture: Printing, Petitions, and The Public Sphere in Early-Modern England* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), 238.

[38] *A Plea for Common-Right and Freedom* (1648), E 536 (22), 2.

[39] *A Manifestation*, 336.

goals of the 'common cause.' This led them to question their fidelity to the 'common cause' and the levellers' production of the Agreement of the People was their solution to the problem of how to make use of the 'opportunity' provided by God. *The second Part of Englands New-Chaines Discovered* charged that "the most hopefull opportunity that ever England had for recovery of our Freedome, was spent and consumed" by the "uncertaine staggering motions, and arbitrary, irrational Proceedings" of Parliament and the Army.[40] The final *Agreement of the People* expressed the intention to work out a settlement that would not "deprive us of the benefit of all those wonderful Victories God hath vouchsafed against such as sought our bondage" and was guided by the desire "to make a right use of that opportunity God hath given us to make this Nation Free and Happy."[41] The mode of subjection that was organized as a practice of 'looke about you' worked to instruct the individual toward this 'the right use' and established, for the individual, the moral valorization of his choices.

Within these modes of subjection, the leveller made himself into an ethical subject by referring his political activity to precepts set out by divine law and natural law. The levellers produced the Agreement of the People as the end of their 'engagement' for the 'common cause' organized by the concepts of 'necessity' and 'opportunity.' In order to be the ethical subject of this political activity, the leveller constituted his relation to his fidelity for the 'common cause' in the practice of 'looke about you.' This practice was

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[40] *The second Part of Englands New-Chaines Discovered* (1649), Haller and Davies, 180.

[41] *An Agreement of the Free People of England* (1649), Wolfe, 402.

based on a mode of subjection, structured by the concepts of 'necessity' and 'opportunity,' which organized the way the leveller related his political choices to his fidelity for the 'common cause.'

In relation to this mode of subjection, the leveller, according to the practice of 'looke about you,' was forced make himself an object of ethical work and transform himself into the ethical subject of his political activity. The ethical substance, or the part of himself and his behaviour that was the object to be worked on was his 'affections,' for the 'common cause.'

The Ethical Substance: 'Engagement' & 'Affection'

In the discussions of 'engagement,' the heart, the tongue and the hand formed a structure through which texts differentiated and grouped the relevant elements of political activity. In this period, when tracts referred to the heart, it was to refer to the central site where the feelings, emotions and thoughts of the individual were located. The heart was where understanding and conscience were located, and it was through the heart that one communicated with God. The heart forms with the head and the brain a unit in which the heart, as the site of one's inmost thoughts or feelings, dictates to the head or brain, producing the articulation of one's thoughts and feelings - by the tongue in oral communication and by the hand in written form. 'The hand' also stands for comprehensive actions and practices of the body in general.

Contemporaries used this grid - of the heart, the tongue, and the hand - to divide,

contrast and group together forms of political activity. *Mercurius Pacificus* set out the problems of 1648 as follows: "'Divided as far as Hounds and Hares in antipathizing disaffection: Heads divided in opinions, like those of the Serpeant Amphibena, one fighting with another, hearts divided, like fire and water, tongues divided, as still in Babel's confusion, hands divided.'"[42] We find a tract using this grid to set out the character of an agitator: "Hee is a meere Atheist in his heart, a Heretick in his braine, a Devill in his tongue, a Jesuit in his Consultations, a Traytor in his Agitations, a Saint only in his pretention."[43] This becomes even more clear in a sermon preached in 1643, and then published in 1647, which explores the meaning of Moses' command to the Israelites at the Red Sea to "standstill." The sermon suggests that the command Moses gave contains a fourfold meaning: not murmuring, not wavering, not flying, not fighting. "Not murmuring, hold your Tongues still: not wavering, hold your Hearts still: not flying, hold your Feet still: not fighting, hold your Hands still."[44]

The *Rebels' Catcheism* provides the clearest formulation of this. Here rebellion is characterized in a threefold formula: "rebellion of the heart,""rebellion of the tongue," and "rebellion of the hand."[45] "[R]ebellion of the heart" is defined as "a rancorous swelling of the heart, against the authority and commands of the supreme power under

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[42] Quoted in Dagmar Friest, *Governed By Opinion: Politics, Religion and the Dynamics of Communication in Stuart London 1637-1645* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1997), 2.

[43] *The Character of an Agitator* (1647), E 414 (3), 4.

[44] John Brinsley, *Standstill: Or, A bridle for the Times* (1647), E 410 (14), A3.

[45] *Rebels' Catechism* (1643), *Harleian Miscellany*, v.7, 462.

which we live: which, though it be so cunningly suppressed and smothered, that it break not out either into words or deeds, yet makes a man guilty of damnation."[46] The "rebellion of the tongue" refers to seditious words against "persons, actions, parts, and government" while the "rebellion of the hand" is either "composing and dispersing of false and scandalous books, and pamphlets" or waging war against the government.[47] In another tract, one that aimed at setting out the duties of the loyal subject, the 'reverence' the subject owes to the King is said to be threefold: in thought, in tongue, and in body.[48]

It is clear that while these elements can be discussed in isolation and even punished in isolation, in the experience of 'engagement,' the heart, the tongue, and the hand formed an ensemble that was closely bound together. It would seem that the dynamics in which all three were joined together, forming the ethical substance of one's 'engagement,' constituted the object for moral reflection on political activity. In this sense, *A Just Vindication of the Armie* defines the soldiers in the army as those whose "tongues concure with their hearts, hands, and the end of their Commission."[49] *The Vanitie of the Present Churches* presents a more systematic statement of this relationship: "As there is nothing more commendable amongst men, then a true correspondency between the heart, the tongue, & the hand: so no thing is more lovely amongst Christians,

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[46] Ibid., 462.

[47] Ibid., 463.

[48] *The Fanatick in his Colours* (1661), E 1055 (14), 88-89.

[49] A. Warren, *A Just Vindication of the Armie* (1647), E 410 (18), 2.

then that the Conscience, the profession and the practice so universally agree."[50] The term that was used to specify this positive relationship of constancy between the heart, the tongue and the hand was 'affection.'[51] To have 'affection' for a cause or a person implied a constancy between the heart, the tongue and the hand in one's actions on behalf of that person or cause.

The treatise *Self-Contradiction censured* is characteristic of this as it frames its questioning of political activity within a discourse between "Affection and Judgement."[52] It suggests one "may come to be rightly informed" in what to think and what to do when 'affection' and judgement are joined "together to assist one another."[53] The treatise then revolves around the questions that 'affection' poses to judgement: "the ends which I ought to aim at, the choice of the means, which I should use to those ends, and the esteem I ought to have them in, whom I observe to be richly adorned with eminent graces, or notoriously overtaken with false opinions, or evil practices."[54] The tract is addressing the situation of individuals who are presented with a choice between

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[50] *The Vanitie of the Churches* (1649), McMichael and Taft, 311.

[51] In early modern usage, affection, when used in a passive sense, meant a mental state, disposition, a set of emotions and feelings towards a thing or a person. The verb form, to affect or to be affected, meant 'to be drawn to, have affection or liking for; to take to, be fond of, show preference for; to fancy, like or love' a person or thing and it could be used to suggest modes of acting on behalf of that which one had affection for. In sum, it meant to be voluntarily disposed or inclined, mentally, emotionally and physically, on behalf of a person or a thing that one loves or cherishes. (*OED sub* 'affection')

[52] Christopher Harvey, *Self-Contradiction censured* (1661), W: H1044.

[53] Ibid., 4.

[54] Ibid., 4.

conflicting parties, and uses scripture as the means to guide 'affection' towards the right moral choice.

In the tracts of the period, the term 'affection' is widely used to characterize that which guides one in his 'engagement' for the common good.[55] In *A Whisper in the Eare*, William Walwyn expressed the wish that his contribution to the war had been "ten thousand times more then my ability, so really am I affected with the Parliaments just cause for the common freedom of this Nation."[56] Overton advised in a tract directed to his "dearest friends, and fellow assertors of the publick cause," that "knowing how circumspect, tender & careful we ought to be, now especially [we ought] to shew our affections, our truth and fidelity to our persecuted, wounded, forsaken and almost murthered cause."[57] In *A Plea for Common-Right and Freedom*, a group of levellers argued that "for all our most affectionate endeavours for common Peace and Freedom,

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[55] The term 'affection' is used throughout the tracts I have read. For example, one tract discusses those propositions of the "Levellers" which have "the deepest impression and influence upon the people's affections." *The Declaration of the Levellers Concerning Prince Charles* (1649), E 551 (11), 3. Another tract remarked that the "Levellers" were "divided in affection from the Parliament." Marchamont Nedham, *The Case of the Commonwealth of England, Stated*, Edited by Philip A. Knachel (Charlottesville: The University of Press of Virginia, 1969), 96. Richard Overton warned the army, "If you dally with us, and befoole our expectations too long, we shall turne our pens, our hearts, and our hands against you, for our affection and concurrence with you, is but for our safety and protection." Overton, *An Appeale From the Degenerative Representative Body*, 187. For other examples see, *A Remonstrance of Many Thousand Citizens, and other Free-born People of England* (1646), Wolfe, 114; Lilburne, *Jonahs Cry out of the Whales belly*, 2; Anthony Burgesse, *Publick Affections pressed in a sermon before the House of Commons* (1646), E 325 (4).

[56] William Walwyn, *A Whisper in the Eare* (1646), McMichael and Taft, 176.

