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**Political language after Robert Molesworth's intervention; the discourse of history and the conception of liberty.**

A political debate in 1690s Europe.

Masteroppgave i Historie

Trondheim, mai 2015

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## **Acknowledgments.**

The subject in this thesis has followed me for some time now. Especially the last nine months or so has been dedicated to scrutinize the debate Molesworth created. So, I think it's time to close this chapter, take a holiday, and enjoy the fact that I have delivered a thesis that I'm proud of!

My overall experience with the thesis has been positive. A reason for this is the source material (leaving me out of archive marathons), and the lack of classes to attend this year. This has left me free to focus on my dissertation, and the last months have shown that it is exciting to write history. This is not to say that there has been moments when I have looked empty into the screen; words do not add up, the text does not flow, and arguments lack sense. In these moments, coupled with glimmers of self doubt, writing itself seems to be a meaningless enterprise. Yet, the key in such situations (which in my experience from the last year, can be *the* hardest thing to do) is to take a break, and leave your work and faith to a seemingly unrational subconsciousness. Naturally, writing a thesis is challenging, and should be so. My experience is no exception. But it has, moreover, given a sense of meaning and further confirmed that I made the right choice when I accepted the offer to study history at NTNU, autumn 2010.

There are of course, some people I would like to express gratitude to. First and foremost is my supervisor Magne Njåstad. His brilliant lectures contributed to make me focus extra on Early Modern history my first year of study, and when I showed up unannounced at his office some time later –expressing with confidence a rather vague thing, namely that I wanted to write about political history from the Early Modern period – he was the one who tipped me about Molesworth. Besides this, he has been a good support and given useful advises throughout. I would also like to thank Håkon With Andersen for giving me valuable feedback, and Adam Sutcliffe at King's College London for assessing my prospectus essay (pointing me towards relevant studies). I would also like to thank my fellow students situated in 6B 6392 and D113, Mari and Siv for assisting me with proof-reading, onkel Morten, and all my other good friends in Trondheim and Oslo (you know who you are!). Lastly, I would like to give thanks to my dear family: mamma og pappa, my sister Kristine and Tor.

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# 1 Robert Molesworth's life, and the publication of *An Account of Denmark, as it was in the year 1692*.

This thesis will examine a political debate started by Robert Molesworth (1656- 1725) and his *Account of Denmark* in late 1693-94. The focus will be on the discussion concerning 'history' and 'liberty', and how Molesworth's opponents responded to his historical discourse and his 'neo-roman' conception of liberty. It will do this by applying the methodology and theories of Quentin Skinner and John Pocock.

Robert Molesworth was born in Ireland in 1656. He was educated at Trinity College, Dublin.<sup>1</sup> His father had fought under Cromwell, and was rewarded with a sizeable amount of land before making success as a merchant.<sup>2</sup> Molesworth was therefore born into the upper strata of society. As a member of the land-based gentry, Molesworth later married Lettice Coote. The marriage secured him further prominent connections.<sup>3</sup> For instance, Lettice was a relative of Richard, earl of Bellamont; a friend of John Locke and governor of New York and New England.<sup>4</sup> In 1688, Molesworth passionately supported of the Glorious Revolution and William III's accession to the throne. He was condemned by the government of James II, and fled with his wife to England. There they joined the circle around the later Queen Anne (married to prince George of Denmark), and Molesworth was for a time, a member of Anne's Irish Privy council. After the Revolution, Molesworth's acquaintance also developed out of Parliamentary associations in Ireland and England. He was an active politician in Irish and English Parliaments – being a part of the land- based, republican-minded, Parliamentary gentry which later became influential in the eighteenth century. Yet, enough historical material remains to show that his repudiation was made with the publishing of the *Account of Denmark* from December 1693.<sup>5</sup> This pamphlet was based on his experience as an envoy at the Danish court. In the last decade of his life, his fame was enlarged by his vigor against the

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<sup>1</sup> Caroline Robbins, *The eighteenth-century Commonwealthman*, (Cambridge Massachusetts, 1959) 91.

<sup>2</sup> Jørgen Holt, *Robert Molesworth og hans bok "An Account of Denmark as It was in the Year 1692"*. *Et Innlegg i den politiske strid I 1690-årenes England*. Hovedfagsoppgave i historie. (Universitet i Oslo, 1968) ,1.

<sup>3</sup> Christian Henrik Brasch, *Om Robert Molesworth's skrift "An account of Denmark, as it was in the year 1692"*, (København, 1879) 4.

<sup>4</sup> Robbins, 1959: 91.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 92.



South Sea Company directors. When he was invited to stand for Westminster in 1722, he eventually changed his mind. He retired to his estates, and enjoyed a circle of lively friends. He could look back on a long political career. It spanned something like thirty years, in which he sat with only brief intermissions in the Irish and English Parliaments. He died in Ireland in 1725.<sup>6</sup>

It was perhaps Molesworth's role in the Glorious Revolution, in which he had taken up arms in support of William III, which led William to send his protestant supporter to Denmark. Molesworth's arrived in Copenhagen in 1689. His task was to represent William's government abroad, and secure military aid in the form of Danish mercenaries.<sup>7</sup> Molesworth succeeded in this diplomatic mission, and the military aid constituted 7000 men. Apart from this, the choice of Molesworth as an envoy was, on the whole, a failure with regard to his personality.<sup>8</sup> For example, when he came to Denmark, he declared that he would not tolerate that Christian V received him sitting in his chair – with his hat on.<sup>9</sup> It later became evident that Molesworth's criticism of court manners was a starting point of a series of episodes. His temper was one reason for which he got into fights with the Danes.<sup>10</sup> Another probable reason was that land-based gentlemen like Molesworth championed themselves as plain-hearted, upright and virtuous – in which they saw they were polar opposites of the obnoxious lackeys located at court.<sup>11</sup> Nonetheless, Molesworth stay at the Danish court lasted for three years.<sup>12</sup> During this time, he got substantial knowledge of the Denmark-Norway – its culture, of the court, history, geography, commerce, dominions to mention some. And despite his temper, it is evident that he was a man of charm and talents.

When Molesworth arrived in Copenhagen, he met with a political system which was completely opposite of the one he fought for during the Revolution in England. While the Glorious Revolution had been a victory for the Parliamentary supporters, Denmark-Norway turned to an absolutist regime in 1660. Thus, in the same year as the English monarchy was restored after the failure of Cromwell, the Danish Estates, represented by 'Riksrådet', ceased operation.<sup>13</sup> (see chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion). The result was that Molesworth

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 92-93.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 92.

<sup>8</sup> Brasch, 1879: 6.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>10</sup> Robbins, 1959: 92.

<sup>11</sup> This was the case with neo-roman writers. A general point of taken from Skinner; *Liberty before liberalism*, (Cambridge, 1998) a: 95-96.

<sup>12</sup> Brasch, 1879: 6.

<sup>13</sup> W.M Spellman, *European Political Thought 1600-1700*, (London 1998) 39.

got first-hand knowledge of two very common institutions in the Early Modern era (1500-1800). This was the absolutist regime and the constitutional or limited monarchy. As an absolutist regime, Denmark-Norway lacked a political body which could figure as a check on royal power. This was not the case with England. The declaration of rights which William III accepted to at his accession was drawn up by a Parliament whose aim it was to circumscribe royal power. English monarchy never would be a personal monarchy in quite the same way it had been under Charles II or James II.<sup>14</sup> One result of this was that England saw a more decisive shift of political power away from court.<sup>15</sup>

The Danish regime made a lasting impression on Molesworth. The practice of an absolutist King without checks, such as a Parliament, was abhorrent to him. One time he lost his temper during his stay in Copenhagen for example, he declared that 'the first to avenge the people' if he found himself in country were the king undertook even a minor intervention against the laws of the state.<sup>16</sup> Of course, the idea of the 'people' in the late seventeenth century for men like Molesworth meant some of state (property was important) and those with some stake in the community.<sup>17</sup> But it was a radical statement at the Danish court, and he would later give justification for it when he wrote the *Account of Denmark*.

On the whole, Molesworth was faced with two different forms of rule. Questions at hand was political authority, its legitimacy, and which institutional practice which was most admirable. This was a dilemma between 1500-1800. For instance, the concentration of princely power was justified by Jean Bodin and Jacques Bénigne Bossuet in France, and Sir Robert Filmer and Thomas Hobbes in England. To Molesworth, however, there was no question. Unlimited royal power was dangerous. Absolutism was detrimental to political life, society, welfare of the individual and incompatible with true liberty. True liberty was according to Molesworth, just formally secured in the Glorious Revolution and the 'Bill of Rights' from 1689.<sup>18</sup>

The *Account of Denmark* was anonymously published in December 1693. Even without the Preface, which did not encompass Denmark, the *Account* numbered 246 pages. These pages were divided into seventeen different chapters. The first five chapters described

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<sup>14</sup> Tim Harris, *Revolution. The Great Crisis of the British Monarchy 1685-1720*, (London, 2006) 494.

<sup>15</sup> Stéphane van Damme and Janet Dickinson, 'Courts and Centers', in ed Beat Kümin *The European World 1500-1800. An Introduction to Early Modern History*. (London and New York, 2009) 263.

<sup>16</sup> See chapter 7 for a discussion of this statement.

<sup>17</sup> Robbins, 1959: 16.

<sup>18</sup> Henrik Horstbøll, 'Defending Monarchism in Denmark-Norway in the Eighteenth Century', in Hans Blom, John Christiansen Laursen and Luisa Simonutti (eds) *Monarchism in the age of Enlightenment; liberty, patriotism, and the common good* (Toronto, 2007) 178-180.

Denmark-Norway in general – with regard to its dominions, geography and commerce: 1) *Of the Territories belonging to the King of Denmark, and their situation.* 2) *Of Denmark in particular, and the Island of Zealand.* 3) *Of the Sound.* 4) *Of the other Islands and Jutland.* 5) *Of the rest of the King of Denmark's Countries.*

The next chapter treated ...*their Form of Government.* This chapter was closely linked with chapter 7 and the more detailed historical narrative of the account: *The Manner how the Kingdom of Denmark became Hereditary and Absolute.*

The next four chapters portrayed conditions in Denmark-Norway. 8) *The Condition, Customs, and Temper of the People.* 9) *Of the Revenue.* 10) *Of the Army, Fleet, and Fortresses.* These chapters are of the most critical and polemical – all linked to the nature of arbitrary rule.

Thereafter followed three chapters on foreign politics. 12) *The Disposition and Inclinations of the King of Denmark towards his Neighbours.* 13) *The Manner of Disposessing and restoring the Duke of Holstein Gottorp.* 14) *The Interests of Denmark in relation to other Princes.*

The two next chapters treated the legal system, jurisprudence and the clergy: 15) *Of the Laws, Courts of Justice, &c.* 16) *The State of Religion, of the Clergy and Learning.*

17) *The Conclusion.*

Despite a seemingly impartial and descriptive content, the *Account* was definitively a controversial piece of political writing. For instance, the Danish representative in London, Mogens Skeel, sent a letter to the Danish king Christian V in December 1693 after its publication. In this, Skeel not only mentioned that the author was 'filled with a strong hate towards us', but also that Molesworth tried to create suspicion towards the English king, William III, and his armies.<sup>19</sup> Skeel was right. Besides its more explicit criticism of Denmark, the tract also contained more subtle criticism on political affairs in England. Molesworth was in fact a leading figure of the 'Old Whigs' (see chapter 3). This was a more radical faction of the Whigs, and one can perhaps to invoke the modern notion of the 'left' in order to situate them on a political scene. They were skeptical to royal power, which also was evident for an alert reader of the *Account*. Confronted with Molesworth's praise of William III, it made the church member Thomas R. Rogers (1660-1694) to simply conclude that

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<sup>19</sup> 'men da han er fyldt av et stærkt had til os', see Brasch, 1879: 43 and 42.

‘Judas still can kiss’.<sup>20</sup> Molesworth did then, not only feel compelled to tell about the effects of bad government after his stay at Copenhagen. His main intention was rather to intervene in English political affairs. England was at the time engaged in a large-scale war (The Nine-Years War 1688-97). Even though he somewhat ironically had contributed to William military policy it by securing Danish mercenaries, it was in fact William’s potential military power, and a growing standing army, which Molesworth saw as a dangerous.

Molesworth’s *Account* was a typical printed text of the Early Modern era (1500-1800). The period from the Reformation to the French Revolution was arguably the golden age for such political pamphlets. By example, it has been estimated that the English Exclusion Crisis of 1679-81 (named so after the Parliamentary effort to exclude Charles II’s son James II, from the throne) generated between 5 million and 10 million printed pamphlets within three years.<sup>21</sup> Of course, there existed national differences regarding publishing. The print industry was by example, minimal in Norway far into the eighteenth century.<sup>22</sup> Another difference was censorship. In the days of December 1693, right after the publication of the *Account*, Skeel had without success, tried to stop the spread of the *Account*. It is likely that Skeel knew his appeal was a failure from the start. He was highly aware of the fact that the Danish system of censorship was far beyond the more tolerate English.<sup>23</sup> But this did not stop him from appealing to stop the sale of the tract, and to publicly burn existing examples.<sup>24</sup>

Skeel’s appeal, delivered at a hearing, serves to highlight a Danish unease. This unease was not going to be any lighter during the first months of 1694. The *Account* became a bestseller from the start, and was soon the talk of diplomats all over Europe. Within the first three months, it sold an astonishing 6,000 copies.<sup>25</sup> And by the year 1700, there were at least 13 editions of the book published in French, Dutch, German as well as English.<sup>26</sup>

The popularity and the spread of the *Account* became a serious blow to the Danes. If not ‘filled with a strong hate’ as Skeel wrote to Christian V, Molesworth was certainly hostile to the absolutist regime installed at 1660. As Molesworth stated in it; ‘Denmark therefore was till within these two and thirty years governed by a king chosen by the people of all sorts’.