[57] Richard Overton, *Overton's Defyance of the Act of Pardon* (1649), E 562 (26), 4.

we were rewarded only with the groundless aspersion of Levellers."[58] *A Declaration of Some Proceedings* warned its readers, in reference to John Lilburne, "that he hath done good service for the Parliament, and adventured his life, and lost of his blood in the Common Cause. But some that know him, well observe, that he brought not the same affections from Oxford, that he was carried prisoner thither withall."[59]

The moral differentiation and valuation of acting according to 'affection' for the public good was defined by working out and questioning the proper correlation between the heart, the hand and the tongue. In the moral reflection of the debate on 'the Levellers' this dynamic was analysed according to two variables.

The first variable is quantitative: the right 'affection' is shown by the intensity of one's action for the common good. Men are differentiated by the intensity with which they act, relative to the constancy of their adherence to the professed ends of their 'engagement': The difference was marked by the terms 'active' and 'turbulent.' It was always important in this moral characterization to assess whether or not in his political activity, the 'public-spirited man' had been 'active.' This term marked the intensity, and frequency, of one's political work; the 'active' man was one who was vigorous in what he did for the common good and one who maintained his action until the goal of his 'engagement' was accomplished. John Goodwin suggested that it was a time when it should be an "abomination unto us, as the very shadow of death, to every man, woman, and child of us, not to be active, not to lie out and straine our selves to the utmost of our

[58] *A Plea for Common-Right and Freedom*, 2.

[59] *A Declaration of Some Proceedings*, 94.

strength and power."[60] In 1647, a letter written from a member in the Army residing in London to the Agitators in the regiments, informing them of Parliament's decision to disband the Army, an issue that was paramount to the army during this period, instructs the agitators to "ride night and day; we will act here night and day for you. . . Bee sure now be active."[61] *The Case of the Army Truly stated*, written with the same concern, opens with the contention that "we not only apprehend nothing to have been done effectually, either for the Army or the poore oppressed people of the nation, but we also conceive, that there is little probabillitie of any good, without some more speedy and vigorous actings."[62]

The notion of being 'active' was central to the leveller experience of 'engagement.' In their organization for producing and promoting petitions they put "the most active men" in every ward and parish in the privileged positions.[63] From prison, in 1649, Richard Overton asked his "Sea-Green Brethren":

> I wonder what meaneth your late dulnesse of motion, appearing as men in a dream, or as if you were another sort of people then the Authors, promoters, approvers and presenters of the Petition of the 11 of Sept. that people use to be the most active and vigorous People in England for publick Freedom and safety, they use to fear no colours, the more they were prest down the more they prest forward, and the more they encreased; few months have passed that they have not in point of Common-Right produced some eminent peece: but your heads have dropped of late, nothing hath appeared, not one punctilio in supportation and

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[60] John Goodwin, *Anti-Cavalierisme*, Haller, v.2, 3.

[61] *The Clarke Papers*, v.1, 100.

[62] *The Case of the Armie Truly stated* (1647), Wolfe, 199.

[63] *A Declaration of Some Proceedings*, 103.

promotion of the Agreement.[64]

Overton followed this by defining the exemplary figure of the leveller 'sort of men' in the following way:

> I confesse no people in England have been more vigorous, more active and diligent, and more adventurous for the Cause of the Nation, and for our Liberties than most of you: we have been as precious to you as the apple of your eye; you have spared no hazard, no toyle or time to get us at freedome, and I hope we shall never be so ungrateful as not thankfully to remember that service of Love: To you we are obliged in the deepest obligations of any others in England.[65]

In this mode of moral characterization it was important to distinguish between one who is 'active' and one who is 'turbulent.' The term 'constancy' serves to differentiate the 'active' man from the 'turbulent' man. In whatever one does one must be acting or speaking with a 'constant' adherence to the principles forming the cause and ends for which one engages. *Englands Lamentable Slaverie* praises Lilburne for his "constant zealous affection to the Commonwealth, and for your undaunted resolution in defence of the common freedome of the People."[66] As *Looke about you, Or The Fault-Finder, and Critical Observer* expressed this, "I never left my first love, nor ever wore two faces under one hood."[67] Tracts throughout the period refer to a person's, group's

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[64] Richard Overton, *The Baiting of the Great Bull of Bashan* (1649), Morton, 287-288. Overton presented the tract to "the Affecters and approvers of the Petition of the 11 Sept. 1648. Especially, to the Citizens of London usually meeting at the Whalebone in Lothbury behind the Royal Exchange, Commonly (though unjustly) styled Levellers."

[65] Ibid., 292. A similar usage can be found in Lilburne, *Jonahs Cry out of the Whales belly*, 9.

[66] *Englands Lamentable Slaverie* (1645), McMichael and Taft, 145

[67] *Looke about you, Or The Fault-Finder, and Critical Observer*, 1.

or institution's "constant adherence" to the common good in general or to specific means for accomplishing the common good, such as a petition or the Agreement of the People.[68]

In contrast, the characterization of the 'turbulent' man suggests that his actions and words are directed to no consistent or identifiable end. The notion of 'turbulency' suggests unsteadiness in the heart, in turn producing wild motions of the body and the tongue that lack direction, resulting in 'affections' that are orientated to a constantly shifting set of goals, causes and people. In his discussion of 'the Levellers,' Willam Prynne suggested the notion 'turbulency' when he characterized them as men who are "given to change."[69] The notion of 'turbulency of spirit' was central to the trial of John Lilburne in 1653, and it was the central issue he addressed in the tract *The Just Defence of John Lilburn*. Lilburne suggests that the charge of 'turbulency of spirit' against him is to refer to a man "always opposing, striving, and flying in the faces of all authorities,

[68] John Lilburne was praised for his "constant pursuance of the generall good of this long-betrayed and inslaved Nation." *Englands weeping spectacle* (1648), E 450 (7), 1. Similarly, the army's 'constancy' to its Solemn Engagement was a often debated. See *The Levellers (Falsly so called) Vindicated* (1649), Morton, 297-318; *The Case of the Army Truly stated*, 207. For other examples see, Overton, *Overton's Defyance of the Act of Pardon*; *The humble Petition of divers well-affected, and constant adherers to the interest of Parliaments, and their own native fundamental rights and Freedomes therein concerned, Youngmen and Apprentices of the Cities of London and Westminister, Borough of Southwark, and parts adjacent.* (1653), 669. f. 17. (38).

[69] William Prynne, *The Levellers Levelled to the very Ground* (1647), E 428 (7), 15. Other examples of the discussion of 'turbulency' and the practice of the levellers include: Henry Denne, *The Levellers Designe Discovered* (1649), E 556 (11), 3; J. Philolaus, *A Serious Aviso to the Good People of this Nation, Concerning that Sort of Men, called Levellers* (1649), E 555 (28), 5; *Questions Propounded To all wel-affected wealthy Citizens and others with Relation to the present Distempers in, and proceedings of the Army* (1647), E 393 (23), 5.

restless, and never satisfied whoever is uppermost."[70] The term was used to suggest "rashness"and "a contentious spirit," implicating the man who is 'turbulent' as one who "owned no Authority, and that would have no Government."[71] Lilburne addressed the charge of 'turbulency' by suggesting that "the cause being still the same, viz. my constant adherence to the known rights of the nation" all that had changed was the oppressors.[72] The context of this charge against the levellers was that they had resisted in turn the King, the Parliament, the Army and the government of the new Republic. For many of their contemporaries this seemed to suggest that they were unsteady and wavering in their 'affections.' Walwyn described this charge against them as follows: "It is imposed upon us, that we are an unquiet, unstaied people, that are not resolved what will satisfie us; that we know not where to end, or what to fix a bottom upon."[73] To Walwyn, the levellers' promotion of the Agreement of the People was the central evidence that vindicated himself and his associates from this charge which, as he said referring to the Agreement, "we have been long since satisfied in our selves."[74] Accordingly, the levellers characterized the Agreement as "the Standard and ultimate scope of our Designes."[75] As Richard Overton remarked, "that Paper. . . is the price,

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[70] John Lilburn, *The Just Defence of John Lilburn* (1653), Haller and Davies, 450-451.

[71] Ibid., 453, 457, 459.

[72] Ibid., 460.

[73] Walwyn, *The Fountain of Slaunder Discovered*, 378.

[74] Ibid., 378

[75] *A Manifestation*, 335.

glory and end of my endurance."[76] In this moral differentiation, to be serviceable to the commonwealth the individual must be 'active' and 'constant' in his 'affections,' thus ensuring that he was not 'turbulent' and useless to the 'common cause.'

The 'uprightness' of the individual's political activity was the second variable through which political activity was questioned about this dynamic relationship. In its seventeenth century meaning, 'uprightness' referred to the sincerity, honesty and justness a person displayed in his political activity. The problem of 'uprightness' involved a questioning of the symmetry between what one said and what one did.[77] This was in relation to the extent to which the heart concurred both with the tongue and the hand. Stephen Marshall discussed this in differentiating between the wise man and the fool:

> when a business is to be done, & the right season for it, the wise man, a gracious man hath his hand ready, and his heart to joyne with his hand, he is always dexterous at it, but a fooles (i.e. wicked mans) heart, when his business is to bee done, his heart is at his left hand, every finger is a Thumbe, hee cannot manage it.[78]

It also forcibly raised the question of the relationship between the tongue and the hand, a relationship indicative of the secret working of the heart.

This is best exemplified in the discussion of 'hypocrisy' and the moral characterization of the "deceiver." As one tract says, "It being the grand design of all

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[76] Overton, *Overton's Defyance of the Act of Pardon*, 4.

[77] Richard Overton provides a good example of this connection. When discussing the army he stated, "But being fully perswaded of the uprightness and innocency of your intentions, I shall expect that your works will give witnesse to the truth of your words." Overton, *An Appeale From the Degenerative Representative Body*, 186.