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<sup>20</sup> Thomas R. Roger, *The Common-Wealths-Man unmasqu’d, or a just rebuke to the Author of the Account of Denmark. In Two Parts.* (London, Printed for Randal Taylor, 1694) 74.

<sup>21</sup> James Van Horn Melton, *The Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe*, (Cambridge, 2001)19.

<sup>22</sup> Øystein Rian, *Sensuren i Danmark-Norge. Vilkårerne for offentlige ytringer 1536-1814.* (Oslo, 2014) 39.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, 42-43.

<sup>24</sup> Brasch, 1879: 44.

<sup>25</sup> Steve Pincus, ‘Absolutism, ideology and English foreign policy: the ideological context of Robert Molesworth’s *Account of Denmark*, in David Onnekink, Gijs Rommelse (eds) *Ideology and Foreign Policy in Early Modern Europe 1650-1750*, (Farnham, 2011), 29.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, 29.

And he declared; ‘The commons have since experienced, that the little finger of an absolute prince can be heavier than the loins of many nobles’.<sup>27</sup> The turn to absolutism in 1660 was a fatal event. Using his acquired knowledge as emissary, Molesworth argued that the event not only was a sudden change from freedom to slavery, but also that arbitrary rule had caused spiritual decay. This state of ‘servitude’ had become so manifest that people ‘could not make use of liberty if it were offered to them’, but rather ‘throw it away if they had it’.<sup>28</sup> In addition, learning was at a low ebb, and he had never experienced any country in which the minds of the people were more of one caliber and pitch than in Denmark; ‘every one keeps the ordinary beaten road of sence[...] without deviating to right or left’.<sup>29</sup> Since all the troubles in Denmark were the ‘constant effects of arbitrary rule’,<sup>30</sup> the sole reason for this decay was the political system. At the heart of Molesworth’s criticism then, was the idea that an arbitrary king was corrupting to every aspect of society.

## 1.1 The start of a political debate.

The *Account* initiated a political debate between 1694-96, and prompted four rejoinders from four different authors.<sup>31</sup> In retrospect, the fast spread of the *Account*, and many views put forward by Molesworth (ought to be seen as radical in the seventeenth century), made it more or less certain that someone would take up the pen against him.

The debate became transnational as well. It encompassed British, Scandinavian and European history, and included more traditional topics such as absolutism, constitutionalism, republicanism, divine-right kingship, liberty, the role of the clergy, and the ‘Original Contract’. In approaching these subjects, the use of history became central. History was used to underpin arguments, and also employed as an ideological disclaimer.

The High Church Physican Jodocus Crull was perhaps the most eager opponent of Molesworth. Crull was born in Hamburg and later immigrated to England. He wrote two

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<sup>27</sup>Robert Molesworth, *An Account of Denmark. As It was in the Year 1692*. (London. Printed for Timothy Goodwin, 1693) 39, and 67. Despite the year on the title page (1694), the *Account* was published in December 1693. See Robbins, 1959: 93.

<sup>28</sup>Molesworth, 1693: 244.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid, 235.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid, 43.

<sup>31</sup>The book prompted rejoinders in English, Dutch, French and German. However, this thesis will mainly focus on the three English rejoinders from 1694, and give some remarks on the one from 1696 and 1700 in the last chapter.

rejoinders. The first appeared in 1694, and the second in 1700. Dedicating himself to Prince George in the first (Jørgen in Danish, married to the later Queen Anne, which succeeded her brother-in-law William III), Crull labeled Molesworth's *Account* as a historical treatise, and also accused him of applying 'mistaken rules of liberty'.<sup>32</sup> Molesworth's 'true liberty' was too much liberty in the eyes of Crull. Besides this, Crull argued that the Danes did not lose their liberty in 1660, but rather freed themselves from the slavery of the nobles. In addition, Crull claimed that Molesworth did not intend to give a just account of Denmark. His goal was instead to represent tyranny in its worst shape to the English nation.<sup>33</sup>

Thomas R. Rogers (1660-1694) was the man who proclaimed that Molesworth's praise for William III was a Judas kiss. He wrote this in his reply *The Common-Wealths-Man unmasqu'd, or a just rebuke to the Authour of the Account of Denmark in two parts* from 1694. As a representative for the English Church, Rogers's political outlook was far apart from the Old Whigs and Molesworth. As such, Rogers's dared Molesworth to actually find evidence of the 'Original contract'. This was a contract which Rogers argued never had existed.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, Rogers denounced Molesworth's neo-roman conception of liberty (see chapter 4). This so called liberty was dangerous, and Rogers contended that, Molesworth really was aiming at destroying the British monarchy.

Dr William King (1663-1712) published *Animadversions on a Pretended Account of Denmark* in 1694. King was an arch-Tory, and was like Rogers part of the Church movement. Interestingly, King organized the pamphlet exactly like Molesworth's *Account*; seventeen chapters with the same titles. The reply was written at the request of the Danish chaplain in London, Iver Brink.<sup>35</sup> It was not only Skeel who was at unease with Molesworth's explicit criticism of the Danes. The Norwegian born Brink, then situated in England, was also offended by it. Brink therefore sought a recognized man, skillful with the pen, enable to expose the unjust *Account*. In writing, King ridiculed Molesworth's historical narrative, and argued that the Danes did not lose their liberty in 1660. In addition, he argued that Molesworth's intention in writing was to encourage a rebellion against William III and Christian V in Denmark. This paralleled King's effort in which he tried to expose Molesworth

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<sup>32</sup> Jodocus Crull, *Denmark Vindicated, Being an Answer to a late Treatise called an Account of Denmark, as it was in the year 1692. Sentt from a Gentleman in the country to his friend in London*, (London, Printed for Tho. Newborough at the Golden-Bail, 1694) 3.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, see the part, *A Letter from a Gentleman in the Country, to his Friend in London*.

<sup>34</sup> For 'passive doctrines', see the part *The Consolation of the Cross: Or the Two Grand Pillars of Man's Security In this Worlds*. For the point on the 'Original Contract', see p 102.

<sup>35</sup> Brasch, 1879: 72-74.

as a Commonwealthman (see chapter 3). In short, both Rogers and King saw Molesworth as a revolutionary in disguise. Even though Molesworth was a vigorous supporter of Parliament, Rogers and King took this further, and argued that he really wanted to depose the king in England.

Two years later, two expanded versions of King's *Animadversions* appeared. It was written in French, and authored by the émigré Huguenot Jean Payen La Foulere (ca 1650-1701). When he did not spy for the Danish legation in London, Foulere worked for the German foreign office in Copenhagen. It was in Copenhagen he translated and expanded King's work.<sup>36</sup> Unlike King, Foulere published his expanded version on his own initiative.

## 1.2 Historiography:

There has been done substantial work on Molesworth throughout. Danish and Norwegian surveys have taken interest in Molesworth's *Account*, and also the debate as a whole. The first Danish scholar who examined the debate was the priest and historian Christian Henrik Brasch (1811-1894). The nineteenth century was a time of nationalistic historical writing, and one can assume that one reason for Brasch's interest was that the *Account* connected Denmark to a larger European scene. However, his notable survey from 1879<sup>37</sup> covered the debate in great detail, and arguably set a golden standard on studies of Molesworth in Denmark and Norway. This thesis will use and be indebted to Brasch's study. To mention some, it highlights the diplomatic dynamics in the wake of the *Account*, and the relation each agent had to the debate. There have also been more recent studies, such as Jørgen Holt (1968) and Hugh Mayo (2000). In his master thesis from the University of Oslo 1968, Holt convincingly treated the *Account* as an intervention in standing army controversy of the 1690s – in which it was a direct critique of William III's military policy.<sup>38</sup> Interestingly, Holt also positioned himself like some of Molesworth's opponents. This implied that Molesworth's project was republican, where he in fact, wanted to depose the king. As we shall see later on, however, there are good reasons for challenging this view. Besides this, a noteworthy point from

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<sup>36</sup> Sebastian Olden-Jørgensen, 'Robert Molesworth's *An Account of Denmark as it was 1692*; A Political Scandal and its literary Aftermath' in Knud Haakonssen & Henrik Horstbøll (eds) *Northern Antiquities and National Identities. Perceptions of Denmark and the North In the Eighteenth Century. Symposium held in Copenhagen August 2005*. Historisk-filosofiske Meddelelser (København, 2008) 71-72.

<sup>37</sup> Brasch 1879.

<sup>38</sup> Holt, 1968: 92, 95, 121.

Mayo's more recent PhD study is that Molesworth's opponents tended to be High Church, (that is to say Tory. See chapter 6 for more on the Tories), and that they were associated with the household of princess Anne and her husband Prince George of Denmark. However, Mayo's analysis of the *Account* in which Molesworth promoted a defense for political economical principles,<sup>39</sup> is more doubtful. Lastly, there have emerged more recent comments, such as Sebastian Olden Jørgensen (2005), and Henrik Horstbøll (2007).

Molesworth and his *Account* have also been discussed by English historians. An influential piece is Caroline Robbins classic *The eighteenth-century Commonwealthman* from 1959. The book examined three generations of 'Commonwealthmen' (see chapter 3). On the one hand, these men could be seen as conservators of the old order, but on the other, they could be viewed as spiritual forerunners and heirs of later revolutionaries.<sup>40</sup> To be sure, the continued existence of the Commonwealthmen, however limited, served to maintain a revolutionary tradition and to link the history of the English struggle against tyranny to the later American efforts for independence. The American constitution employed many devices which the Old Whigs begged English to adopt. In other words, it is possible to trace a tradition from one century to another.<sup>41</sup> Robbins seminal study placed Molesworth in broader intellectual picture, which undoubtedly, was important. Another noteworthy point from it is that Molesworth was a leading figure amongst the Old Whigs – an early group included among the Commonwealthmen. The Old Whigs was a small minority amongst other Whigs, and a more radical faction. Even though they did not succeed on the political scene, this group strived for reform in a time when most Englishmen saw the constitution as sacred. In addition, the *Account* has also been discussed in other useful books and comments, such as J.A.I. Champion (1992), Mark Goldie (2006). Champion examined the confrontation between priests and freethinkers from 1660-1730, and places Molesworth in an early Enlightenment context. One can say that there was an historical link between religious skepticism and republican-minded men like Molesworth. In addition, Champion showed that historical argumentation was central for both freethinkers and priests.<sup>42</sup> Regarding this, it is interesting to note that historical argumentation as a phenomenon of political discussion in the period, is displayed by this debate as well. The second by Goldie treats the *Account* in a discussion on

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<sup>39</sup> Hugh Mayo, *Robert Molesworth's Account of Denmark. Its roots and impacts*, (University of Odense, 2000). However, this information regarding Mayo is taken from Pincus, 2011: See page footnotes on page 31 and 53.

<sup>40</sup> Robbins, 1959: 5.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 3-4.

<sup>42</sup> J.A.I Champion. *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken: The Church of England and its Enemies, 1660-1730*, (Cambridge, 1992).



the English system of liberty. An important point from Goldie was that it was the 'Old Whig's' who would adopt a stance of hostility towards the new 'fiscal-military' state.<sup>43</sup> The term 'fiscal military' came from that military campaigns, armies and navies grew larger during 1500-1800. As a result, states were forced to raise more money, through a combination of taxation, loans and fiscal innovations.<sup>44</sup>

Steve Pincus has a more unique approach to the *Account*. He argues that the text persistently have been misread as contribution to the literature of the Commonwealthmen – going against Robbins, Goldie and Holt. Pincus rather treats the *Account* as a pointed intervention in the party controversy over English foreign policy in the 1690s. As such, Pincus claims that it was frustration over Tory foreign policy which was the context for Molesworth's publication. Molesworth did, in other words, support the war against France (The Nine Years War), and advocated a full-scale continental commitment against the struggle of absolutism. Relevant to this, Molesworth was also a much more of mainstream Whig.<sup>45</sup>

Lastly, Horstbøll's recent study from 2007 (mentioned above) has a more provocative edge. Here, Horstbøll said that the rejoinders from Molesworth's opponents and their 'predictable blanket rejection is not of interest', and that the effect of Molesworth's criticism was 'more silent'. Besides, Horstbøll continued by saying that; 'His (Molesworth's) attack exposed a painful inability to provide a consistent refutation, in terms of political theory, of the claim that Denmark was a despotism. On the face of it, one could only adduce historical arguments.'<sup>46</sup> It was rather first in the middle of the eighteenth century when the absolutist regime in Denmark felt compelled to legitimize its monarchy.<sup>47</sup> The approach in this thesis has partly evolved as a critical dialogue to Horstbøll statements. It will discuss this more in detail later (chapter 5), but it is enough for now to point out that history was fundamental battleground. In short, 'history' was a key repertoire – a repertoire the agents in this debate actively sought to employ and make use of. What is more is that Molesworth's text to a large extent was a historical treatise – by which his opponents not were resigning to historical arguments, but rather were addressing his discourse.

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<sup>43</sup> Mark Goldie, 'The English system of liberty', in Mark Goldie, Robert Wokler (eds) *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Political Thought*, (Cambridge, 2006) 66.

<sup>44</sup> Colin Jones and Mark Knights, 'European Politics from the Peace of Westphalia to the French Revolution c.1650-1800', in ed Beat Kümin *The European World 1500-1800. An Introduction to Early Modern History*. (London and New York, 2009): 306.

<sup>45</sup> Pincus, 2011: 31, 47, 53-54.

<sup>46</sup> Horstbøll, 2007: 179.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 175-177.

### 1.3 A new approach and its relevance:

This thesis will set out to examine the pamphlets of Robert Molesworth, Thomas Rogers, Dr William King, Jodocus Crull and Jean Payen la Foulereuse. More specifically, it will examine language-games surrounding `liberty` and the use of `history`. Focusing on the use of `history` and the notion of `liberty`, the thesis seeks to locate the conventions surrounding these ideas by examining their employment in different arguments, and situate this in its right historical context. It is interesting to see how Molesworth used history and conceptualized liberty, and if his opponents – faced with a successful pamphlet – followed, challenged, manipulated or denounced his conceptions and `languages`. It will set out to do this by addressing some key questions. Firstly, what did they believe? And what characterized their conventions surrounding history and liberty? Secondly, what were they actually *doing* in writing? Thirdly, which topoi, idioms, rhetorical strategies and other established `languages` did they use?