[78] Stephen Marshall, *The Right Understanding of Time*, 21.

deceivers to look one way, and row another," so "it is not enough for men to say they are for our freedome and liberties; but let us consider what they are doing."[79] The discussion of hypocrisy was often centred around two exemplary figures. One theme was organized around Machiavelli and the figure of the "politician."[80] "Take heed of crafty politicians and subtle Machiavelians," says one tract, "and be sure to trust no man's painted words; it being high time now to see actions, yea, and those constantly upright too."[81] The "politician" was a common figure in leveller tracts, implicated as the source of slanders and reproaches to the levellers' action and as the embodiment of corrupt self-interested political activity:

> The Politicians of this world are Satan's chief Agents, by whom all discords and dissentions amongst men are begot and nourished: and that the Politicians chief Agent is his tongue, wherewith in an evil sense, and to an evil end, he speaks to every man in his own language, applies himself to every man's corrupt humour and interests, by it he becomes all things to all men, that by all means he might deceive some. [82]

A second theme was the Biblical figure Absolom, a favourite illustration of hypocrisy

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[79] *The Free Mans Plea for Freedom* (1648), E 443 (10), 1.

[80] The common link that was made between "Machivilisme" and deception can be found in *A New Found Stratagem* (1647), E 384 (11). The "politician" was a persistent theme in leveller tracts. See *The second Part of Englands New-Chains Discovered*,173,175; Lilburne, *The Just Defence of John Lilburn*, 451; *The Hunting of the Foxes* (1649), Wolfe; Walwyn, *A Whisper in the Eare*, 175; *The Leveller; or, The Principles & Maxims concerning Government and Religion, which are asserted by those that are commonly called 'Levellers'* (1659), E 968 (3), 1.

[81] *A Call to all the Soldiers of the Army by the Free People of England* (1647), Woodhouse, 439.

[82] Walwyn, *The Fountain of Slaunder Discovered*, 381.

and deceit.[83] *The Free Mans Plea for Freedom* exemplifies the use of the theme of Absolom to draw a moral distinction: "for Absolom pretended justice to the people, when he made war against his Father, but his design was to make himself King."[84] In both cases, the concern was over how they spoke about the common good but at the same time were working to promote their own interests. This problem was addressed by *The Grand Designe*: "In all Ages publique pretences have been made use of, for the advantaging and securing of particular interests."[85] Another tract cautioned that "it hath been the common observation of intelligent men, from various transactions of publique affairs, that the most dangerous designes of publique ruin and particular interests, have alwaies fomented under the most plausible species of publique advantage and common good."[86]

These two figures are distinguishable by two practices. The first is their propensity of making long oratorical speeches, in which they are more apt to slander and denigrate their enemies than discuss their own practices and goals. "One of the surest marks of deceivers is to make fair, long and eloquent speeches, but a trusty or true-hearted man studieth more to do good actions than utter deceitful orations."[87]

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[83] For examples of this theme see, *The Discoverer* (1649), E 558 (2), 3; Paul Knell, *A Looking-Glass for Levellers* (1648), E 465 (30), 15; *Walwins Wiles* (1649), Haller and Davies, 313. Absolom was referred to repeatedly in Harvey, *The Right Rebel.*

[84] *The Free Mans Plea for Freedom*, 1.

[85] *The Grand Designe* (1647), E 419 (15), A2.

[86] *Vox Militaris* (1647), E 401 (24), 1.

[87] *A Call to all the Soldiers of the Army by the Free People of England*, 439.

Differentiating modes of using the tongue is central in this moral characterization. As Walwyn says of the politician,

> his words are cool as the dew, smooth as oyl, and sweet as the purest honey, weeps and kils, smiles and stobs, praieth, fasteth, and sometimes preacheth to betray, shrouds himself under the finest cloak of Religion, takes on him the most zealous form of godlinesse, and in this shape securely casts his nets to catch plain-meaning people.[88]

One who is 'upright' in his 'engagements' is one who places an emphasis on the acts he performs and thinks it is sufficient to speak 'plainly.'[89]

The second practice is the secrecy with which the two figures cloak their action, preferring to act out of sight rather than in 'publick view.' This was a sure sign that they were hiding secret designs; one who is 'upright' has no fear of making his actions and words visible. John Lilburne defended himself by appealing to the visibility of his actions:

> But Sir, This I will say to you, my late Actions have not bin done in a hole, or a corner, but on the house top, in the face of the Sun, before hundreds and some thousands of people; and therefore why ask you me any questions? Go to those that have heard me, and seen me, and it is possible you may find some hundreds of witnesses to tell you what I have said and done: for I hate holes and corners: My late Actions need no covers nor hidings, they have bin more honest than so.[90]

Speaking of George Masterton, who attended a leveller meeting and then informed on what he heard to the authorities, a tract defending the levellers drew attention to his mode of participation at the meeting to challenge the truthfulness of his

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[88] Walwyn, *The Fountain of Slaunder Discovered*, 381.

[89] John Lilburne characterized himself as a "plain dealer." *Jonah's Cry out of the Whales belly*, 10; When William Ashhurst produced a response to the *Agreement of the People* he justified his publication of it by stating that he "judged it more honest . . . to use plain dealing." *Reasons Against Agreement* (1648), E 536 (4), A1.

[90] *The Picture of the Counsel of State*, 202.

account: "Mr. Masterton came privately in to the Roome, and stood sneaking in a corner to heare what was said, and neither asked a question, nor objected against what was delivered or spoken, but catcht at severall broken sentences, and patcht them together to make up an Information."[91] We can also find this mode of moral differentiation, organized around the notion of secrecy, in the common moral characterizations of the Jesuit and his practices.[92]

These two variables - 'active' and 'upright' - organized the moral valuation of 'engagement,' the object being to elicit the right relationship of constancy between the heart, the tongue and the hand to ensure one engages with right 'affection' for the 'common cause.' The dynamic relationship between these elements was scrutinized by questioning the intensity and the constancy of one's 'engagement' and by questioning the consistency between his speech and his actions that signified the 'uprightness' of his heart. In the moral problematization of 'engagement,' it was 'affection' that constituted the ethical substance or the part of oneself that was the relevant domain for ethical judgement about political activity. 'Affection' constituted the object the individual was to work on in practices of the self, organized by a set of techniques through which he

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[91] Jah. Norris, *A Lash for a Lyar: Or, The Stayner Stayned* (1647), E 428 (8), 4.

[92] For examples of this characterization of the Jesuit see, *The Jesuits Character* (1642), E 130 (29); *Naked Truth Or A Way to Finde the perfect Malignants.* (1648), E 449 (9); *The Old Malignant in New Apparrell, Discovered by the Marks of Malignancy given in the Declarations, Remonstrances, Orders, Ordinances, Votes, etc.* (1648), E 449 (17). For discussions that link levellers and Jesuits see, *Questions Propounded To all wel-affected wealthy Citizens and others with Relation to the present Distempers in, and proceedings of the Army,* 5; *Bloody Independent Plot Discovered* (1647), E 419 (2), 6. *Walwins Wiles*, 299.

established a relation to self that enabled him to form himself into a subject of ethical conduct.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE ETHICAL EXPERIENCE OF ENGAGEMENT: ETHICAL WORK AND TELOS

How did the individual work on his 'affections'? What principles were used to regulate a set of procedures he performed on himself - to decipher who he was, eradicate his self-interest and take 'care' of his freedom? How were these principles organized within a set of practices of the self by which he sought to shape his political conduct? This introduces the self-forming activities, or ethical work, that the individual performs on himself to make his conduct comply with his moral obligations and transform himself into the ethical subject of his political behaviour.

These practices of self-examination were developed within the practice of 'looke about you' - which could be phrased slightly differently, as 'looke unto your selves.'[1] We have already studied the way this practice was organized according to a mode of subjection that defined within the principles of necessity and opportunity the conditions for one's political activity to be morally admissible. This chapter will develop the way it formed the basis for a set of self-forming activities by which the leveller made himself into an ethical subject. Through these practices the individual worked on his 'affections' to decipher and renounce the desires, ambitions and passions of the 'self.' These practices of self-examination were to ensure that one was not acting as a "self-seeker" and it formed a response to the problem of the 'self' that was interrelated to a traditional

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[1] *The English Souldiers Standard* (1649), Morton, 233. Other examples of this particular phrasing can be found in *Sea-Green & Blue, See Which Speak True* (1649), E 559 (1), 3; John Lilburne, *Jonahs Cry out of the Whales belly* (1647), E 400(5), 10.

Christian problematization of the 'self.'[2] Issac Pennington discussed the problem of the 'self' and political activity as follows:

> Man hath a selfish Principle within, which secretly blindeth and draweth him aside in his purest aims and intentions. Man knoweth not in his own heart, how much he is engaged for himself, what little truth of love, mercy and justice there is in him towards others. Every man thinks he minds the public Good and interest, little seeing or suspecting how straitly he is bound up within the narrow compass of himself. Every man pretendeth to be just, and very ready to amend the wilful or negligent miscarriages of others.[3]

Accordingly, we find the tract *The Gallant Rights, Christian Priviledges, Solemn Institutions of the Sea-Green Order* suggesting: "that every Champion of the Sea-green Order shall vow a sacred vow, in all his prayers and endeavours, to level first the mountain of his own heart, pride, ambition, avarice, felt hopes, self ends, self revenge, for this is the true level of the internal Antichrist."[4] The practice of self-examination that organized this strategy was aimed at a mode of self-renunciation according to which the leveller would be 'free from himself.'[5] The achievement of this telos required that one

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[2] The term "self-seeker" was used in many tracts to characterize an individual pursuing his own self-interests and not the public good. For examples see, *The Levellers Remonstrance, with their proposals to the General Councell of the Army* (1649), E 555 (2), 6; *The second Part of Englands New-Chains Discovered* (1649), Haller and Davies, 175; *Walwins Wiles* (1649), Haller and Davies, 311; Christopher Harvey, *The Right Rebel. A Treatise Discovering the true use of the Name by the Nature of Rebellion; With the Poperties and Practices of Rebels* (1661), W: H1043, 56-59. Thomas Edwards charged "sectaries" with "covetousness, ambition and self-seeking." Thomas Edwards, *Gangraena* (Exeter: The Rota, 1977), 61.