This approach is valuable for different reasons. Most important is that a thorough analysis of Molesworth's, Crull's, Rogers's, King's and Foulereuse's approaches to history and liberty not has been done before. To my knowledge, it has not been a focal point in a survey, and not been examined collectively in a detailed study as this. The choice of history and liberty is not random either. The two aspects were the arguably the most significant battlegrounds in the debate. Not only were the two aspects deeply connected, but the *Account* was in the end, all about liberty, and the dangers and effects of unlimited rule personified by a king.

Early Modern Europe was also a highly rhetorical civilization. The agents in this debate were well aware that the pen was a mighty sword,<sup>48</sup> and the method used here (see down below) is a very textual-and rhetorical based. Molesworth's opponents did not find themselves in linguistic prisons, and they were all unique in their respective approaches. As such, this thesis will hopefully exhume the rhetorical and intellectual diversity by examining the pamphlets of each agent. To be sure, it can be easy to forget that Early Modern Europe inhabited by individuals, each unique in their own way. As mentioned, the debate was also transnational. It included English, Danish, Norwegian, Swedish and European history. In this regard, it is certainly intriguing that Molesworth's approach to political authority, by which

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<sup>48</sup> A more general point I use from, Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics, Volume 1: Regarding Method* (Cambridge, 2002) 7.

the *Account* was deeply rooted in an English system, more or less was the antithesis to the approach to political authority *inside* Denmark-Norway. Even though the two most significant battlegrounds were history and liberty in the debate, it must also be seen, as a discussion concerning two competitive political systems between 1500-1800.

More importantly, the approach to Molesworth's *Account* will be new. In short, this thesis is heavily influenced by theories and methodology of Quentin Skinner. With regard to Molesworth's conception of liberty, it will argue that this was 'neo-roman' in character. Skinner examined in his two ground-breaking studies from 1998 and 2008, two distinct approaches to the relationship between the power of the state and the liberty of the subject. A recognizable strand of thought arose when supporters of the Parliamentary cause during the English Civil War (1642-51) were faced with a new approach to liberty put forward by Hobbes and other royalists. The Parliamentary supporters responded by asserting a more classical understanding of liberty, and it was this response which gave rise to the 'neo-roman' element in Early Modern thought.<sup>49</sup> Not only was the theory restated by later Commonwealthmen,<sup>50</sup> but it was, as I argue, at the very heart of Molesworth's approach to liberty in the *Account of Denmark*. This theory has not been a starting point in an analysis of Molesworth's tract. It has come as a surprise in reading the secondary literature since, the result have been that, historians by large have missed his key argument. Other aspects of this theory will be discussed later, but is it necessary to point out that this will affect the analysis of the rejoinders. Regarding liberty then, it will address how they responded and challenged Molesworth's neo-roman conception.

The neo-roman theory (see chapter 4) leads over to the last point regarding the value of this thesis. It is perhaps best addressed by asking the question, why we study the history of ideas in the first place. The orthodoxy in the first part of the twentieth century held that it only was a canon of political text which was the proper object of research. The reason was that these texts could be expected to address perennial questions.<sup>51</sup> Even though this view has become increasingly challenged, it is unfortunately present to this day. One result is that previous writers simply are praised or blamed according to how far they aspire to the condition of being ourselves.<sup>52</sup> For example, the recently published *Farvel Machiavelli. Politisk makt fra frykt til anstendighet* is an example of this. Not only does Helge Ole

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<sup>49</sup> Skinner, 1998 a: 5-11.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 12-13.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 101-102.

<sup>52</sup> Skinner, 2002: 63.

Bergesen examine Machiavelli's 'doctrines' by applying them in twentieth century context, but he also confidently concludes that Machiavelli was wrong when he saw fear as a fundamental basis for political power.<sup>53</sup> For one thing, such an argument neglects that Machiavelli wrote *Il Principe* intending to re-establish his connection with the political elite in Florence, and that his real political sentiments were republican, exemplified by his *discourses on the First Decade [or Ten Books] of Titus Livy*. It also suggests that Machiavelli was able to anticipate the events in the twentieth century. Going back to this thesis, it strongly denies that the value of it lies in its earlier 'anticipations' of modernity. Although the main subject is liberty, it will not set out for instance, to discover some hidden traces of democratic tendencies – as if this doctrine has been immanent in history. In a time when liberty is equated with western democratic institutions, the value of the debate lies rather in its 'otherness', and that people in Europe throughout has approached liberty in various ways. The neo-roman theory for example, was short-lived – owed to the rise of a bourgeois culture, an expanding commercial age, the fiscal military state, and the rise of classical utilitarianism in the eighteenth century.<sup>54</sup> In summary then, and as Quentin Skinner says, there is no history of the 'idea' to be written, but only various uses, and the varying intentions in which it was used.<sup>55</sup> From modern eyes, it is this debate's more alien character, which constitutes its relevance.

## 1.4 Methodology: Political thought and the historian.

Throughout the latter part of the twentieth century, several new trends have challenged the 'old intellectual history' prevalent down to the 1960s. This 'old intellectual history', as mentioned above, was highly selective in the sense that a canon of classical texts were perceived as the only worth studying. Not only this, but it also separated ideas from social context.<sup>56</sup> Even though such an approach to history can be said to be present today, it has also been toppled by several distinct methodologies.

Two of these schools arose in France and Germany, and both saw the 'Old intellectual

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<sup>53</sup> 'Det er ikke grunnlag lenger for hans (Machiavellis) grove generaliseringer om maktens natur og maktens basis i frykt'. Helge Ole Bergesen, *Farvel Machiavelli. Politisk makt fra frykt til anstendighet*. (Oslo, 2014) 220.

<sup>54</sup> Skinner, 1998 a: 96.

<sup>55</sup> Skinner, 2002: 85.

<sup>56</sup> Jonathan I. Israel, *Enlightenment Contested. Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man 1670-1752*. (Oxford, 2006) 15.

history' as unsatisfactory. The 'Annales School' in France promoted a new kind of cultural-social *histoire de mentalités* – stressing the need to take all levels of society into consideration, and emphasizing more on social themes than political or diplomatic themes. The focus shifted towards the masses as it separated from political themes and the history of ideas. The German force, perhaps better known as *Begriffsgeschichte*, did also seek to pull social and intellectual history together. However, the starting point was concepts, or 'conceptual history'. In it, the founding figures Reinhart Koselleck and Rolf Reichardt saw basic concepts such as 'revolution', 'republic', 'civil society', 'civilization', 'liberty', 'liberalism', 'toleration' as being crafted, spread and adapted in political, social and economic spheres throughout time. Such concepts were key ideas, and their historically determined shifts of meaning were the prime focus of study.<sup>57</sup>

The third theoretical divergent methodology arose in Cambridge in the 1960s. With Quentin Skinner and John Pocock as the most prominent figures, they began to ask how concepts relate to rhetoric, forms of expression and 'political languages'. This new trend promoted a textual and linguistic approach to the history of ideas. John Pocock somewhat encapsulates this when he said that historians should 'be rhetoricians rather than logicians'.<sup>58</sup> However, this resulted in a critique from the German conceptual school – claiming that the Cambridge school defines historical context too narrowly, and thereby showing insufficient concern for social structures and pressures.<sup>59</sup> Despite rival tendencies and critique, it is also worth mentioning that this strand also was – and perhaps to a greater extent – a reaction against the 'Old intellectual history'.

Regarding to the political debate created by Molesworth and his *Account*, I will not deny that another methodical approach could have been fruitful and yielded results. That being said, this thesis will place itself firmly within the Cambridge School. It will be heavily influenced by the method and theories of Quentin Skinner (especially), and John Pocock. The length of this introduction does not allow for any substantial argument for why it prefers this methodological approach. It will only argue that an emphasis on rhetoric, what a writer was *doing* and not merely saying, and more established 'political languages' are key contexts in the history of ideas. I think this especially is the case when dealing with political pamphlets of this sort from the Early Modern period. What follows below in this subchapter, is an introduction to the methodology of Quentin Skinner and John Pocock.

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid, 16-17.

<sup>58</sup> J.G.A Pocock, *Political thought and history. Essays on theory and method*. (Cambridge, 2009) 27.

<sup>59</sup> Isreal, 2006: 16-17.

A useful starting point regarding Quentin Skinner's methodology is that he wants to write philosophy and intellectual history in a genuinely historical spirit. Accordingly, even the most abstract political works are part of the 'battleground'.<sup>60</sup> This was also very much the case for which Skinner felt dissatisfied with the old intellectual history, and its insistence on perennial values. As he points out for example, the old approach was insensitive to the possibility that earlier thinkers may have been interested in a range of questions very different from our own.<sup>61</sup> Continuing this, it is easy to think that our normative concepts, given to us by the mainstream of our intellectual traditions, must be *the* way of thinking about them.<sup>62</sup> We must not therefore, go to the past with some pre-set mind about a story they must be telling, or some modern conceptual scheme they must be taking part in. If we do this, history becomes a pack of tricks we play on the dead.<sup>63</sup> For example, it becomes it is all too easy to elucidate some incidental remark to key argument, and claiming that they were espousing a doctrine which, likely is a modern anachronistic concept, than a historical problem they engaged with.<sup>64</sup>

According to Skinner, the old approach before the 1960s was also insufficient because it left little space for considering what previous writers was *doing* in writing.<sup>65</sup> This last point can be challenging to grasp, but it is for one thing, key in Skinner's methodology, and also shed light over the more revolutionary aspect of the Cambridge School. Drawing on Ludwig Wittgenstein and J.L Austins theory of linguistic action, Skinner and Pocock applied this theory to the history of political thought. According to this, there are two separable dimensions of language. The one is meaning in the more ordinary sense, that is, the study of the sense and reference attached to words and sentences.<sup>66</sup> The other dimension derives from the fact that, as Ludwig Wittgenstein says, 'words are also deeds'.<sup>67</sup> J.L Austin showed this in his seminal work *How to do things with words*. Here Austin described a speech act theory dubbed 'illocutionary forces'. The point is that the utterance of a sentence can be to do something – a performing of an action.<sup>68</sup> In line with this, Skinner equates speech act with

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<sup>60</sup> Quentin Skinner, *Hobbes and Republican Liberty*, (Cambridge, 2008) Preface xv.

<sup>61</sup> Skinner, 2002: 2- 3.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, 6.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, 65.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, 60-61.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, 3.

<sup>67</sup> 'Worte sind auch Taten'. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical investigations*, (Oxford, 1968), para 546, p 146.

<sup>68</sup> J.L Austin, *How to do things with words*, (Oxford 1976) see 5-7, and 100.

certain texts, thus arguing that texts are acts as well.<sup>69</sup> It can therefore be helpful to imagine authors reading their texts loud in front of a political assembly.

That texts are acts is also the case for which we need to distinguish that a writer, on the one hand, may be saying something, and on the other, may be *doing* something. Speech acts can be uttered with a certain illocutionary force – by which the utterance itself may succeed in bringing change about. Likewise, you can also write with a certain force.<sup>70</sup> Anyone who is issuing a serious utterance then, in written or oral form – an appeal for instance – will always be *doing* something. However, it might justfully be asked here, how this relate to the study of intellectual history? In order to grasp this, it can be helpful to take into account the overall plea, which is to recognize that the pen is a mighty sword.<sup>71</sup> To be sure, most political writers throughout have not been political armchair theorists of the twentieth century. They were rather agents, and by being part of the battleground, had several intentions in writing in a particular way. For instance, writers were often deliberately employing a range rhetorical strategies.<sup>72</sup> They could perform such moves in order to denounce their opponents, trying to prevent something, get support, cause something to happen, and so on. Consequently, such texts were often a clear intervention in which they were *doing* something.

The aspect of illocution, which can be said to be a repertoire of language, parallels the need to recover intentions. According to Skinner, to gain ‘uptake’ on such intentions is equivalent to understand the nature or range of the illocutionary acts that the writer may have been performing in writing in a particular way. To be able to characterize what a writer was doing, is for example to be able to say that he or she must have been intending, to defend or attack a particular line of argument, to contribute or criticize to particular tradition of discourse, and so on.<sup>73</sup> For example, this thesis will argue that Molesworth intended to contribute to a particular line of argument, in which you were reduced to a slave by just being within arbitrary range. As a result, liberty is incompatible with absolutism. To fully grasp his argument, however, one needs to acknowledge the intended force he was writing with. Molesworth tried, in short, by using Denmark as an example, to bring about awareness of the precariousness of political affairs back home, and the true value of English liberty. One can argue that he tried to warn, or prevent, a similar fate of that of Denmark.

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<sup>69</sup> Skinner, 2002: 120.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 104.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 80.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 100-101.

Owed to the fact that one ought to write intellectual history in genuinely historical spirit, some methodological steps is required in order to gain a satisfactory understanding of a political text. To begin with, we need obviously to identify what they believe. This is normally contained in whatever texts and other utterances they may have left behind.<sup>74</sup> But since the historian ought so far as possible to see and think as our ancestors did, we need not only to focus on the particular text in which we study but also on the prevailing conventions surrounding the issues they address.<sup>75</sup> Historians deals often therefore with factors outside texts in order to understand them. This emphasis on the prevailing conventions comes from the fact that agents require some structure of relationship in which their actions are performed, in order to be said to act at all. One can call this context, which gives the meaning and intelligibility.<sup>76</sup> The starting point here is of course that historical texts are concerned with their own questions and not with ours.<sup>77</sup> This means that we ought so far as possible, the free ourselves from our own cultural heritage, our views, and rather recover their repertoire, the concepts they possessed, the distinctions they drew and the chains of reasoning they followed in their attempts to make sense of the world.<sup>78</sup>

John Pocock is next to Skinner, the most well-known historian of the Cambridge School of intellectual history. Although their methodology is similar, for instance regarding speech act theory, they also diverge on some points. Skinner for instance, resist to some extent Pock's notion of political 'languages'. The reason is that Skinner puts greater emphasis on authorial autonomy,<sup>79</sup> and stress the need to recover intentions. John Pocock, however, is more interested in the ways in which men in political societies find and explore such 'languages'.