[3] Isaac Pennington, *The Fundamental Right, Safety and Liberty of the People*, edited by Lee Penn (Los Angeles: Western, 1965), 21.

[4] *The Gallant Rights, Christian Priviledges, Solemn Institutions of the Sea-Green Order* (1648), 669.f.13 (48).

[5] *Walwins Wiles* spoke of the levellers' characterization of themselves as "the freest men from self-interest." *Walwins Wiles*, 305.

work on his 'affections' according to the notion of 'impartiality.'

Ethical Work: 'Impartiality'

In the practice of 'looke about you' the individual was expected to work on his 'affection' according to an 'impartial judgement.' It is in the concept of 'impartiality' that ethical work was organized and practised in a number of self-forming activities and it defined the attitude one was to adopt to himself, and to others, in order to make himself into an ethical subject. In the tracts we have been studying the terms 'impartiality' and 'public-spirited' would seem to be used synonymously to refer to one who does not act according to self-interest. The resemblance between the two terms is clear, but they refer to a different mode of relating to onself as it pertains to the ethical experience of 'engagement.' Thus, 'impartiality' can be seen as a prerequisite for becoming 'public-spirited,' as the mode one must adopt in his self-examination in order to become 'public-spirited' - the telos or mode of being that was the goal for the ethical subject.

'Impartiality' was the attitude the leveller was to adopt in the ethical work of looking about oneself to resist the effects of pride, covetousness, ambition and avarice in his political activity. *The Grand Designe* adopts this position of 'impartiality' in claiming to be "not an invective, but moderate and impartiall observer of the transactions of the Parliament and Army."[6] "Causes," said Marchamont Nedham, "made me reflect with an

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[6] *The Grand Designe* (1647), E 419 (15).

impartial eye upon the affairs of this new government."[7] In *Englands Lamentable Slaverie* we find the author characterizing himself as one "looking upon the present with an impartiall judgement."[8] In *Still and Soft Voice*, William Walwyn criticizes those men who "approach all discourses with prejudice," while Thomas Edwards listed "partiality" as one of the main characteristics of a "Sectary."[9] Richard Overton appealed to the 'impartiality' of his audience, addressing them as such:

> Thus all un-interested, unprejudiced persons, (who measure things as they are in themselves, having nothing in admiration with respect of persons, who sincerely mind the freedom and prosperity of the Common-wealth) may clearly see, as in a Glass, by this tast of Aristocraticall Tyranny towards us, a perfect and lively resemblance of the Councell of State.[10]

The way one was to structure his practice of 'looke about you' according to an impartial judgement is exemplified in the debate which occurred in print between William Walwyn and Thomas Edwards. We can note in this polemic that both organized their moral characterization according to the same notion that one ought to be guided in examining himself and others according to 'impartiality.'[11] Walwyn compares Edwards

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[7] Marchamont Nedham, *The Case of the Commonwealth of England, Stated*, edited by Philip A. Knachel (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1969), 3.

[8] *Englands Lamentable Slaverie* (1645), McMichael and Taft, 146.

[9] William Walwyn, *A Still and Soft Voice from the Scriptures* (1647), McMichael and Taft, 268; Edwards, *Gangraena*, part 1, 67.

[10] *The Picture of the Councel of State* (1649), Haller and Davies, 227.

[11] Edwards characterization of the method he used to gather his information is indicative of the notion of 'impartiality.' Thus, Edwards describes his method "I have been a faithful gatherer together and storer up, Rembrancer and Treasurer of these errours and practices for the good of the pulicke." Edwards, *Gangraena*, part 1, 2. The full discussion of his method can be found on pages 1-10.

to Demetrius, who opposed the doctrine of Christ not because of his zeal for pagan forms of worship, nor for any hatred of the doctrine, but "as it tended to the losse of his craft and gain."[12] According to Walwyn, Edwards is guilty of this same position in the production of his Catalogue and he admonishes Edwards as follows:

> you do not indeavour to make odious the severall doctrines and practices of conscienscious people, out of true zeal to any thing you apprehend as truth; or out of hatred to any thing you apprehend as errour: but because the doctrines and practices of those you term independents, Brownists, Anabaptists, Antinomians, and Seekers: do all tend to the losse of your craft and gain.[13]

Principally, Wawlyn says, this is due to the position Edwards has as a minister, and his concern for the loss of tithes, prestige and "domination."[14] Walwyn elaborates on Edwards' 'impartiality' in addressing the arguments of the sectaries:

> Denying unto you any more authority to judge of doctrines or discipline, then any other sort of Christian men: and to speak truly . . . are sore temptations to such wordly minds as yours, who in your hopes had made your selves sure of the greatest part of all that was taken from the Prelats, and thereby of a foundation of advancing the honour, and splendour, and power, and profit of the Clergy once more in this Nation.[15]

Walwyn prescribes that Edwards "forsake all corrupt interests" which produce in him the very vices he attribues to the Sectaries, that is "pride, ambition, covetousness, effeminacy, cruelty, delicacy of pallate, and the like."[16] Walwyn's central concern in this tract is not

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[12] William Walwyn, *A Whisper in the Eare* (1646), McMichael and Taft, 174. A similar connection between Demetrius and the partiality of priests can be found in *A New Found Stratagem* (1647), E 384 (11), 10.

[13] Wawyn, *A Whisper in the Eare*, 174.

[14] Ibid.,174.

[15] Ibid., 174.

[16] Ibid., 181,180.

the precise theological ideas that Edwards had, although an argument over religious toleration is implicit in the tract, but a question of what attitude and method of 'impartiality' the individual must adopt in his practice of examining others, and in the practice of examining himself.[17]

This ethical work of looking about oneself can be located in practices of the self, or techniques, the individual applied to his actions and behaviours. These techniques are located in a set of historical practices of the period and the constitute what Foucault called the 'self-forming activity' or 'ethical work.' These practices of the self are integral to Foucault's theory of the way individuals constitute themselves as ethical subjects. We can focus on three principle practices through which the levellers sought to shape their own conduct: their practice of 'practical Christianity,' their practice of reading and writing, their practice of associating with friends to pursue political goals.

Practical Christianity

The traditional Christian practices of the self orientated toward self-decipherment, confession, and the struggle against temptation and sin operate in the ethical work of

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[17] Edwards' response to Walwyn involves the same concern for being impartial towards oneself and others: "Whereas some of the Sectaries in their Pamphlets, as Master Walwyn and others have often insinuated that I have preached and written so much against the Sectaries out of Policy, Superstition, worldly and selfe Interest to maintain my owne Covetousness, Ambition, desire of Domination, distinction betweene Clergy and Laytie, out of a spirit of opposition and Persecution against conscientious and peaceable spirit men . . . I do . . . declare as in the presence of God, I never have, nor do appeare against the Sectaries and Errors of the times from any of these principles, but from a zeale of the glory of God and his Truth." Edwards, *Gangraena*, part 3, A14.

making oneself the ethical subject of his political activity no less then in making himself godly. The relationship the leveller formed with his 'wordly' and 'carnall interests,' concerns which provoked a set of techniques for self-examination in the 'care of the soul,' were not only important in constituting himself as a Christian subject but as a political subject as well. This is apparent in *The Power of Love*, where the Christian subject is instructed to examine himself, according to scripture and the acts of God's grace, to "deny ungoldlinesse and wordly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, & godly in this present world."[18] As the tract remarked on the Christian subject:

> it is a wonderful thing to my understanding, that men should call themselves Christians, and professe to be religious, and to be diligent readers of Scripture, and hearers of Sermons, and yet content themselves to bee indeed in many things carnall, and to walke as did the most indiscreete and inconsiderate Gentiles.[19]

The Power of Love follows this by making a connection between this work and political activity. It instructs the Christian subjects that in making themselves "walk as becommeth the Gospel of Christ" they will in turn "finde it nothing to hazzard your lives for God, in defence of his truth from errour; in defence of your brother or neighbour from oppression or tyranny."[20] The tract goes further, suggesting that this ethical work "makes you no longer your owne but God's servants, and prompts you to doe his will in the punishment of all kinde of exorbitances, whether it be breach of oathes, breach of trust, or any kinde of injustice in whomsoever."[21] This relationship was suggested by

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[18] *The Power of Love* (1643), McMichael and Taft, 82.

[19] Ibid., 83.

[20] Ibdi., 93.

[21] Ibid., 93.

John Lilburne, whereby "for a justification of my integrity, uprightnesse, meeknesse, gentlenesse, and single-hearted walking amongst you," he pointed to his sense "that the grace of God in particular had appeared to my soul, for that end, to teach me to deny ungodlinesse and wordly lusts, and to live soberly and godly in this present evil world."[22] When he was young, *Englands weeping spectacle* said of Lilburne, he was "like unto most young men of his age and time, who either wast their abilities on vaine fantastick pleasures, or hunt after the sordid rewards of ambition and covetousness, minding little else but the pride, vanity, and luxury of a sinfull life."[23] However, as the tract continues,

> his conscience was soon awakened upon his Masters call, God to whose service he had dedicated himself, made him to know betimes; that he had other work for him to do, and being called , he neither suffered the motions of God, in his conscience to be choked with the cares of this world, nor the deceitfulnesse of riches, nor consult with flesh and blood, but (as Moses) he chused rather to suffer affliction in pursuance of a just cause, then to injoy the pleasures of sin for a season.[24]

John Lilburne suggested the relationship between subjection to God and the political action required for the 'common cause':

> I am confident it is now above 13 years, since I knew God as my loving and reconciled father, that had particularly wasted and clensed my soul with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, and had caused the grace of God to appear in my soul, to teach me . . . to abstaine from all ungodlinesse and wordly lusts and to

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[22] John Lilburne, *The Upright Mans Vindication* (1653), E 708 (22), 1. This maxim was repeated constantly in the tracts I have studied. See: *The Compassionate Samaritane* (1644), McMichael and Taft, 99; William Walwyn, *A Prediction of Mr. Edwards* (1646), McMichael and Taft, 234; *Tolleration Justified, and Persecution condemn'd* (1646), McMichael and Taft, 170; *A helpe to the right understanding of a Discourse Concerning Independency* (1644), McMichael and Taft, 136.