These languages are not only necessary to conceptualize human life, but they also carry patterns of thought about the continuity of society and politics in time and in history.<sup>80</sup> By languages then, Pocock does not mean ethnically different languages such as Chinese, Norwegian or French. When he speaks of languages, therefore, it is for the most part sub-languages: rhetoric, idioms, ways of talking about politics, distinguishable language-games of which each may have its own vocabulary, rules, preconditions and implications, style and

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 40.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 101-102.

<sup>76</sup> Pocock, 2009: 67.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 88.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid, 47.

<sup>79</sup> Isreal, 2006: 16.

<sup>80</sup> Pocock, 2009: 20.



tone.<sup>81</sup>

According to Pocock, the history of political ideas could conventionally be treated as the history of political language or languages. Various styles of discourse, conceptual vocabularies and modes of thought exist, in varying degrees of formalization, in the structure of a political society. As a result, such languages are used by inhabitants of that society to articulate various utterances.<sup>82</sup> One might say that conceptualization, needs a language in order to be called a concept at all. Thus, intellectual history can be studied by paying attention to rhetoric, standardized vocabularies and so on. The historians therefore, deal with different recognizable languages of political conceptualization, in which he or she needs to re-enter the linguistic universe of the past, and reconstruct that historically.<sup>83</sup>

In order to identify such languages of course, there are some problems and criteria's which ought to be addressed. To begin with, several layers of such languages may be found in a single text. For example, Molesworth drew on the one hand, on a more established language of a Gothic character, in which the idyll of an 'Ancient Constitution' appeared frequently. On the other hand, he also engaged in what might be called the 'languages of Rome', using familiar terms as virtue, vice, tyranny and praising the societies found in Sparta and Rome. Besides this, there are certain criteria's. One is of course that, a historian needs to be certain that such languages existed prior to his/her discovery of it. What is more is that several authors must be shown to have operated within the same language; used it as medium, responding to each other as well as discussing, criticizing the others use of it.<sup>84</sup> Regarding the last point, Molesworth's adversaries were for example, explicitly criticizing his use of the languages of Rome. Jodocus Crull for instance, perceived Molesworth's veneration of ancient doctrines and deeds as vanity – especially since he sat them so far above contemporary ones.<sup>85</sup>

It is perhaps advantageous here, in a discussion of 'language', to demonstrate what the title to this thesis means. The title is *Political language after Robert Molesworth's intervention; the discourse of history and the conception of liberty*. What I mean with political language, is first and foremost the individual speech act. It denotes firstly, the individual act – that is the pamphlet of each agent. In this, the emphasis is on the rhetoric of each author, what

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<sup>81</sup> J.G.A Pocock 'The concept of a language and the *métier d'historien*: some considerations on practice', in Anthony Pagden (ed) *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1987) 20-21.

<sup>82</sup> Pocock, 2009: 26. Even though such languages are autonomous, they can also be modified within over time by various speech acts – that is speech act upon language context ('parole' and 'langue').

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 26-27.

<sup>84</sup> There are other considerations as well. See Pocock 1987: 26-27.

<sup>85</sup> Crull, 1694: 84.

themes and topics they address in their approach to history and liberty, and what rhetorical strategies they use and so on. In addition, since the agents engaged in more standardized vocabularies, this thesis also seeks to situate each speech act in more established languages. In line with Pocock's notion of 'language', the term political language will be more adequate here. Yet, 'language' includes rhetoric and speech act as well. So in this thesis, the term encompasses more than established political languages.

## **1.5 The structure of this thesis.**

The analysis in this thesis is twofold. It will on the one hand examine the use and conventions of history, and on the other, the different conceptions and approaches to liberty. Each chapter starts with some few overview comments – hopefully preparing the reader for what to come. It will then discuss a relevant background, and afterwards examine 'history' and 'liberty' in each pamphlet. A small summary will finish each chapter. Besides this, Molesworth will be treated in two autonomous chapters. The first deals with the Old Whigs, the *Account's* discourse of history and its language. The next discusses his neo-roman conception of liberty. Chapter 7 briefly comments on Jean Payen la Foulere's reply and the subsequent rejoinder by Crull. This is because they, to a little degree, deals with Molesworth's historical discourse and his conception of liberty. Apart from this, the other chapter's sets out to investigate *one* pamphlet by *one* opponent. Crull's first rejoinder, and those from Rogers and King will be therefore be treated individually. Lastly, there follows a conclusion.



## 2 A historical mapping.

This chapter gives a historical introduction to the political landscape in the late seventeenth century. The emphasis is on England and Scandinavia. Some readers might find this ‘birds-eye view’ useful, especially if they have not studied subjects on the seventeenth century.

### 2.1 England: the Glorious Revolution, the Nine Years War and the Church.

The first point which needs to be addressed is that the 1680s-90s England, as with most of the seventeenth century, was a turbulent period. The Revolution of 1688-89 is crucial in understanding this. In 1685, the Catholic King James II inherited the crown of England. In the intervening years, and with a series of missteps, James II gradually managed to alienate the more moderate English people. This culminated by a show trial, prompted by that seven bishops of the Church of England defied James by having his Declaration of Indulgence. The trial of the seven bishops was a disaster from the crown’s point of view. James had not only failed to bring the bishops into line, but he also made it apparent that public opinion was overwhelmingly against his attempts to establish a general toleration.<sup>86</sup> The jury did not find the prelates guilty, and soon after, English representatives invited the Dutchman William III, Prince of Orange, to England to vindicate their religious and political liberty.<sup>87</sup>

James II was not a defender of traditional English society. Not only had he insisted on the right to defy parliamentary statute, and ran roughshod over English law,<sup>88</sup> but he also tried to create a modern Catholic polity. Following the model of the French Sun King, Louis XIV’s, this involved to try to create a modern, centralizing, and extremely bureaucratic state apparatus. The effectiveness of this machine, coupled with a massive new standing army, made it certain that any attempt of overthrowing James had to be violent in kind.<sup>89</sup>

The revolution became violent. In England it was more or less bloodless, but this was not the case with Ireland and Scotland. A substantial minority had remained loyal to James,

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<sup>86</sup> Harris: 2006: 268.

<sup>87</sup> Steve Pincus, *1688. The First Modern Revolution*, (New Haven & London, 2009) 3-4.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*, 4.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid*, 475.

even though his regime had provoked passionate resentment among the English population.<sup>90</sup> Ireland for instance, had to be re-conquered at the battle of Boyne in 1690 in order to defeat James.<sup>91</sup> Nonetheless, as the events unfolded, it was William that would sit on the throne. It was agreed to replace James with William and Mary in February 1689. The Parliament declared that James had abdicated by desertion, and as joint monarchs, William and Mary accepted a declaration of Rights. It was drawn up by a convention of Parliament, aiming (among other things) to circumscribe royal power. Accordingly, the king's powers became more limited, and the settlement provided checks against royal abuses. As mentioned in the introduction, English monarchy would never again be a personal monarchy in quite the same way it had been under Charles II or James II.<sup>92</sup>

Admittedly, the term 'Glorious Revolution' was coined later.<sup>93</sup> But in a time when absolutism was on the rise throughout Europe, one can say that the English somewhat continued to uphold their uniqueness in 1689. In the more traditional account the Glorious Revolution, the English people, led by their two houses of Parliament, changed the English polity in the slightest of ways in 1688-89.<sup>94</sup> At least, it is evident that the Glorious Revolution enabled the English to celebrate their liberty throughout the eighteenth century. However, approaching the political climate of the 1690s, it is important to recognize that James reign had shown that an ambitious king *was*, and potentially could be detrimental in the English system of politics.

The Early Modern period was an era of state building. War and professional armies was an important factor of this. It passed hardly a year between 1650-1800 without a conflict which involved one or more European powers.<sup>95</sup> War was another factor which contributed to a more unstable political climate in 1690s England. The Nine Years War, or the 'War of the Grand Alliance', was larger than any previous English military commitment. William had invaded England intending to bring it into his European Alliance against France.<sup>96</sup> The English participation was therefore deeply connected the Glorious Revolution. But halting Louis XIV's expansive policy was not a cheap affair. The military expenditure was almost 5.5

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<sup>90</sup> Pincus, 2009: 475. The extent of these violent actions, and if Glorious Revolution legitimately can be designated as Modern revolution, is debated by historians. Pincus, argues that 1688-89 was the first modern Revolution. See p 4-5.

<sup>91</sup> Goldie, 2006: 54.

<sup>92</sup> Harris, 2006: 494.

<sup>93</sup> Israel, 2006: 8.

<sup>94</sup> Pincus, 2009: 4.

<sup>95</sup> Colin Jones and Mark Knights, 2009: 302

<sup>96</sup> Harris, 2006: 491.

million pound's – about 74 per cent of the annual state budget. The army was also almost double of what it had been under James II.<sup>97</sup> To meet with some of the costs, a new system of public credit was set up, involving the floating of long-term, funded loans. This resulted in the origin of the National Debt in 1692-3, and the creation of the Bank of England. It was rather the Financial Revolution of the 1690s, and not the Declaration of Rights, that secured regular meetings of parliament after the Revolution.<sup>98</sup> In 1694 for example, William was in need of money when the war was at its second serious crisis. This made him agree to the 'Triennial Act'. This secured that the parliament must meet every three years, and that no parliament should last more than three years.<sup>99</sup>

The Revolution from 1688 also changed the religious polity. Before the Early Enlightenment, emerging slowly from the latter part of the seventeenth century, western civilization was based on a largely shared core of faith, tradition and authority. More or less all debates, which penetrated the public sphere, revolved around 'confessional' – that is, Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed (Calvinist) or Anglican issues. During the early Enlightenment, however, a general process of secularization and rationalization set in.<sup>100</sup> Pocock takes the essence of this process to be the 'polemic against enthusiasm'.<sup>101</sup> The established Church started to lose its monopoly on life and thought. And it is important to note that the religious changes and impacts in 1688, was connected to this. As such, it was not only the *Toleration Act* of 1689 which was a blow to the Church. The spread of Arian, deist, and 'atheist' heresies by means of a freer press, and the establishment of a rival, Presbyterian church in Scotland, to mention some, all served to provoke a militant English High Church movement. This movement aimed at recapturing its lost authority.<sup>102</sup> Not surprisingly in the early Enlightenment dynamic, post- Revolution sensibility were in some circles, deeply anticlerical.<sup>103</sup>

England then, was not stable on the political scene after 1688 and into the 1690s. The fact that England was a post-revolutionary regime, ought alone to make us aware of this. Unlike the first English Revolution, the 'Glorious Revolution' created a fundamentally new

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<sup>97</sup> Pincus, 2011: 33.

<sup>98</sup> Harris, 2006: 491- 492.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid, 492-493.

<sup>100</sup> Jonathan I. Israel ,*Radical Enlightenment. Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750* (Oxford, 2001). 3-5.

<sup>101</sup> Goldie, *Priestcraft and the birth of Whiggism* in Nicholas Phillipson and Quentin Skinner (eds) *Ideas in context. 'Political discourse in early modern Britain*, (Cambridge, 1993) 211.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 51.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, 54.

type of parliamentary monarchy. This transformed both the role of monarchy and Parliament in Britain as well as the uniformity in the Anglican Church.<sup>104</sup> English monarchy became limited, bureaucratic and parliamentary.<sup>105</sup> In addition, the Nine Years was upon the English, coupled with a growing fiscal military state. And lastly, the early Enlightenment brought the new question on the scene along with a High-Church movement.

## **2.2 Denmark-Norway and Sweden: the Scandinavian turn to absolutism.**

The latter part of the seventeenth century was also period with dramatic transformation in Denmark-Norway and Sweden. For instance, in the interval from 1657-1660, both countries was at war with each other (called `Karl Gustav Krigene´). In Denmark-Norway, this war would be the trigger for the downfall of the old regime. Through a coup during a few days time, Denmark-Norway turned from an elective kingdom to a hereditary rule. The king was honored in a ceremony in Copenhagen on 18 October 1660. This happened only five days after the estates, represented by `Riksrådet´ gave away the right to elect a king. In these events, in which Frederick III threatened to use military power to silence the opposition, the estates `offered´ Frederick hereditary right to the crown for himself and his successors. The new regime introduced itself to subjects when the king on the 10 of January sent a declaration to sign, named `suverenitetsakten´, or `enevoldsarveregeringsakten´. This text, which also was a law, fabricated the events by saying that the people without pressure, was part of introducing the absolutist regime by signing the declaration.<sup>106</sup> Yet, the process did not happen simultaneously in all dominions. The Norwegian declaration came to life in august 1661, and in Island and Faroe Islands in 1662.

The result of the events in Copenhagen in 1660, however, was a notorious absolutist regime. It became more or less unparalleled in Europe. Unlike France for instance, Denmark-Norway did not have any `sleeping´ parliaments which could figure as checks on royal power. French absolutism developed within a social order that limited royal authority in practice as well a principle.<sup>107</sup> By contrast, the king was truly unlimited in Denmark, at least in theory.

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<sup>104</sup> Israel, 2006: 8.

<sup>105</sup> Harris, 2006: 494.

<sup>106</sup> Rian, 2014: 107.

<sup>107</sup> Melton, 2001: 45.