[23] *Englands weeping spectacle* (1648), E 450 (7), 1.

[24] Ibid., 1-2.

> live soberly and righteously, in this present evill world, doing good to all, but especially to the household of Faith, Ingraving with his Spirit upon my heart as with a point of a Diamond those Divine Laws, viz. to doe to all men as I would they should to me, and in all the carriages of my life to be watchfull over my actings, and not to do evill that good may come of it, and thirdly that seeing that I am bought with a price by Redemption, that therefore I should not be the servant of men (to serve their lusts and wills) but entirely and solely the servant of God, to glorifie him with my body, in righteous and just actions amongst the sons of men, as well as in my soul, in speculation, imagination or adoration.[25]

The levellers elaborated on this ethical work in their concept of "practicall Christianity" and the work of charity constituted for them a practice for forming themselves as Christian subjects and as political subjects.[26] This ethical work was guided by the maxim "to do to all men as I would they should do to me" which organized for them "the principall badge or mark of a true Christian."[27] William Walwyn suggested the work of charity through which one makes himself a "true Christian": "Feeding the hungry, Cloathing the naked, Visiting the sick, the Fatherlesse, the Widowes and Prisoners: and in all things walking as becometh the Gospell of Christ."[28] *The Vanitie of the Present Churches* suggested that the individual who was a "practical Christian" would "take more pleasure in Feeding the hungry, Cloathing the naked, visiting and comforting the sicke, releeving the aged, weak and important; in delivering of Prisoners,

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[25]John Lilburne, *The Legall Fundamentall Liberties of the People of England* (1649), E 560 (14), 20.

[26] The notion of a "practical Christian" or "true Christian" was a significant theme in leveller tracts, the best examples are: *The Vanitie of the Present Churches* (1649), McMicheal and Taft, 308-333; Walwyn, *A Still and Soft Voice*, 268-274; Walwyn, *A Whisper in the Eare*, 181-183; *The Compassionate Samaritane*, 100-124; Lilburne, *The Legall Fundamentall Liberties of the People of England*, 59.

[27] Lilburne, *The Upright Mans Vindication*, 1.

[28] Walwyn, *A Still and Soft Voice*, 269.

supporting of poor families, or in freeing a Commonwealth from all Tyrants."[29] Making oneself a practical Christian was based on the ethical work the individual performed in reading scripture and performing charitable work through which "every one [was] to stir up the knowledge of God that is in him, and to keep it alive by continuall practice."[30] Walwyn suggested that in his practice of charity the individual made himself "profitable to society and good neighbourhood."[31] This ethical work demanded that the levellers adopt a "severe" attitude "towards themselves" and take "a more exact accompt" of their "owne ways."[32] According to the theme of the 'practical Christian' the levellers worked on their 'affections' for the common good by working on themselves as Christians in the practice of 'practical Christianity.'. As *The Power of Love* explained:

> True Christians are of all men the most valiant defenders of the just liberties of their countrey, and the most zealous preservers of true Religion: vindicating the truths of God with their lives, against all ungodlinesse and unrighteousnesse of men: making thereby the whole world to know that true Christianity hates and abhorres tyranny, oppression, perjury, cruelty, deceipt, and all kind of filthinesse; and true Christians to be the most impartiall, and most severe punishers thereof, and of all kinde of wickednesse, of any men whatsoever.[33]

Thus, a principal technology of the self that we find in this ethics is one we commonly associate with Protestantism and the work of 'caring for the soul.' The levellers shared with others in their culture an emphasis on the modes through which the

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[29] *The Vanitie of the Present Churches*, 329.

[30] Ibid., 331.

[31] Walwyn, *A Still and Soft Voice*, 273.

[32] Ibid., 272.

[33] *The Power of Love*, 94.

individual could form his own relationship with God in his religious practices. The levellers elaborated on these themes in the practice of 'practical Christianity,' which established a structure of ethical work for the leveller to establish his relationship to God and his community. These practices were instrumental for how the leveller was expected to form himself as a political being with the right 'affections' for the public good.

Reading and Writing

Reading and writing constituted a second mode through which the leveller worked on himself as an ethical subject and shaped his political activity. This ethical work was expressed forcibly in the concept of the 'looking-glass' and one finds countless tracts of the period organized as a "looking glass" directed to various types of political subjects.[34] *A Looking-Glasse for Levellers* is characteristic of this practice defining the purpose of the tract to "sheweth them their faces in a Glasse, wherein they might see plainly what manner of men they were."[35] The concept of the 'looking-glass' was equally applied to scriptural exegesis and the application of biblical lessons to one's own political activity. It is possible to characterize the problematization of reading in relation to political activity in two ways: the first was organized around the scriptures and the extent to which the individual was applying the moral lessons of scripture to his political

[34] A substantial number of examples could be citied, two I have consulted are *A Looking-Glasse for Malignants* (1644), E 33 (18) and *The Rebels Looking-Glasse* (1649), E 554 (23).

[35] Paul Knell, *A Looking-Glasse for Levellers* (1648), E 465 (30), 1.

actions; the second was organized around contemporary tracts and the individual's work on his 'affections' by reading them and producing them.[36]

The individual was expected to use scripture to guide him in his political activity and form himself as an ethical subject. The importance of this is exemplified in the way the reading habits of William Walwyn were one of the principal themes of an argument, in 1649, over how he ought to be morally characterized.[37] *Walwins Wiles* claims that Walwyn preferred the works of classical authors, such as Lucian, Plutarch or Cicero, to scripture, and that he read these classical works for moral lessons and for knowledge on government rather than scriptures or the elucidation of scripture in sermons.

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[36] Michel Foucault suggested the importance of reading and writing as a practice of the self. "It seems to me, that all the so-called literature of the self - private diaries, narratives of the self, and so - cannot be understood unless it is put into the general and very rich framework of these practices of the self." Michel Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics," in Michel Foucault, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, edited by Paul Rabinow (New York: The New Press, 1994), 277. In a short essay he briefly analysed reading and writing as a practice of the self in the Greco-Roman period. See Michel Foucault, "Self-Writing," in Foucault, *Ethics*, 207-221. Although he wrote his book before Foucault elaborated his theory of ethics, complementary themes can be found in Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980). A significant way to study reading as a practice of the self in the early-modern period would be to investigate the common practice of keeping a commonplace book which the individual used to record notes from his reading. This is suggested to me by Kevin Sharpe's recent study of William Drake's commonplace books and Paul Seaver's study of manuscripts left behind by Nehemiah Wallington. Kevin Sharpe, *Reading Revolution: The Politics of Reading in Early-Modern England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); Paul Seaver, *Wallington's World: A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth Century London* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985).

[37] *Walwins Wiles* was composed as a response to *A Manifestation,* and it centred on Walwyn as the crafty, and deceitful leader of the levellers, "deluding, cozening and deceiving a plain and honest generation of well-meaning men, into such paths practices and manners that are most destructive to their own Interest, and the publique good." *Walwin Wiles*, 293. In response to this tract Walwyn wrote *Walwyns Just Defence* and a friend defended him in *The Charity of Churchmen.*

> Having once upon a Fast Day (as his usual manner was both upon those and the lords days) gone from place to place, hearing here a little, and there a little what the Ministers said, making it the subject matter of his prophane scorning and jeering, came at last to his own house with one of his supposed Fast- disciples . . . being at home, he fetcht out that prophane scurrilous Lucians Dialogue, come (said he) let us go read that which hath something in it, Here is more wit in this (saith he) then in all the Bible.[38]

Walwins Wiles continues this theme, reporting Walwyn to have said that the books of Psalms and Proverbs were not necessary and that the book of Canticles was but "one of Solomons Epipohenema's or Rhetorical Songs upon one of his whores."[39] It follows this by suggesting that Walwyn said, regarding Sunday meetings,

> it was better on such days to meet together, and spend our time in considering what is good for the Commonwealth, read some good moral things, as Plutarchs Morals, Ciceroes Orations, then reading the Scriptures, and hearing Sermons, glorying much of the notable witty things in these moral Writers, and of the manner of their governing of States.[40]

The same emphasis on the use of scripture is present when Walwyn and his friend responded to these attacks and described his readings habits differently than they were portrayed by *Walwins Wiles*. Neither denied that Walwyn read works from classical authors, but both were careful to note that he categorically rejected that they could or should supersede the lessons one should apply to oneself from scripture and from sermons devoted to scriptural exegesis. Walwyn praised the classical authors, suggesting "how wise and able they were in those things, unto which their knowledge did

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[38] *Walwins Wiles*, 296

[39] Ibid., 296

[40] Ibid., 297

extend; and what pains they took to make men wise, vertuous, and good common-wealths men," but he insisted that he "used them always in their due place; being very studious all that time in the Scriptures, and other divine authors, as some of Mr. Perkins works, Mr. Downhams divinity . . . and those peeces annexed to Mr. Hookers Ecclesiasticall pollicy."[41] Similarly, *The Charity of Church-men* notes that Walwyn never preferred Lucian to the Bible as "all that know him" could attest to. This tract goes on to describe his method of reading as follows:

> For Books of Morality and History, though Mr Walwyn gives them their due esteem, and judges that the peoples reading them would very much advance their knowledge, and enable them to preserve themselves in freedom, by seeing through the policies of bad men and their many sleights by which they abuse and enslave the people which are plentifully described in those Books: And thus far the Author speaks truth of him. Yet hath Mr Walwyn never elevated them beyond their proper sphere, or desert, nor made comparisons between them, and that Book which he ever hath accounted . . . the Book of Books, and truly deserving the name of Bible, or the Book.[42]

All three tracts share the same concern that the scriptures be read with care, and that the reading of scriptures take precedence over any other works which the individual might use to shape his political conduct. The debate over Walwyn's reading habits and the extent to which he was proficient in the scriptures and accorded to them the central effort

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[41] William Walwyn, *Walwyns Just Defence* (1649), Haller and Davies, 362. Similarly to Walwyn, one finds John Lilburne discussing the works he read to form his judgement. Referring to his "spare time" when he was an apprentice, "I never mispent it, but continually spent it in reading the Bible, the Book of Martyrs, Luthers, Calvins, Bezaes, Cartwrights, Perkins, Molins, Burtons, and Rogers Works, with multitude of other such like Books." Lilburne, *The Legall Fundamental Liberties of the People of England*, 21. He discusses his reading of classical authors in another tract, but he also subordinated them to scripture. Lilburne, *The Upright Mans Vindication*, 7-9.

[42] *The Charity of Church-men* (1649), Haller and Davies, 335.

of his reading were all questions reflecting the practice of reading as a self-forming activity. Walwyn noted that the end result of his twenty years of reading scripture and classical authors was, "I became master of what I heard, or read, in divinity" and so " I became also, much more master of my affections."[43]

Scripture was not the only way that reading formed a practice of the self; ethical work was constituted in reading the tracts of the period and using these tracts for forming 'impartial judgements' about one's political activity. Reading these tracts was the ethical work one did on his 'affections' to guide him in his decisions about engaging and about engaging with others. These were all formative aspects of making oneself serviceable to the public good, whether it was by detecting a 'malignant' pamphlet or detecting a 'well-affected' work that one might link with a composition of one's own. The concern that was expressed over what the individual read was linked with concern over being "deceived" and "ensnared" by others.[44] This was a common theme in discussion of 'the Leveller.' *The Levellers levell'd* offers an example of this. It characterized the goal of the deceiving the "simple people" in a fictional dialogue between two "Levellers": while one "Leveller" asks "how doth our Printed Papers take?", a second "Leveller" answers, "as well as heart can think, the people swallow them amaine."[45] The dialogue is meant to

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[43] Walwyn, *Walwyns Just Defence*, 364.

[44] For various examples of concern over the way "the Levellers" are deceiving "simple people" see, *The Faerie Leveller* (1648), E 454 (23); William Prynne, *The Levellers Levelled to the very Ground* (1647), E 428 (7); *A Fraction in the Assembly: or The Snod in Armes* (1648), E 447 (17); *The Devil in his Dumps* 1647), E 400 (38).

[45] *The Levellers levell'd* (1647), E 419 (4), 11.

suggest a "grand design" by "the Levellers," one that is propagated principally through the written tract.[46] We find many tracts sharing this same view of "the Leveller" and offering the reading public an interpretation of their tracts from one who has read them with "care and diligence."[47] *The Discoverer*, written to "undeceive the Nation" about "the Levellers," provides a detailed examination of various "Leveller" tracts to instruct "a simplician, a superficious and shallow Reader."[48] Similarly, another tract offers its interpretation so that "all sober and honest men know what use to put his [Lilburne] Pamphlets unto."[49] The levellers consistently responded to these attacks and shared the same goal of aiding the potential 'reader' of one their tracts to arrive at the right interpretation of their suggestions for the commonwealth.[50]

In this problematization of reading, the ethical work of reading was merged with that of writing. When one wrote a tract it was the end result of a self-forming activity; the tract produced was meant to work on the 'affections' of others, but, in order to produce the tract, one was expected to have worked on himself in the process of composition. This entailed making references to scripture in the body of one's argument, linking the tract to other tracts from the period, whether in solidarity or in polemic, all of

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[46] Ibid., 11.

[47] *An Anatomy of Lieut. Col. John Lilburn's Spirit and Pamphlets* (1649), E 575 (21), 16.

[48] *The Discoverer* (1649), E 558 (2), 39.

[49] *An Anatomy of Lieut. Col. John Lilburn's Spirit and Pamphlets*, 16.

[50] A good example of this practice is *The Crafts-mens Craft* (1649), E 561 (11). It was published as a response to the interpretation of the levellers' tracts by *The Discoverer*.

which were effected by the work of reading one had done with an 'impartial judgement.'[51] It was for many a matter of ensuring that what they said in one tract did not conflict with statements they made in another tract, and if it did, for the change to be explained lest one be reproached for, among other things, hypocrisy. John Lilburne's pamphlets are instructive of this practice, and one finds Lilburne making constant reference to his previous works, along with his references to scripture, to Parliament's *Book of Declarations* and to the works of friends and enemies.[52] Underneath the printed tract of John Lilburne one can detect a mode of reading as a method of working on one's 'affections' and forming oneself as the ethical subject of his 'engagement.'

Practices of biblical exegesis, of reading contemporary tracts, of working over one's own tract in preparation for publication were all organized as a practice of the self, whereby, in his practice of reading and writing, the leveller worked on his 'affections' and formed himself as the ethical subject of his political activity.

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[51] Elizabeth Skerpan's recent study of rhetorical practice in the tracts of this period suggests one possibility for studying how writing was organized as a practice of the self. She studied the way the theory and practice of classical oratory was taught in grammar schools during this period, and she suggests that these lessons formed the basis for teaching students notions about "the formal speech and writing of public men." Elizabeth Skerpan, *The Rhetoric of Politics in the English Revolution 1642-1660* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 13-30.

[52] All of John Lilburne's tracts are good example of his practice. For a good example of his use of Parliament's *Book of Declarations* see, John Lilburne, *The Legall Fundamentall Liberties of the People of England.* This has been discussed in detail by Andrew Sharp. "John Lilburne and the Long Parliament's Book of Declarations: A Radical's Exploitation of the Words of Authorities," *History of Political Thought* Vol. IX, No.1 (Spring 1988): 19- 44. For a good example of Lilburne's practice of referring his readers to his previous tracts he published see *Jonahs Cry out of the Whales belly.* An example of Walwyn's practice of referring to his previous tracts see *Walwyns Just Defence.*

Association

In this period, the associations and friendships a man formed in his 'engagement' were problematized in relation to his 'affection' and were organized as a self-forming activity. One finds throughout their tracts that when the levellers choose to describe the relationships they have with each other they refer to themselves as friends and associates.[53] In one sense this mode of reference is used to counter the aspersions of those who claimed that they were a 'faction' or a 'party,' terms which carried in this period significant moral implications. Nevertheless, within this mode of referring to one another as friends, we note the extent to which friendship organizes a mode of ethical work for the individual. We can characterize this ethical work in two ways.

1. Although self-examination is primarily a task one is to do alone, there is the suggestion that the ethical work one performs on oneself can be aided by his friends. Friendship can be said to imply a reciprocal mode of ethical work, in which one works on the 'affections' of friends who in turn work on his 'affections.' In a letter to Henry Martin John Lilburne expressed this notion about the work a friend should do: "Sir, an enemy to you he is not, that shall cordially and heartily tell you of your faults, with a

[53] Referring to one another as "friends" and "associates" is very common in leveller tracts. Perhaps the best example is the two tracts Richard Overton addressed to his "friends" who usually meet at the Whale-bone tavern: Richard Overton, *The Baiting of the Great Bull of Bashan* (1649), Morton, 282, 286, 291; Richard Overton, *Overton's Defyance of the Act of Pardon* (1649), E 562 (26).

desire to reclaim you from the evill of your wayes."[54] Speaking against those individuals who provided "false information" about him, William Walwyn sets out the activities one would expect a friend to perform: "there being not one of them that ever reproved me to my face for any thing that I ever said or did, or that ever applied themselves to me as Friends in a Christian way, to shew me wherein I walked erroniously or scandalously."[55] Friendship and association within a 'sort of men' provided the individual with a group of friends to work on and a group of friends who would apply themselves to him. In the political activity of the levellers the practice of association demanded particular self-forming activities on the part of both members who associated together in political practice. This practice is indicated to us in the number of times various levellers appealed to those who knew them as friends to vindicate them from the many tracts that questioned them as moral agents.[56]

2. Whom one chooses to associate with in his political activity is a form of working on oneself, and the choice one makes plays a formative part in constituting oneself as a 'public-spirited man.' In this ethical work we can see the extent to which

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[54] John Lilburne, *Rash Oaths unwarrantable* (1647), E 393 (39), 2.

[55] Walwyn, *Walwyns Just Defence*, 351.