The epitome of this was *Kongeloven* from 1665. This absolutist constitution, concluded in paragraph 3, that the king alone possessed the power to create new laws, after his own wishes. The king could, at anytime, amend any law – except *Kongeloven*.<sup>108</sup>

The Swedish state was dramatically transformed after 1680 as well. It turned from an elective to an absolute monarchy. A significant factor for this was an anxiety for a potential loss for its hard won status as a great power.<sup>109</sup> In 1680, Charles XI achieved status of an absolute monarch. The Swedish diets lost the power to limit royal authority. As a result the king was able to restructure the Swedish navy, finances and army. The nobility was surely weakened, and the event, which some interpreted as royal coup, involved a significant transfer of resources from private hands to the public domain.<sup>110</sup>

In order to sum up this birds-eye view then, one can say that Denmark-Norway and Sweden took the opposite route of England in the last part of the seventeenth-century. Approaches to political authority therefore took on different characters, and would continue to be far apart.

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<sup>108</sup> Rian, 2014: 113.

<sup>109</sup> Pincus, 2009: 35.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, 35.





### **3 Robert Molesworth's *Account of Denmark, as it was in the year 1692.***

This chapter will discuss Molesworth's *Account of Denmark*; its discourse of history, and the political languages he drew on. The first part describes his background and some ideas shared by him and other so-called Old-Whigs. This will again be linked to the analysis of Molesworth's historical discourse. In addition, his historical narrative will be contextualized in the standing army controversy in the 1690s. This controversy was fundamental in understanding the illocutionary force Molesworth was writing with (that is, what he was trying to do; prevent, bring about and so on).

#### **3.1 Molesworth and 'The Old Whig's'.**

Molesworth was a leading figure among the Old Whigs. This political group rose to prominence in the 1690s. For example, the very influential Anthony Ashley Cooper, a philosopher better known as the third earl of Shaftesbury, declared himself as a disciple of him.<sup>111</sup> The movement started as a critical faction opposed to executive power. They contended that the Parliament, as the embodiment of the country, ought to stand supreme over the Court in legislature.<sup>112</sup> Executive power was always liable to become corrupt. It posed a threat to the liberties of the people. As a result, they believed in a separation of power, and were proponents of 'annual parliaments' which would secure a form of rotation.<sup>113</sup> The movement continued to flourish in diverse forms throughout the eighteenth century. Historians and contemporaries have therefore labeled this group with several names; Commonwealthmen, Old Whigs, True Whig, republican, civic humanist, neo-Harringtonian and 'the Country Platform'.<sup>114</sup> The name 'Commonwealthmen' was applied by their political adversaries which, allegedly, signified an intention to introduce a new republic after a Cromwellian pattern.<sup>115</sup> Seeing that Molesworth's father fought under Cromwell, such accusations was not entirely unjustified. However, because of these associations, they were

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>112</sup> Goldie, 2006: 65.

<sup>113</sup> Robbins, 1959: 8-9.

<sup>114</sup> Goldie, 2006: 65.

<sup>115</sup> Holt, 1968: 5.

often associated with anarchy, confusion, sedition and leveling by the more conservative. The Old Whigs did not agree to this of course. To them, the ideas they stood for represented liberty and order, strict impartial justice, equal laws, a liberal education and a tolerant religion.<sup>116</sup> Although their political sentiments were broadly Whig, the Commonwealthmen, starting as the Old Whigs in the 1690s, constituted a small minority. Their achievements on the political scene were limited in character.<sup>117</sup>

In order to understand the minor achievements, one need take their more radical intellectual trajectories into account. The Old Whigs were intellectually akin to notable English-republican theorists such as James Harrington, Algernon Sidney and John Milton.<sup>118</sup> Algernon Sidney, executed for treason in 1683, was a widely influential political writer. According to him, a monarchy was a private interest government, bent on the subordination of the governed to their parasitic governors.<sup>119</sup> This view was also evident in the works of John Milton. He wrote many anti-monarchical tracts, and in *Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth* of 1660, Milton treated the impending restoration of the English monarchy as a return to servitude.<sup>120</sup> As we shall see later, Molesworth's notion of servitude, or slavery, was key in his *Account*. Nonetheless, these trajectories indicate that the Old Whigs carried some political sentiments which could come across as radical after 1688.

Yet, the Old Whig's did generally accept a king as long as he was restricted by a strong parliament. This highlight that they shared some views with their contemporaries as well. Like others from that era, they admired the English Constitution.<sup>121</sup> 'Public liberty' had to Molesworth just been formally secured in the Bill of Rights in 1689.<sup>122</sup> Besides; along with all Whigs until the French Revolution, they maintained that a tyrant, at least *in theory*, legitimately could be resisted. This is not to say that their canon, consisting of works of Harrington, Nedham and Milton in Cromwell's time; of Sidney, Neville and Locke, active during the controversies of Charles II, carried revolutionary potential. But somewhat tempered by Glorious Revolution – few of the even greatest admirers of Sidney and Milton, actually promoted reform through violent means.<sup>123</sup>

If not violent in kind, however, some views championed by the Old Whigs were

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<sup>116</sup> Robbins, 1959: 127.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>118</sup> I'm indebted to Holt's theses for clarifying this point. See p 5.

<sup>119</sup> Jonathan Scott, *Algernon Sidney and the Restoration Crisis 1677-1683*, (Cambridge, 1991) 105, 111.

<sup>120</sup> Skinner, 2008: 215.

<sup>121</sup> Robbins, 1959: 8.

<sup>122</sup> Horstbøll, 2007: 178-180.

<sup>123</sup> Robbins, 1959: 4-5, 8.

unique. First of all, they extended the application of rights. These were rights which most contemporaries did not adhere to. For example, a key neo-roman principle they put forward was that an Englishman was entitled to be ruled by laws to which he himself had consented, wherever he was, at home or abroad.<sup>124</sup> What is more is that they were willing to recognize political rights to all those who, through the acquisition of property, should be qualified as citizens.<sup>125</sup> As the 'Country Platform' indicates, these men were basically a land-based, parliamentary gentry.<sup>126</sup> In addition, most of them wanted to provide education in order to increase religious liberty. This was a key Enlightenment idea, in which the Old Whigs went further than their predecessors such as Milton and Locke.<sup>127</sup>

The Old Whigs were also defenders of older traditions. It was they who adopted a stance of hostility towards the new 'fiscal military' state.<sup>128</sup> The reasons for this were many. For one thing, we ought to remember that the fiscal military state was connected to royal power. Another significant aspect was a genuine hostility towards mercenary armies, royal guards and janissaries. In the spirit of ethic citizenship, they saw a remedy in a citizen militia. This manifested itself in invocations of Spartan models of martial citizenship, and use of Machiavelli's condemnation of mercenary armies in his *Discourses*.<sup>129</sup> To independent country gentlemen such as Molesworth, one can say that there existed a link between land, the bearing of arms, being virtuous and freedom. Regarding private armies, it is perhaps not surprising that they adopted such a stand against it, when they advocated 'annual parliaments' as an antidote to private political power.

As mentioned in the Introduction, the Commonwealthmen could not only be regarded as conservators of the older traditions, but also as spiritual forerunners of later revolutionaries.<sup>130</sup> As Pocock demonstrated, there is something like a consistent train of republican writing, a language of republicanism, inspired by Machiavelli, Sidney and Harrington which informed traditions of the Commonwealthmen in Britain during the first half of the eighteenth century – later migrating to North America. There they made a major contribution to the development of revolutionary opposition to British rule.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid, 8- 9.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>126</sup> Israel, 2006: 243.

<sup>127</sup> Robbins, 1959: 11.

<sup>128</sup> Goldie, 2006: 66.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid, 67.

<sup>130</sup> Robbins, 1959: 5.

<sup>131</sup> Mark Philip, 'Enlightenment, Republicanism and radicalism' in Martin Fitzpatrick, Peter Jones, Christa Knellwolf and Ian McCalman (eds) *The Enlightenment World*, (London and New York, 2004) 460.

### 3.2 The *Account*: The discourse of history and the intervention in the standing army controversy.

It was the *Account of Denmark* from 1693 which signaled the arrival of the Old Whigs on the political scene.<sup>132</sup> Its popularity immediately enlarged the acquaintance with Molesworth, and made John Locke describe him as 'so ingenious and extraordinary a man'.<sup>133</sup> But before discussing Molesworth's historical discourse, it is important to note that the topic he raised was eagerly debated before him. As such, a key question was whether the Englishman's rights and liberties, from ancient past, stemmed from the human source of a king, or community. For example, the question was vigorously examined in the Stuart age by common lawyers, in which these searched historical records by assuming these rights.<sup>134</sup> What is more is that the divergent ideologies concerning this question were seeds which would endure to the Glorious Revolution.<sup>135</sup>

In raising this subject in his *Account*, Molesworth presented political authority as arising in a certain way, and possessing certain characteristics. This is likely to be the case in texts where the concept of authority is under question.<sup>136</sup> To begin with, Molesworth established the all-encompassing historical narrative in his Preface by saying that slavery had crept upon Europe the last 200 years. Consequently, both Protestant as well as Popish countries had quite lost 'precious Jewel Liberty'.<sup>137</sup> In a section further down, Molesworth continued;

All Europe was inn a manner a free Country till very lately[...] in the beginning small Territories, or Congregations of People, chose valiant and wise Men to be their Captains or Judges[...] Kings and Princes, which at first, and for a long time were every where Elective.<sup>138</sup>

Molesworth contended that most European kingdoms originated by a contract.<sup>139</sup> This ancient 'Gothic' form of government was also the same in the North.<sup>140</sup> In order to understand this

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid, 5. See also Holt, 1968: 5.

<sup>133</sup> Robbins, 1959: 93.

<sup>134</sup> Corinne C. Weston 'England: ancient constitution and common law' in J.H. Burns, Mark Goldie (eds) *The Cambridge History of Political Thought 1450-1700* (Cambridge, 1995) 374.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid, 375.

<sup>136</sup> J.G.A Pocock *Virtue, commerce and history* (Cambridge, 1985) 8.

<sup>137</sup> Due to lack of page numbers in the Preface, the pagenumbers listed based on a regular printed format of that document: Molesworth, 1693:, (Preface) 10.

<sup>138</sup> Molesworth, 1693: (Preface) 13-14.

<sup>139</sup> Martyn P. Thompson "A Note On 'Reason' and 'History' in Late Seventeenth century political thought," *Sage Publications, Inc*, Vol 4 (1976) 492.

<sup>140</sup> Molesworth, 1693: 38.

idea of an 'Original Contract', one can take David Hume's remark into account (he was not only philosopher, but also an historian). Hume saw that there was one party which founded the government on the consent of the people. In doing this, they supposed that there was a kind of an Original Contract; 'by which the subjects have tacitly reserved the power of resisting their sovereign, whenever they find themselves aggrieved by that authority.'<sup>141</sup>

According to Molesworth, ancient rights and liberties came from the community. The subject had therefore the right to resist his sovereign. However, this view implied a more perfect natural state in which the power of kings was severely circumscribed. For example, Molesworth argued that in Denmark, the elective body made the King answer for the body or the 'people'. And in more severe instances, the elective bodies frequently banished or destroyed a king if he ruled tyrannically.<sup>142</sup> Furthermore, there was commonplace for the estates to meet often. All matters relating to government were enacted there – such as laws, affairs belonging to peace and war, disposal of great offices etc. For Molesworth and the Old Whigs, this ancient government was a good government. So, when the Old Whigs saw that many countries had lost their Gothic balance and become monarchical despotisms after the Renaissance,<sup>143</sup> it was alarming. Not only did they hope to enlarge the Gothic system,<sup>144</sup> but they also defended some of its core principles.

Molesworth provided two narratives in his historical discourse. Although closely correlated, the one was broader, encompassing Europe, and more 'ancient'. The other was more detailed, encompassing Denmark, and newer in the sense that it happened thirty two years ago. Molesworth closely described this coup in chapter 7; *The Manner how the Kingdom of Denmark became Hereditary and Absolute*.

On the one hand, the chapter reflected that Molesworth had a great deal of knowledge about Denmark. On the other, and even though the narrative seems quite impartial, the employed rhetoric in some sections displays a more polemical side. For example, the fact that Molesworth's designated the events as 'the Plot against the Publick Liberty', and described the events as making a 'formal Surrender of their Liberty',<sup>145</sup> makes the reader aware that he

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<sup>141</sup> David Hume, *On the Original Contract*, in David Wootton (ed) 'Modern Political Thought: Readings from Machiavelli to Nietzsche (Indianapolis, 1996) 387.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid, 40.

<sup>143</sup> Goldie, 2006: 70.

<sup>144</sup> Robbins, 1959: 5.

<sup>145</sup> Molesworth, 1693: 56-7, 64.

was not just writing something, but also doing something.

Until 1660, the Danish king had ruled and shared his power with 'Riksrådet'. The latter was an assembly of representatives of the nobility. After the wars with Sweden, however, the economical crises rose to a point in which the king was forced to take action.<sup>146</sup> As a result, Frederick III summoned the three estates consisting of Nobility, Commonality and the Clergy. In the events of this, Molesworth told that the Nobility was steadfast in maintaining their ancient prerogative of paying nothing in the form of taxes. When almost all the remaining riches were in their hands, they seemed rather to make use of the occasion not only to vindicate their prerogative, but also to extent their privileges.<sup>147</sup>

Besides this, the aspiring clergy sought a further advantage of the events. The reason was that they formerly were being kept down by the nobility. In a possible change of government, the clergy would have no other superior than the king. In revealing passage, Molesworth pointed out the mutual benefits of this; the king having the force (military) by his command, and the other, having religion in their possession.<sup>148</sup> Molesworth would further amplify this in the *Conclusion*. There he said that that the army and priests were two 'sure' cards; a prince having one of them depending on him could hardly fail. But a prince who had both depending on him, needed nothing to fear from his own subjects.<sup>149</sup>

According to Molesworth, the nobility did not understand the danger which crept upon them in 1660. The 'plot' was deeper than they expected since the prime Minister and members of their own body were engaged in it.<sup>150</sup> The events unfolded, and the commons became armed. Not only this, but the nobility had the army and clergy against them too.<sup>151</sup> In this stalemate, the possibility of losing their lives, took away all thoughts of their liberty.<sup>152</sup> Furthermore, the king himself, whose role had been relatively minor up to this point, became determined to pursue the opportunity to the outmost. He did not tolerate the gates to be opened, and therefore ordered that the nobility should stay in the city. In the face of the people and the army, the nobility was forced to divest themselves by oath of all rights

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<sup>146</sup> Ståle Dyrvik, *Norsk historie 1536-1814*. (Oslo, 2011) 60,62.

<sup>147</sup> Molesworth, 1693: 45-46.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid*, 50.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid*, 239.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid*, 53.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid*, 56.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid*, 63-64.

formerly enjoyed.<sup>153</sup> As Molesworth said, the ‘formal surrender of their liberties’, and the installment of the absolutist regime, became a reality in few days of drama.

As Quentin Skinner argues, even the most abstract works of political thought are a part of the battle on the ground.<sup>154</sup> We need to recognize that is, what kind of an intervention the text does. As such, historians of political thought ought to recognize and grasp, not merely what the author was saying, but also what he/she was doing in saying it.<sup>155</sup> To gain uptake on this, requires an analysis of illocutionary intentions.<sup>156</sup> Continuing this, Molesworth’s 1660 narrative was an intervention in the in the standing army controversy of the 1690s. Scholars as Robbins and Goldie, not to mention Holt’s thesis, has highlighted this context.<sup>157</sup> Interestingly, the emphasis in the standing army discussions of the 1690s was upon the danger of internal royal power. It was not upon protections from external forces.<sup>158</sup> According to Molesworth as well, it was not external forces which had installed the absolutist regime. The events in 1660 were rather caused by an unbalanced constitution, and the military power of the Danish king.<sup>159</sup>

At home, William III’s expensive warfare against France was taking its toll. The Nine Years War (1688-97) was larger than any previous military commitment. By example, the English army was almost double of what it had been under James II,<sup>160</sup> and the budgets were averagely four times bigger than under Charles II.<sup>161</sup> If we recall Steve Pincus analysis of the *Account*, he treated it as a result of the Whig frustration with ‘Tory blue-water foreign policy’, in which Molesworth supported the war against France, and advocated a full-scale continental commitment.<sup>162</sup> To be sure, the radical Whig’s – whose policy it was to limit the powers of the Crown – were equally committed to the war as the King was.<sup>163</sup> But although Molesworth was sympathetic to William’s cause against France, in which he perceived Louis XIV’s absolutist regime as a threat, it does not exclude an approach in which he was skeptical

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid, 64-65.

<sup>154</sup> Skinner, 2008: xv.

<sup>155</sup> Skinner, 2002: 82.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid, 100.

<sup>157</sup> Holt treats Molesowrth’s pamphlet as an intervention in standing army controversy, and as being a critique of William’s military policy. See Holt p, 92, 95. Goldie, 2006: 66-67, 70. Robbins, 1959: 89, 104.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid, 101, 105.

<sup>159</sup> Robbins, 1959: 101.

<sup>160</sup> Pincus, 2011: 33.

<sup>161</sup> Holt, 1968: 93.

<sup>162</sup> Pincus, 2011: 31, 47.

<sup>163</sup> Sir George Clark, *The Later Stuarts 1660-1714*, (Oxford, 1955) 149.



towards the growing fiscal- military state. A good example of the hostility towards standing armies was after the Peace of Ryswick in 1697. Then the Old Whigs became highly provoked by the Court's proposition to maintain a standing army – allegedly to withstand the continuing threats posed by France and the Jacobites.<sup>164</sup>

Continuing this, Molesworth feared that William possibly could use his army for domestic purposes.<sup>165</sup> It is no coincidence that the *Account* was quoted in 1718 in the Commons in order to highlight the dangers of a standing army.<sup>166</sup> Molesworth would also later in his Preface to his translation of *Franco Gallia*, recur to the relation between mercenary troops and absolutism.<sup>167</sup> Regarding the political situation in the early 1690s, one needs to recognize that the Nine Years war also set limits to parliamentary power. The War afforded a justification for the fact that William was his own prime minister, and kept military and foreign affairs tightly under his own control.<sup>168</sup> William did in fact view the position of the Crown much as Charles II had viewed it. To him, both republics and monarchies had their advantages. Yet, there was no government so bad as a monarchy without the necessary powers.<sup>169</sup> In short, William's pursuit for military power was a threat, and Molesworth's narrative of the coup in Denmark was linked to this.

A standing army did not only lead to heavier tax burdens, but it also constituted a serious threat towards the citizens' natural rights.<sup>170</sup> It was a dangerous policy – even though he had somewhat ironically, contributed to this policy by securing military aid in Denmark. The case was that, if people lacked awareness of liberty, and did not care to defend it, the Gothic system in England could be overthrown in days. What Molesworth was doing in writing then, was to warn his readers by pointing to Denmark. If due precautions were not taken, the overthrow of the Gothic parliamentary system, could be a premonitory of a like fate in England.<sup>171</sup> By reading about the coup, the reader would hopefully be more alert back home. This was also why Molesworth stressed the benefit of traveling. By witnessing the dreadful conditions outside, the traveler would be more apt to enjoy the liberty back home.

In order to appreciate Molesworth's move, we need to take contemporary ideals of history into account. In the seventeenth and eighteenth century, history had a similar function

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<sup>164</sup> Goldie, 2006: 66-67.

<sup>165</sup> Holt, 1968: 95.

<sup>166</sup> Robbins, 1959: 104.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid, 104.

<sup>168</sup> Clark, 1955: 151.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid, 149.

<sup>170</sup> Holt, 1968: 92.

<sup>171</sup> Robbins, 1959: 89.

as moral philosophy. Both aimed at improving civil society, and history could do this by proving examples. Like other contemporaries who used history then<sup>172</sup>, Molesworth acted as a prudent advisor. The point for Molesworth was that history had shown that a standing army was a dangerous policy.

### 3.3 The discourse of history and ‘languages’.

It is possible to trace some more common and existing languages in Molesworth’s historical discourse. One was Gothic in character, in which the idyll of ‘Ancient Constitution’ was a frequently employed idiom.<sup>173</sup> Molesworth drew on this as he argued that the ancient inhabitants of Goths and Vandals had restored or introduced the Ancient form of Government in Europe.<sup>174</sup> Molesworth was also, as a gentleman of the seventeenth century, no less well read in Ancient history and the languages of Rome.<sup>175</sup> By example, Sallust, Livy and Machiavelli were all literary heroes for those who favored neo-roman liberty.<sup>176</sup>

Molesworth used knowledge of Rome to mount an attack on education. The point was that contemporary education did not make students useful to society. To underline this, Molesworth invoked the Greeks and Romans. Contrary to modern education, they instituted their academies for this purpose. This again made citizens useful and vigorous.<sup>177</sup> One can perhaps say that there glimmers a trace of Pocock’s notion of a ‘republican train of writing’ here. For Molesworth and the Old Whig’s, the ethics of citizenship was an important matter.<sup>178</sup> Like the later humanists of the Italian Renaissance, the Old Whig’s too was sympathetic to equate the possession of *virtue* with a broad sense of public commitment.<sup>179</sup>

Moreover, history was a key repertoire for Molesworth. It becomes evident in reading the historical-minded passages that, the employment of terms like *Virtué*, ‘vice’, ‘tyranny’, discussions of general threats to liberty, the condemnation of tyrants in Rome, references and

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<sup>172</sup> For interesting remarks on the use of history in the early modern period, see Champion, *Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken*, (Cambridge, 2002) 34,39.

<sup>173</sup> Goldie, 2006: 70.

<sup>174</sup> Molesworth, 1693: 38-39.

<sup>175</sup> I draw here on points made by Mark Goldie. See, 2006:,70.

<sup>176</sup> Skinner, 1998 a: 47.

<sup>177</sup> Molesworth, (Preface) 11.

<sup>178</sup> Goldie, 2006: 67.

<sup>179</sup> This was an important aspect for the later humanists. Quentin Skinner, *The Foundation of Modern Political Thought. Volume 1: The Renaissance* (Cambridge, 1998) b: 175.

veneration of the institutions of Athenians and Spartans,<sup>180</sup> ( idioms and topics used in political languages in the Renaissance) also were intermixed with a Gothic outlook and language. This substantiate that a too rigid distinction drawn by modern scholars on different languages, such as `civic humanist´ and `ancient constitutional traditions´, do not do justice to the syncretism found in Post-Revolution political writing.<sup>181</sup> Thus, as there was a close textual link between Roman and Gothic idioms in Tacitus´ *Germania*,<sup>182</sup> the same can be said about some passages in the *Account*.

Nonetheless, it is worth to point out that Molesworth and the Old Whigs also differed from previous republican writers. The parallels ought not to be taken too far. A significant example of this is their fundamental different approach to history. Alternatively, one can approach this as a `natural state´. The notion of a state of nature, and the claim that this condition was one of pure freedom, was belief wholly foreign to the Roman and Renaissance texts.<sup>183</sup> Naturally, this had implications for the conceptualization of politics, and in turn, the political languages. A key example of difference is when Machiavelli in his *Discourses*, described the birth of the Roman Republic. After the king was expelled, the Republic constituted only of senate and consuls. But, Rome got its fortune at second gift, and that was the establishment of the tribunes. This establishment made Rome perfect according to Machiavelli; `... But remained mixed, made a Republic *perfect*, to which perfection came to be disunion of the Plebs and the Senate´.<sup>184</sup> For Machiavelli, perfect freedom was not a natural state. Perfection came along with the establishment of the tribunes and the birth of the Roman Republic.

Amongst several seventeenth-century writers, however, the notion of a state of nature, and that such a state was of perfect freedom, gave rise to the contention that these primitive liberties must be recognized as a God-Given birthright.<sup>185</sup> This was perhaps also the reason why the Old Whigs wanted to extent the Rights of Englishmen to all mankind – consequently denouncing the right of conquest.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Preface, especially p 12. Molesworth uses the word `tyranni´ and `Vertue´. Furthermore, he speaks about good learning and is negative towards the tyrants in Rome.

<sup>181</sup> Goldie, 2006: 49.

<sup>182</sup> I use a point put forward by Goldie 2006: 70.

<sup>183</sup> Skinner, 1998 a: 19.

<sup>184</sup> `Ma rimanendo mista, fece una Republicca perfetta , alle quale perfezione venne per la disunione della Plebe e del Senato´.(My translation) From Niccolò, Machiavelli, *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio*, (Milano, 1824) Volume Primo, 23.

<sup>185</sup> Skinner, 1998 a: 19.

<sup>186</sup> Robbins, 1959: 10.

### 3.4 Summary.

Robert Molesworth was a leading figure among the Old Whigs. Although few of them promoted reforms through violent means, their ideas nonetheless carried revolutionary potential. Their achievements were limited, but their ideas, inspired by Machiavelli, Sidney and Harrington, would later influence country party émigrés to North America. These Commonwealthmen would later form revolutionary opposition to British rule. Furthermore, it was the *Account* which signaled the arrival of the Old Whigs. In it, Molesworth argued that original power was in the hands of the commonality. Such a notion of a perfect natural state was something new among seventeenth century republican writers. But to Molesworth, the overthrow of the admirable Gothic system in 1660 was an alarming example. In this regard, Molesworth used history to warn his readers. Like Denmark prior to 1660, there existed a standing army in England, and the Nine Years was a justification for William to keep the army under his own control. The 1660 narrative was therefore an intervention in the standing army controversy. There was a possibility that William could use his army for domestic purposes. Like his fellow Whig's, Molesworth was highly critical to a standing army, and in general, unlimited power without checks.



## 4 Molesworth's 'neo-roman' conception of liberty.

This chapter will discuss Molesworth's conception of liberty. It will contextualize this with Skinner's seminal studies from 1998 and 2008.

### 4.1 Considering the term 'neo-roman'.

Few words have been employed in so many settings and centuries as the word liberty. This indicates that different societies conceptualize the vocabulary of politics and morals in different ways.<sup>187</sup> Because of this, there is no history of the 'idea' itself to be written – only a history of its various uses and intentions.<sup>188</sup> If we want to grasp how someone sees the world then, we need not the word, but rather what concepts they possess.<sup>189</sup>

I have designated this approach as the 'neo-roman' conception in Molesworth's *Account*. The neo-roman term was originally used in Skinner's survey from 1998; but in 2008, he said that he had lost this part of the argument – thus re-naming it 'republican liberty'.<sup>190</sup> There are two reasons for which I adopt the first usage. Firstly, I think the word republican is too ambiguous. To mention some, seventeenth century Dutch republicanism was more radical than its English counterpart. The Dutch was more anti-monarchical, anti-hierarchical, and more concerned with equality.<sup>191</sup> Holland was moreover, the place where radical ideas in the seventeenth century would be most fully formulated.<sup>192</sup> English republicanism was on the other hand that of a parliamentary gentry; opposition-minded, agrarian and anti-commercial, and emphasizing the duty of the citizen to participate in government.<sup>193</sup> So, although the third earl of Shaftesbury called the Dutch Republic 'that mother nation of liberty',<sup>194</sup> there was no single republican strand of thought. Yet, it is worth recalling here that Jørgen Holt labeled Molesworth as a republican in his thesis. Besides this,

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<sup>187</sup> Skinner, 2002: 175-6.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid, 85.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid, 159.

<sup>190</sup> These two studies are; Skinner, 1998 (a) and Skinner, 2008. For Skinner's views on his re-naming, see 2008: viii.

<sup>191</sup> Israel, 2006: 243.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid, 242.

<sup>194</sup> Hugh Dunthorne, "The Dutch Republic: 'That mother nation of liberty'" in Martin Fitzpatrick, Peter Jones, Christa Knellwolf and Ian McCalman (eds) *The Enlightenment World*, (London and New York, 2004) 87.