[56] For example, William Walwyn suggested that his friends could substantiate his characterization of himself: "there are some ingenious men, with whom I have daily converst, that know I doe acknowledge and beleeve there is a God, and that the Scriptures are the Word of God." Walwyn, *A Still and Soft Voice*, 271. Another example from Walwyn can be found in his *Walwyns Just Defence*, 367. *The Charity of Church-men* said that Walwyn's reading habits could be attested to by "all that know him." *The Charity of Church-men*, 335. This theme is also present throughout *The Picture of the Counsel of State.*

one must maintain an attitude of suspicion towards the secret intentions of others. *A Found Stratagem* warned, "Never render your selves so rediculous, as to be led like children and fooles by the nose; to be made stalking horses for other mens designes, whose interests are dissonant, and inconsistant with yours."[57] It was a persistent theme of the tracts we have been studying to warn the individual about being deceived by others and tricked into helping them with their "plots" against the 'common cause.'[58] Unless the individual uses care and circumspection in choosing his friends and associates, he is not taking care to ensure that his own 'affections' remain constant. *A word in season* expressed this concern:

> The difficulty will rather be found to arise by our own default, from our want of a patient, setled, serious, and religious consideration, whereby we are continually liable upon all occasions to be misled, either by our owne evill and eager desires, or by the evill examples of others . . . or by the preswasions of politique deceivers, into such wayes, which though they seeme to be strewed with Roses and perfumes, yet are the wayes of death, and when we least suspect, bring us to destruction.[59]

The tract then relates this problem in a common Christian theme of being wary of "Serpents" and instructs the individual to watch for "wolves that come to us in sheepes

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[57] *A New Found Stratagem*, 11.

[58] See tracts listed in footnote 43. In addition, this is a common theme in discussions of Jesuits and malignants, for example *Naked Truth or, A way to Finde the perfect Malignants* (1648), E 449 (9); *The Old Malignant in New Apparell* (1648), E 449 (17). In relation to the levellers, *A Declaration of Some Proceedings* warned, "I hope all men truly conscientious will take heed how they comply with these men, who have conceived those black designes in the dark." *A Declaration of Some Proceedings* (1648), Haller and Davies, 101.

[59] *A word in season: To All Sorts of Well Minded People in this Miserably Distracted and distempered nation* (1646), McMichael and Taft, 199.

clothing."[60]

One of the clearest examples of this concern and the ethical work that is implied comes from the treatise *Self-Contradiction censured.* Its main theme is organized around the question of how men ought to choose associates in political activity to ensure that their associates share the same 'affections' as they do. We find "Judgement" admonishing "Affection" that it finds it

> sometimes so applauding some mens persons, and so admiring their graces, without taking notice at all of their infirmities; sometimes so detesting some mens particular opinions and practices, that you have fallen into a general disliking of their persons, and vilifying all (though otherwise good) that they have had any hand at all in.[61]

The advice that "Judgement" gives to "Affection" is to "use more circumspection" and one of the important aspects of this 'care' is to be directed toward the practice of associating with others:

> For other mens intents, though you cannot so certainly know them, as your own, nor need alwayes to enquire after them: yet, when they are of publick and common concernment, and are urged as motives to draw you into action with them, it behoves you to take heed, that your opinions of them be not lightly undertaken.[62]

The treatise suggests a number of methods to examine others with an 'impartial judgement' in order to ensure that they are acting consistently according to their

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[60] Ibid., 199. Another example of using this theme can be found in *The Hunting of the Foxes* (1649), Wolfe, 358 - 375.

[61] Christopher Harvey, *Self-contradiction censured, Or A Caveat against inconstancy, and the inconsistent contrariety of same mens pretences, principles, opinions and practices* (1662), W: H1044, 3.

[62] Ibid., 11.

pretended ends and that the methods they employ are based on constancy in their 'affections' for the public good. This tract is organized around the notion of 'self-contradiction' and the term is applied both to suggest that one be careful not to associate with individuals who say one thing and do another, and that one avoid 'self-contradiction' in his own mode of political activity by associating only with individuals who share the same 'affection' as he does.

These concerns made it imperative that the individual work on his own 'affection' for the public good by examining his associates to ensure that they share his 'affection' for the public good. In *A Manifestation*, the levellers respond to these concerns: "it is likewise suggested that we are acted by others, who have other ends then appear to us; we answer, That that cannot be, since every thing has its rise amongst our selves, and since those things we bring to light cannot conduce to the ends of any by the publicke weale of the Nation."[63] The tract elaborates on this by suggesting that only persons who "have given sound and undeniable testimonies of the truth of their affection to their Country" have "any credit with us."[64] The leveller worked on his 'affections' when he attended with his "friends," the group's "constant meetings on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays in the evening at the Whalebone; and the other three days at Southwark, Wapping, and other places."[65] "In all that I have at any time done," said William Walwyn, "I ever associated my self with persons of known good affections to Parliament

[63] *A Manifestation* (1649), McMichael and Taft, 339.

[64] Ibid., 339.

[65] *A Declaration of Some Proceedings*, 100.

and Commonwealth."[66]

In this ethics, whom one associated with constituted a very important point of moral reflection and elaboration; it was in choosing one's associates that the problematization of 'levelling' practice called for an intense fidelity to the 'common cause.' In associating with others for the political work of organizing a petition, or producing a tract, or meeting in taverns and private homes for debate, the levellers were constituting themselves as ethical subjects. Through a set of techniques they applied to themselves, and others applied to them, they developed and transformed themselves to achieve a certain mode of being. It was a practice that was organized to address the moral concern that one might be deceived by the self-interest of others and it constituted a technique through which the leveller worked on his 'affection' for the public good.

Thus, in this field practices - of practical Christianity, reading and writing, and associating with others - the levellers' questioned themselves about their political behaviour as an ethical problem and they sought to define the form of self-renunciation that it required. These themes were certainly not the only focus of their problematization, but they do appear to be very important areas around which they worked on their 'affections' and developed the mode of 'looke about you' according to the demands of fidelity to the 'common cause.' A much larger study would enable us to study these in more detail and analyse the discourse that elaborated on these practices and worked out the implications for forming oneself as the ethical subject of one's political activity.

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[66] Walwyn, *A Whisper in the Eare*, 177.

Telos: 'The Public Spirited Man'

'Public-Spirited' was the goal for the ethical subject in his fulfilment and it was approached through the exercise of self-decipherment and self-renunciation.[67] This mode of being characterized the individual whose 'affections' were directed toward the public good and it was characterized as a state of freedom. In one sense it was freedom from the 'self' which was implicated with self-interest. In a second sense it was freedom to pursue a set of goals and methods for the public good as the ethical subject of those actions. The 'public-spirited man' was said to have freed himself from his own 'self' and his 'self-interest' in order to act in service to the 'community.' *Englands weeping spectacle* expressed this ideal when it said, characterizing Lilburne, "For he and the publicke are but one."[68] As it was expressed by *A Manifestation*, "we [the levellers] aim not at power in our selves, our Principles and Desires being in no measure of self-concernment."[69]

This accounts for the importance given to the exemplary moral figure of the martyr. The levellers organized around death an illustration of the ethical subject as 'public-spirited man.' The martyr's death, including both the willful, heroic sacrifice and

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[67] For examples of the use of the term 'public-spirited' see, *A Manifestation*, 337; *Englands Lamentable Slaverie*, 146;

[68] *Englands weeping spectacle*, 4.

[69] *A Manifestation*, 341.

the persecution, characterized the ideal of self-renunication.[70] When one embraces death with a voluntary submission so that one does not betray his 'affections,' one is said to be renouncing all carnal, worldly self-interests and acting as a 'public-spirited man.' John Lilburne expressed this ideal in his speech before the House of Commons upon presenting them with *England's new chains discovered*: "And therefore without any further question, give me leave to tell you I own it [the tract], and I know so doth all the rest of my friends present; and if any hazard should ensue thereby, give me leave resolvedly to tell you I am sorry I have but one life to lose in maintaining the truth, justice, and righteousness of so gallant a piece."[71] The willingness to give his life for the 'just cause' was expressed by Lilburne throughout the tracts he wrote, and the ideal of martyrdom is a persistent theme in the narratives he produced to relate his confrontations with various authorities.[72]

The ideal of martyrdom was more forcibly illustrated in the actual deaths of individuals and the discourse that produced them as martyrs. The following account from

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[70] John Knott has recently published a book on martyrdom and the ideal of Protestant heroism and the cultural significance of these during the sixteenth and seventeenth century that stresses the importance of this ideal in producing notions of resistance to persecution and commitment to reformation. John R. Knott, *Discourses of Martyrdom in English Literature 1563-1694* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

[71] John Lilburne, *England's new chains discovered* (1649), Sharp, 156.

[72] In *Strength out of Weakness*, Lilburne remarked, "I bless God I have already learned to die, having ever since my first contest with the bishops always carried my life in my hand, ready at a quarter of an hour's warning to lay it down." Quoted in H. N. Brailsford, *The Levellers and the English Revolution* (California: Stanford University Press, 1961), 578. The most poignant example is John Lilburne, *A Worke of the Beast* (1638), Haller, v.2, 3-34.

the *Moderate* of the four soldiers who were to be killed, for the mutiny that occurred through the months of 1649, can be analysed for how it instructs us about notions of the 'public-spirited man.' We can analyse this according to the mode of moral characterization that one finds in the account by the *Moderate* of the four men's approach to death outside a Burford parish church on May 17, 1649.