Holt argued that Molesworth tried to institute a Commonwealth— thus abolishing status quo from 1688.<sup>195</sup> There are good reasons for challenging his claim – which leads over to the second point. This is that it would be unhistorical to label Molesworth as republican. We should recognize, as Pocock pointed out, that republicanism was more a language than an actual program.<sup>196</sup> It is also important to note that a system of mixed government was preferred by many. Neo-roman theory was not exclusively anti-monarchical, and many saw the relevant contrast as one between limited and unlimited government, rather than between monarchies and republics.<sup>197</sup> Limited government required a mixed government, in which a monarchical element was favored together with an aristocratic senate and a democratic assembly to represent the citizens.<sup>198</sup> On the whole, it would be more fruitful to discuss the neo-roman elements in the *Account*, than to speak of republicanism, or label Molesworth as a republican.

## 4.2 A contesting view: Hobbes' approach to liberty.

As a way to clarify Molesworth's approach to the nature of human liberty, a useful departure can be to introduce a contesting view.<sup>199</sup> This view rose to prominence during the mid seventeenth century, and it was taken up by a number of legally minded royalists after the outbreak of the English Civil War.<sup>200</sup> The most definite formulation of this argument can be found in Thomas Hobbes's (1588-1679) *Leviathan*.<sup>201</sup> Hobbes was to become the most formidable enemy of neo-roman liberty as he intended to grapple with claims on liberty put forward by the radical and parliamentary writers.<sup>202</sup> In *Leviathan* from 1651, he presented for the first time, a new analysis of what it means to be a free man.<sup>203</sup> Here Hobbes maintained that, to be free as a member of civil association, it is simply enough to be unimpeded from exercising your capacities in pursuit of your desired ends. This implied,

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<sup>195</sup> Holt, 1968: 37.

<sup>196</sup> Champion, 1992: 171.

<sup>197</sup> Mark Philip, 2004: 460.

<sup>198</sup> Skinner, 1998 a: 54.

<sup>199</sup> For different early modern approaches on liberty, see also M.M Goldsmith 'Liberty, Virtue, and the Rule of Law, 1689 -1770), in David Wotton, (ed) : *Republicanism, Liberty, and Commercial Society 1649-1776*, (Stanford ,California, 1994) 195.

<sup>200</sup> Skinner, 1998 a: 5-6.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid*, 6.

<sup>202</sup> Skinner, 2008: xiii-xiv.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid*, xiii.

according to Hobbes, that even the coercive force of law leaves your liberty unimpaired. In short, you `give up` your will to disobey, and acquire a will to obey the laws.<sup>204</sup> In this regard, it is for instance, not so important if we act out of fear or joy – since the act itself, on a basic level, is an expression of our will. When you are systematically being forced to do something then, you nonetheless acquire a will to obey. Interestingly, this had implications for Hobbes approach to slavery. In short, chains became more than a figure of speech. For example, Hobbes saw that, if slaves were allowed freedom of movement, then they ought no longer to be classified as slaves – but rather as servants.<sup>205</sup>

When Hobbes approached sovereignty, it is well known that his overall topos was a chaotic natural state. People enjoyed liberty in this state. But it was also a condition in which anyone rightly could kill or despoil anyone else.<sup>206</sup> If peace is our aim Hobbes argued, then we have no other option than to install an absolute form of sovereignty.<sup>207</sup> In Denmark, this particular line of argument would later be outlined by Ludvig Holberg (1684-1754). He followed Hobbes in which he saw that men were more prone to do evil than animals. It was therefore necessary to deter freedom.<sup>208</sup> However, the interesting point Hobbes made on sovereignty was that, since we are obliged to live in absolute subjection to sovereign power (regardless of form of government), the idea of living as a free man under government is just nothing better than a contradiction in terms.<sup>209</sup> One can say that Hobbes used his construct of the state to warn about the dangers of liberty, and to diminish its prestige.<sup>210</sup>

As soon as Hobbes theory was put forward by other royalists during the English Revolution, a number of supporters of the parliamentary cause responded by asserting another, and a more classical, understanding of liberty. As mentioned before, it was this response which produced the neo-roman theory in Early Modern thought.<sup>211</sup> Furthermore, this conception of liberty was revived to attack the alleged despotism in the Stuart age, by men

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<sup>204</sup> Skinner, 1998 a: 8.

<sup>205</sup> Skinner, 2008: 43.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid, 99.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid, 51.

<sup>208</sup> Rolf Nøtvik Jakobsen, `Holberg etter Pufendorf, Gunnerus etter Darjes, Schlegel før 1814: Om autoritetar og fridom i Dansk-Norsk Natur-og folkerett på 1700 tallet` in (Ola Mestad ed) *Frihetens Forskole. Professor Schlegel og eidsvollsmennenes læretid i København* (Oslo, 2013) 132.

<sup>209</sup> Skinner 2008: 75.

<sup>210</sup> Israel, 2006: 233.

<sup>211</sup> Skinner, 1998 a: 11.



such as Henry Neville and Algernon Sidney. It was afterwards, during the course of the seventeenth century, restated by other Commonwealthmen.<sup>212</sup>

### 4.3 The neo-roman elements in the *Account of Denmark*.

To begin with, the neo-roman writers concerned themselves almost exclusively with the relationship between the freedom of the subjects and the powers of the state, in discussing the meaning of liberty. In this, the neo-roman analysis focused not on the freedom of individuals, but rather on what James Harrington labeled 'the liberty of a commonwealth'. This marked the neo-roman adherents out as protagonists of a particular ideology.<sup>213</sup> The particular contention was that it only was possible to be free in a 'free state'.<sup>214</sup> A free state was a community in which its actions were determined by the will of the members as a whole.<sup>215</sup> It was therefore necessary that the mass of the people were represented by a national assembly. Furthermore, another key neo-roman view dealt with what it meant to suffer loss of liberty. Being one of the clearest announcements of their classical allegiances, the neo-roman adherents argued that loss of liberty for an individual is simply, to be made a slave.<sup>216</sup> They did not agree with Hobbes in other words, when he stated that every form of government was subjection in which you lost the liberty formerly 'enjoyed'. According to the neo-roman thesis, you are rather free, and can only be free, in a specific form of government.

Personal liberty was then equated with a certain form of government. This is why Molesworth opened chapter VIII; *The Condition, Customs, and Temper of the People*, by saying that all these do 'necessarily' depend upon, and are influenced by the nature and change of government.<sup>217</sup> In addition, Molesworth mentioned indirectly, that England was a free state. To him, the constitution of the English government was too perfect already to receive any improvements.<sup>218</sup> Since there existed three institutional bodies in England, in which two of them formed a check against the king,<sup>219</sup> the English people enjoyed liberty. Of

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<sup>212</sup> Ibid, 12-13.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid, 17, 23.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid, 60.

<sup>215</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid, 36-7.

<sup>217</sup> Molesworth, 1693: 68.

<sup>218</sup> Molesworth, (Preface), 6.

<sup>219</sup> Robbins, 1959: 102.

course, as a politician of the late seventeenth century, Molesworth was not free to say whatever he wanted. But he was, on the whole, an admirer of the old English liberties.<sup>220</sup> As a result, he was not sympathetic to the most forthright protagonists of the neo-roman thought. These were more `radical´ as they recurred to the argument originally put forward by Livy; that no community living under a king has any title to be regarded as a free state.<sup>221</sup>

The neo-roman view concerning a free state, and freedom as opposed to slavery, is crucial in analyzing the *Account of Denmark*. First of all, it is the case for which Molesworth, more than one time, treated the coup in 1660 as a sudden change. As he said, `it being no more than thirty two years since it happened.<sup>222</sup> When;

...at one instant the whole Face of Affairs was changed: So that the Kings have ever since been, and at present are, Absolute and Arbitrary; not the least remnant of Liberty remaining to the Subject.<sup>223</sup>

First, Molesworth treated the events as a definite change from freedom to slavery. When the nobility divested themselves of the privileges by oath, thus abolishing Riksrådet, Denmark-Norway ceased to be a free state. Therefore, no subject enjoyed freedom either. Another crucial point was that Molesworth ascribed all the evils in Denmark after 1660 as being the constant effects of arbitrary rule.<sup>224</sup> By saying this, and that there was `not the least remnant of liberty remaining´ post 1660, Molesworth put forward another nerve of neo-roman theory. This was that freedom within a civil association was subverted by just the presence of arbitrary power.<sup>225</sup>

Although his descriptions often were exaggerated, it is true that the kingdom of Denmark was notorious for its absolutism. In the 1680s for instance, the absolutist state apparatus completed an ample legislative work. The result was Christian V *Danske Lov* from 1683, and Christian V's *Norske Lov* from 1687. In the part about `majestetsforbrytelser´, or *crimine majestatis*, criticism of the king or the queen was equated as a murder attempt on members of the royal family. Thus, criticism was to be punished in the same manner as a murder attempt. Not only was criticism more severe than blasphemy, but heirs of the convicted would be affected indirectly by confiscation, and possibly lose their rank. `Majestetsforbrytelser´ was something new in Danish and Norwegian law, and must

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<sup>220</sup> Ibid, 98.

<sup>221</sup> Skinner, 1998 a: 55.

<sup>222</sup> Molesworth, 1693: 242.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid, 42-43.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid, 43.

<sup>225</sup> Skinner, 2008: ix.

consequently be understood from regime from 1660.<sup>226</sup> Besides this, and as mentioned before, the epitome of Danish absolutism (perhaps Scandinavian) was *Kongeloven* from 1665. It was unique in the sense that it expressively attributed unlimited power to the king. So, Molesworth was truly faced with an unlimited king in Denmark. And when he argued that the subjects constantly found themselves within the power of someone else, his analysis was in theory, not misguided at all.

In order to underline this point, Molesworth stated in his chapter of the Revenue (IX), that some taxes were arbitrary, and in some cases fixed. However, the distinction did not mean that the power of the king were limited. Rather, it was only that king had to chosen follow some rules and measures established by himself. In all the other cases, he just varied.<sup>227</sup> The taxing was especially hard due to the maintenance of large standing army. The neo-roman sentiment was here also evident as Molesworth said that their 'Puerses are drain'd in order to their slavery'.<sup>228</sup>

Apart from this, Molesworth also described the greatest hardship of the peasants to be within arbitrary range. The point may seem trivial at first, but it is of importance. Among all the hardships, the greatest was the obligation to furnish the king, royal family, and all their attendants with horses, furniture, travelling wagons whenever the king made any progress.<sup>229</sup> Not only this, but the peasants were also obliged to give this service whenever the king gave his warrant to any person or officer.<sup>230</sup> 'Under a Government so Arbitrary as this is',<sup>231</sup> this was one of many aspects which corrupted liberty. This was the case for which he so frequently employed the word 'slavery' to describe the situation in Denmark. As with other neo-roman protagonist, the essence of what it meant to be a slave, was to be in *potaestate* – within the power of someone else.<sup>232</sup> Accordingly, the Danish case after 1660 was to Molesworth, a state of 'servitude'.<sup>233</sup>

The neo-roman element of being within the arbitrary power of someone else, in turn equated as slavery, seems to me to be the crux of Molesworth's political argument on

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<sup>226</sup> Rian, 2014: 122.

<sup>227</sup> Molesworth, 1693: 92.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid, 116.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid, 82.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid, 83.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid, 144-145.

<sup>232</sup> Skinner, 1998 a: 41.

<sup>233</sup> 'The danes do now really love Servitude'. Molesworth, 1693: 244.

liberty.<sup>234</sup> This view paralleled his historical narrative in which the powers of the king, from ancient time, were severely circumscribed. Europe started as free states – leaving you and your natural liberty unimpaired. Although Molesworth admittedly, in a Whiggish tradition, acknowledged that the conditions after 1660 were better away from court,<sup>235</sup> an arbitrary kingdom was by nature, incompatible with being a ‘free state’. It did not really matter if the Danes were personally affected by the regime. The crucial point was that they were within arbitrary range – degrading them to a position of slavery.

Such an analysis of the *Account* seems to have been overlooked in previous studies. It has either not been emphasized, or it has touched upon without being sufficiently underlined. By treating this as the core of his argument, it is perhaps no surprise, that the lack of discussion on this has surprised the author of this thesis. For example, Hugh Mayo has in his dissertation, ‘Robert Molesworth’s Account of Denmark. Its roots and impacts’ (2000), focused on Molesworth’s defense of political economic principles, which seemingly were central to the Whig agenda and the foundation of the Bank of England. Steve Pincus seems not to have concerned himself with what Knud J.V Jespersen rightfully pointed out; that the *Account* basically was a deeply moral piece of political writing.<sup>236</sup> As mentioned before, Pincus treats the tract as part of being a desperate attempt by Whigs to regain the initiative in the making of English foreign policy.<sup>237</sup>

Although the two Danish scholars Knud J.V Jespersen and Sebastian Olden-Jørgensen have touched upon the aspect of the innate relationship between servitude and arbitrary rule, they have neither sufficiently managed to underline the importance of this. For instance, Olden-Jørgensen is on the right track when he says that the central nexus in Molesworth’s argument was ‘the connection between absolutism and (lack) of freedom.’<sup>238</sup> However, as this thesis seeks to stress, there was not ‘lack’ of freedom – it was simply no freedom. It was only possible to enjoy personal freedom in ‘free’ state.

While it is true to say that this neo-roman aspect of Molesworth’s *Account* was a moral piece of writing, and that it was his key argument, it is valuable to note that this also was ‘part of the battle ground’. Thus, his more moral piece of writing cannot be extracted

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<sup>234</sup> This is also a key contention among other republican (neo-roman) theorists according to Skinner. See, 2008: 211.

<sup>235</sup> Molesworth, 1693: 29.

<sup>236</sup> Knud J.V Jespersen: ‘Absolute Monarchy in Denmark: Change and Continuity’ *Scandinavian Journal of history*, vol 12 (1987), 307.

<sup>237</sup> Pincus, 2011: 31.

<sup>238</sup> Olden-Jørgensen 2005: 101.

from his intention. This thesis have previously argued that his `illocutionary force´ was to warn England of a similar fate like Denmark. As such, Molesworth´s moral piece – renouncing personal freedom for the subject being within the arbitrary power – was also part of the undertaking to keep liberty in England. One can say that, what Molesworth was doing in writing, was to appropriate the greatest moral value of freedom, and apply it exclusively to a distinct form of representative government.<sup>239</sup> This distinct government was to be found in England. On the path to appreciating this, however, Molesworth saw it necessary to describe to condition of slavery in the kingdom of Denmark and its dominions.