> This day Cornet Thompson was brought into the churchyard (the place of execution). Death was a great terror to him, as unto most. Some say he had hopes of a pardon, and therefore delivered something reflecting upon the legality of his engagement, and the just hand of God upon him; but if he had, they failed him. Corporal Perkins was the next; the place of death, and sight of his executioners, was so far from altering his countenance, or daunting his spirit, that he seemed to smile upon both, and account it a great mercy that he was to die for this quarrel, and casting his eyes up to His Father and afterwards to his fellow prisoners (who stood upon the church leads to see the execution) set his back against the wall, and bid the executioners shoot; and so died as gallantly, as he lived religiously. After him Master John Church was brought to the stake, he was as much supported by God, in his great agony, as the latter; for after he had pulled off his doublet, he stretched out his arms, and bid the soldiers do their duties, looking them in the face, till they gave fire upon him, without the least kind of fear or terror. Thus was death, the end of his present joy, and beginning of his future eternal felicity. Cornet Denne was brought to the place of execution, he said, he was more worthy of death than life and showed himself somewhat penitent, for being an occasion of this engagement; but though he said this to save his life, yet the two last executed would not have said it, though they were sure thereby to gain their pardon. The rest of the prisoners are to be sent to their several homes. Colonel Eyre is removed hence to Oxford Castle, to be tried for his life in a civil capacity.[73]

Only two men are characterized as being 'public-spirited' when they face the firing squad. Cornet Thompson is characterized as having succumbed to the natural attitude of self-interest when he spoke to the firing squad with "hopes for a pardon." According to this

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[73] *The Moderate* (Tuesday May 15 to Tuesday May 22, 1649), E 556 (3), 508-509.

attitude, "death was a great terror to him."[74] Cornet Denne begged for his pardon, was penitent about what he engaged in, and his performance saved his life.[75] The exemplary figures is this account are Corporal Perkins and Master John Church, who neither feared their own death, nor did they exert any effort to defend themselves in hopes of a pardon. Perkins did not alter "his countenance" and stood steadfast and undaunted "to die for his quarrel."[76] Church was just as steadfast and undaunted in his resolution and approached the soldiers "without the least kind of fear of terror." [77] Important to this moral differentiation is that neither Perkins nor Church were willing to say what Denne said "though they were sure thereby to gain their pardon;" both chose death for their cause over their own self-interest.[78] We find in this account four variants of moral differentiation in relation to one's own death at the hands of a Tyrant, and two soldiers were characterized as the mode of being of the 'public-spirited man.'

The ideal of martyrdom as self-renunciation is also present in the moral characterization used to describe the death of Roger Lockyer. *The Army's Martyr* reports Lockyer saying, as he made his way to the execution, "I am ready and willing to dye for my Country and Liberty and I blesse God I am not afraid to look death in the face in this particular cause God hath called me to."[79] Lockyer, it is further reported,

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[74] Ibid., 508.

[75] Ibid., 509.

[76] Ibid., 508.

[77] Ibid., 509.

[78] Ibid., 509.

[79] *The Army's Martyr* (1649), E 552 (11), 4 - 5.

responding to the prompting of one M. Watson, remarked on his impending death, "I praise God I am fitted for it and have a witnesse from God that I have served my generation with uprightness so farre as I had understanding, and seeing God hath been so pleased to dispose of me, let it come and welcome, death is nothing."[80] It is the 'public-spirited man' who was said to be fitted for death at the hands of the Tyrant. The martyrdom carefully constructed in this report of Lockyer's words and courage, characterizing him in confrontation with tyranny on behalf of the 'common cause,' expressed the ideal of the faithful death constitutive of the 'public-spirited man.'

The attitude one adopts to his own life, illustrated in his willingness to die for the 'common cause,' exemplifies the mode of self-denial that makes one free from 'himself' and a servant of God, the just cause, and the public good. We find this ideal present in Richard Overton's account of his fidelity to the *Agreement of the People*:

> It is neither my own life, liberty, nor reparation that I stand for, as the proper end of my Engagement; I have set my hand to the plow, and that paper hath proclaim'd it, and bears testimony thereof, and shall I look back for my own advantage, God forbid; rather let me die, then live the life of Den (that accursed English Judas;) The bread of Apostacy, Lord, never let it enter into my lips; to drink the blood, and eat the flesh of my Countries Cause; yea, of the children that are yet unborn, as that Viper, that wretched Traytor hath done, or be clothed with the garments of such abdhorred abhomination; farre, farre be it from me and mine, rather let us be cloathed in rags, and let me linger out my dayes, fettered and mannacl'd in some of their noysome murdering Dungeons to bear testimony against them for that Righteous Agreement: God hath given me the heart, and fild it with power and patience for the work; life, liberty and reparations, that golden ball and bait of Apostacy shall not satisfie me, it is not for such flattering pictures, that I am at variance with them, although my condition might invite me to such wordly acceptances; no I first set my hand to the work of integrity and simplicity of heart, without all self or by-ends, God is my record, and I trust, he that began that good work in me, will bear me out in it, to the end; and that is my earnest and

[80] Ibid., 5.

heart prayer.[81]

'Public-spirit' constituted the goal for the ethical subject of political activity, and it was achieved in the practices of the self that organized the dictate to "looke about you." The state of 'public-spirited' was characterized by a freedom, but one that could only be exercised according to the dictates of 'community.' "Since no man is born for himself only, but obliged by the Laws of Nature (which reaches all) of Christianity (which ingages us as Christians) and of Publick Societie and Government, to employ our endeavours for the advancement of a communitive Happinesse, of equal concernment to others as our selves."[82]

Conclusion

This thesis has analysed the political practice of the levellers during the mid-seventeenth century revolution in England according to a Foucaultian theoretical and methodological approach. Specifically, it has adopted his theory of the way the problematization of the ethical subject is one mode in which human beings are constituted as subjects within historical processes. Organizing the project this way meant that the principle point of analysis was not the political behaviour, nor ideas and their representational signification, but an analysis of how the political practice of the levellers

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[81] Overton, *Overton's Defyance of the Act of Pardon*, 5. Note the characterization of Henry Denne as the "English Judas" as it relates to the passage in *The Moderate* describing the execution at Burford.

[82] *A Manifestation*, 335.

was problematized in the tracts produced during the revolutionary period. To pursue this type of inquiry, this thesis has focussed on the discussion of 'the Leveller' and on a set of practices which provoked concern, debate, passions and conflict in the moral characterization of the political subject. Studying this debate has suggested the way the levellers produced a mode of political action that responded to the problematization of how the individual ought to make himself serviceable to the commonwealth. In this problematization, for the individual to make himself serviceable he did not refer his conduct to a codification that defined for him a precise form for his political activity. It was organized by conditions which produced a certain amount of freedom for the individual in his political behaviour according to a relationship to the self, understood as an ethical practice of constituting oneself as the ethical subject of one's political activity. The focal point of this thesis has been the specific way this ethical practice informed the political practice of the levellers and the discourse produced to reflect on and explain these practices. As we have seen, it was in the interplay between the practice of promoting an Agreement of the People and the problem of defining the ethical subject of that Agreement that the levellers were forced to recognize themselves as ethical subjects.

In the practice of promoting the Agreement of the People and in the discourses which discussed this practice, the levellers questioned themselves about political activity as an ethical problem. This problematization developed from a process whereby political activity was constituted as a moral issue based on the modifications engendered by the civil war and the discourse which produced the war as a 'common cause.' The emergence of the levellers and their practice of promoting an Agreement of the People

was constituted and organized by these modifications which made political activity an 'engagement.' Centred around the practice of producing the Agreement of the People and defining the 'fit person' who could participate in this Agreement, the leveller was forced to problematize himself as an ethical subject and produce a relationship to self constituted by an ethical experience of 'engagement.'

From the study undertaken we can summarize the general form in which the political activity of the levellers was conceptualized and made into an ethical practice. The ethical substance of this domain was formed by the 'affection' with which one engages on behalf of the public good; this entails forming the proper relation of constancy between the heart, the tongue and the hand, a dynamic relationship that combined to make up the elements of 'affection.' The levellers' 'engagement' was regulated by the dictate to 'looke about you' which ensured that his political activity was organized according to necessity and opportunity - the mode of subjection - and that one worked on himself, in practices of the self, with an impartial judgement. This thesis has singled out the work of practical Christianity, reading and writing and associating with others as the principle field of practices in which the leveller problematized his own political activity. In these practices, the leveller worked on his 'affections' in a set of techniques he performed on himself to shape his conduct and define the mode of self-renunciation that these practices required. The mode of being which this practice of ethical work produced was characterized as a state of freedom for one to act for the public good as a 'public-spirited man,' but a state of freedom that could only be experienced within the structural and spiritual bonds of 'community.' In the experience produced by this ethical practice

the leveller made himself a political subject who was serviceable to the commonwealth and capable of promoting an Agreement of the People.

What gave such men the confidence and courage to produce an Agreement that would define, and bind the governors to, a set of fundamental maxims of government and to act as the moral agents of this Agreement even when it meant challenging the King, the Parliament and the Army? To account for this extraordinary political practice, historians have found themselves appealing to the interiority of the groups' leaders, their personality and their rational thinking.[83] As this thesis stated in the introduction, it has set out to suggest that something 'more' can be said to account for the emergence of 'the Leveller' and the 'fit person' who characterized the ethical agent of the Agreement. From the exteriority of a set of practices, of speaking and of doing, this thesis has constructed the foundation for studying how an 'interiority' came to be constituted, producing the possibility for a new relationship one had to his own political activity. The problematization of 'the Leveller' and the ethics it developed constituted the possibility for the levellers to adopt a new type of experience of oneself as a political subject; it was an experience produced by a conceptual field that organized the terms of moral characterization and by the practices of the self that enabled the individual to constitute himself as the ethical subject of his own political action. The something 'more' can be

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[83] G. E. Aylmer described the "essential elements" that "made the Leveller movement possible as a major historical event" as follows: "the personalities of the leading figures, of John Lilburne above all; the intellectual development of their ideas; and the juxtaposition of difficult economic conditions with the political and religious conflicts and dissatisfactions that followed the King's defeat in the First Civil War (1642-6)." G. E. Aylmer, "Introduction," in G. E. Almer, ed., *The Levellers in the English Revolution* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1975), 9.

defined as an ethical experience of 'engagement,' whereby the relationship the leveller formed with himself made it possible for the him to be serviceable to the public good as a 'public-spirited man' and confident that he was fit to throw "an arrow against all tyrants and tyranny."[84]

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[84] The phrase comes from the title of a tract by Richard Overton, *An Arrow against all tyrants and tyranny* (1646), Sharp, 54.

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