Continuing this, we should recognize a couple of other neo-roman elements in the *Account*. The first regards servitude, and is also a typical. More specifically, the matter regards the consequence of not living under a free state. As Skinner points out, the insight on which the neo-roman adherents insists is that servitude breeds servility. Owing to servitude, people become abjectly submissive. This meant that, when you live at the mercy of someone else, you will always have the strongest motives for playing safe.<sup>240</sup> Interestingly, Molesworth concluded in the same neo-roman manner;

I verily believe, the *Danes* do now really love servitude; and like the *Cappaadocians* of old, could not make use of Liberty if it were offered them; but throw it away of they had it, and resume their Chains. Possibly they would wish them less weighty, but Chains they could not live without.<sup>241</sup>

In another passage, Molesworth said that the common people not were warlike in their tempers as formerly. They were rather mean spirited.<sup>242</sup> The aspect of playing safe also had other consequences. One was that, basically, no one dared to publicly oppose the government. There were no seditions, mutinies or libels against Danish authority. Instead, all appeared to be lovers of their king.<sup>243</sup> Not only this, but he saw that there were no robbers upon the highway or house breakers. The same was the case in France, according to him. It was one of the few conveniences among all other evils in arbitrary rule.<sup>244</sup>

Another point was the slavishness of slavery. The result of not living under a free state was a deep-rooted lack of originality. Molesworth argued that Denmark formerly had

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<sup>239</sup> This point is taken from Skinner, 1998 a: 59.

<sup>240</sup> Skinner, 2008: 213.

<sup>241</sup> Molesworth, 1693: 244.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid*, 87.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid*, 226.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid*, 219.

produced very learned men.<sup>245</sup> However, the knowledge he made as an envoy made him conclude that, he had never experienced any country in which the minds of the people were more of one caliber and pitch than in Denmark; `every one keeps the ordinary beaten road of sence[...] without deviating to right or left´.<sup>246</sup> As a consequence, Molesworth claimed that, not even so much as a song, or a tune, was made during his three years there.<sup>247</sup> Although one cannot help but smile by the harshness of his tone, the topic he discussed was serious enough. To put it as bluntly as possible, Molesworth contended that arbitrary rule had caused spiritual decay.

Another reason for spiritual decay in Denmark was religion. Molesworth saw a link between spiritual and civil tyranny,<sup>248</sup> and religion contributed to strengthen the spiritual decay. Not only did the clergy manipulate religion for their own benefit, but the crown and clergy mutually sustained each other. This was a maxim which was restated countless times in Whig writing.<sup>249</sup> As such, the religious polemic in the *Account* ought also to be understood in an Early- Enlightenment context. For example, Molesworth was in fact, the patron of the elusive Enlightenment figure John Toland (1670-1722), whose *Christianity not Mysterious* from 1696, showed contemporaries that theological mystery was wrong.<sup>250</sup>

It was more specifically Molesworth´s anticlericalism which gave the *Account* an early- Enlightenment edge. The anticlericalism is interesting because it only was in the latter part of the eighteenth century that governments slowly started to shed of their confessional and religious skins. Historians have called this process `desacralization´.<sup>251</sup> Molesworth was in this sense, an early advocate of desacralization. But up until the latter part of the eighteenth century, however, religion served in general, as the natural ally and buttress of monarchy throughout Europe. An attack on church was therefore more or less to attack the crown.<sup>252</sup>

Still, the Early-Enlightenment element in the *Account* ought not to be taken too far. Molesworth was a politician, not a *philosophe*. His chief concern in writing was liberty, and

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<sup>245</sup> Ibid, 233.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid, 235.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid, 89.

<sup>248</sup> Champion, 1992: 178.

<sup>249</sup> Goldie, 1993: 225.

<sup>250</sup> Champion, 2008: 10, 184.

<sup>251</sup> Darrin M. McMahon, *Enemies of the Enlightenment. The French Counter-Enlightenment and the Making of Modernity*. (Oxford, 2001) 49.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid, 49.

religion was just but one aspect which contributed to undermine it. As he told, it was the doctrine of blind obedience (upon the crown that is), in which religion (is to be found), which was the destruction of liberty.<sup>253</sup> Indeed, other scholars have highlighted the anticlericalism, and the more general hostility towards religion in the tract. But although it is important, the Molesworth's starting point was nonetheless liberty as opposed to absolute government. A significant example of this is when he contrasted protestant and catholic political life. At least in catholic countries, in which the clergy were dependent on the Church of Rome, one could find some resistance, or check, on government. But this was not the case in Protestant countries. Many neo-roman's saw the relevant contrast between limited and unlimited government, which also was of importance for Molesworth. In the *Account*, he argued that a protestant king, by having the clergy by him in matters of conscience, could be as arbitrary as he wanted.<sup>254</sup> This implied that the French under Louis XIV were better off than Danes under Christian V.

#### 4.4 Summary.

It was the assertion of more classical understanding of liberty during the English Civil War, which gave birth to the neo-roman theory in Early Modern thought. The theory was promoted by the parliamentary supporters as a response to Hobbes novel analysis of liberty. What was particular about neo-roman liberty was that it only was possible to enjoy personal freedom in a 'free state'. For Molesworth, the condition of the people 'necessarily' depended upon the nature of the government, and personal liberty was in the same neo-roman fashion, equated with a certain type of government. In line with another key neo-roman contention, Molesworth argued that the Danes simply were degraded to a position of slavery post 1660. The reason was the arbitrary power of the Danish king. Interestingly, it did not matter if they were affected by it or not. By nature of its unlimited character, the post 1660 regime in Denmark was incompatible with enjoying liberty. To Molesworth, this degrading position of slavery had become so manifest that the Danes were unable to use liberty if it was offered to them. After 1660, the Danes were submissive and all of one mind. Being a very clear

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<sup>253</sup> Molesworth, 1693: 236.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid, 219-220.

formulation of neo-roman theory, this spiritual decay was a direct result of not living under a free state.





## **5 Jodocus Crull: *Denmark Vindicated, Being an Answer to a late Treatise called an Account of Denmark, as it was in the year 1692. Sendt from a Gentleman in the country to his friend in London.***

This chapter examines the High Church Physican Jodocus Crull's (1660- 1713) reply to Molesworth's *Account*. Regarding the historical discourse, the chapter will discuss Crull's views on 'blind obedience', ancient history and the 'Original Contract'. It will also examine what Crull emphasized in Danish history, and his approach to Molesworth's neo-roman conception on liberty. Crull's subsequent rejoinder from 1700; *Memoirs of Denmark, Containing the Life of the late King of Denmark, Norway, etc Christian V* will be treated briefly in the last chapter. The two rejoinders will be treated chronologically, and not thematically.

### **5.1 Background:**

During the spring in 1694, the Danish ambassador Mogens Skeel resigned his post. It was likely that his retirement request was owed to poor health. Skeel died in August 1694, during his journey back home from England.<sup>255</sup> However, before he retired, Skeel wrote a letter in the latter days of March. In it, Skeel mentioned that a rejoinder had appeared. Faced with the success of the *Account*, it is perhaps needless to say, that he was delighted by the rejoinder's appearance. However, Skeel suggested that there had been a long time since its author had been in Denmark. But although he was sorry for that the author did not turn to someone to gain more expertise, Skeel nonetheless acknowledged that the work showed great deal of knowledge.<sup>256</sup> This was also stated by its author; 'that the kingdom of Denmark is very well known to me.'<sup>257</sup>

The man behind the tract was Jodocus Crull. Crull was born in Hamburg, and later emigrated to England. He was a medical man, and translated several tracts. Among them was works by Samuel von Pufendorf (1632-1694), such as *On the Nature and Qualification of*

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<sup>255</sup> Brasch, 1879: 78.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid, 65.

<sup>257</sup> Crull, 1694: 216. // From page 128 to 145 in this pamphlet, there is a printing fault. They are numbered as 229-244, when it ought to be 119-144. Despite this, the references follow the original.

*Religion, in reference to civil society*. Pufendorf was one of the most prominent legal and political thinkers of the seventeenth century. Although his political thought in part was a response and correction to Hobbes,<sup>258</sup> Pufendorf likewise looked to the state as a primary vehicle of stability and order. It was only in a state system capable of maintaining internal order, tranquility and security that social life and economic development could prosper.<sup>259</sup> Such ideas did not emerge from nothing. The increasing importance of the state was a reality between 1500-1800. One should remember that this debate took place only 46 years after the Peace of Westphalia in the aftermath of the Thirty Years War (1618-48). It was this peace which secured, and laid the foundation for further state expansion in the period. For instance, growing concerns for political and social stability caused more frequent intervention from kings into local centers,<sup>260</sup> and such ideas by Hobbes and Pufendorf served to justify this.

It was more or less obvious due to Crull's effort that he sought a compensation from the Danish Court. And as the events unfolded, his work initiated contact with the Danish government. Like Skeel, Crull acknowledged in a letter that his text could have been improved, especially with information about Denmark. Crull therefore offered to compose another tract if the Danish government approved it.<sup>261</sup> This eventually led to a new reply, printed in 1700.

The first tract from 1694, *Denmark Vindicated, Being an Answer to a late Treatise called an Account of Denmark...* was divided into three sections. In addition, there was first a short dedication to Prince George – a dedication which Crull received a donation for.<sup>262</sup> The first section was a Preface. It takes form as a letter which is addressed to his friend in London. Thereafter follows a long section, 'Remarks upon the Preface'. This part numbers 98 pages of 216, and it is almost twice as long as Molesworth's Preface. The last part is called 'Remarks upon the Treatise called an Account of Denmark'. In this part, Crull aimed to display geographical and historical flaws in the *Account*.

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<sup>258</sup> *The Political Writings of Samuel Pufendorf*, ed Craig L. Carr (New York, 1994) 3.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid*, 6.

<sup>260</sup> Steve Hindle and Beat Kümin, 'Centre and Periphery', in ed Beat Kümin *The European World 1500-1800. An Introduction to Early Modern History*. (London and New York, 2009) 271.

<sup>261</sup> Brasch, 1879: 67.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid*, 68.

## 5.2 The historical discourse: Lutheranism, Roman and Egyptian societies, and a military enterprise.

Although Crull cherished the same English system as Molesworth, their political views were nonetheless far apart. For example, Crull revealed early on, that he had heard many positive things about the *Account*. However, it did not take long time in reading before he reached another conclusion. To begin with, he contended that we could have expected a fairer story of Denmark.<sup>263</sup> For instance, it was clear that Molesworth intended to represent tyranny in its worst shape to the English nation.<sup>264</sup> And where Crull claimed to refer his reader to ‘true’ history, he saw the *Account* as being filled with historical mistakes, speculative assertions and romantic notions. The description of Denmark resembled more a tragedy than history,<sup>265</sup> and he had never read a book which asserted more with expressive confidence, and again, proved less.<sup>266</sup>

One of Crull’s intentions in writing was to defend a particular line of argument, in which ‘blind obedience’ not was an inherent feature of Lutheranism. Molesworth had argued that arbitrary rule caused spiritual decay. One significant factor for this was that the Danish king had the clergy to rely on him. The result was blind obedience, which again contributed to strengthen the already present lack opposition, or checks upon the royal power. In effect, ‘blind obedience’ meant absence of liberty, according to Molesworth.<sup>267</sup> Crull saw this, however, as an attack on Lutheranism. In order to vindicate Lutheranism, Crull cited some of its teaching from the previous century. As Crull said, Molesworth was obviously little acquainted with the history of the Reformation.<sup>268</sup> The first point was that Lutherans was far away from obeying electoral proclamations, and had asserted arms against the Emperor (Charles V).<sup>269</sup> For example, when the Protestant princes felt a Catholic invasion imminent, they approved the formation of the *Smalkaldic League*.<sup>270</sup> In addition, Crull cited an answer made by Luther at Wittenberg. According to Crull, Luther said that all in authority owed to God to defend their subjects against violence.<sup>271</sup> There was no difference between the

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<sup>263</sup> Crull, 1694: 216.

<sup>264</sup> See the section, *A letter from a Gentleman in the Country, to his Friend in London*.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid*, 204.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid*, 70.

<sup>267</sup> Molesworth, 1693: 236.

<sup>268</sup> Crull, 1694: 30-31.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid*, 58, 31.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid*, 39.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid*, 33.

Emperor and common murderer if the Emperor, out of his office, notoriously exercised illegal power.<sup>272</sup> The prince also had the `right to oppose, and defend themselves against the same´ if the Pope established Idolatry and committed public injuries.<sup>273</sup> In doing this, Crull aimed to show `how far different the principles and doctrines of Lutherans were from a blind and unlimited obedience´.<sup>274</sup> In short, blind obedience was not an inherent feature in Lutheranism.

Crull put forward some valid historical points regarding the Reformation. But with regard to *de facto* resistance and `blind obedience´, it is clear that he also lacked some nuance in his analysis. Even though Crull claimed to refer his reader to `true history´, he was also obliged to choose some more `favorable´ elements, and leave other out. As such, it is worth to point out that it not necessarily was only the Lutheran doctrines, or Luther himself, which Crull with took time to show, which was the sole reason for protestant resistance in the first place. The crumbling legitimacy of Church and Empire alone would have been a sufficient reason for addressing the role of secular authority before the Reformation. Not only did the late medieval period witness an increase in the powers exercised by the territorial prince, but the basic structural preconditions for a territorial church were already in place well before the sixteenth century as well.<sup>275</sup> The point is that resistance was `easier´ when legitimacy of the Old order had evaporated. Regarding Luther´s resistance, it is also clear that he was bound to listen when princes argued for basic ecclesiastical unity and order in a time when Habsburg-papal onslaught seemed probable.<sup>276</sup>

Addressing the relation between Lutheranism and Denmark, Crull cited theologian named Hector Gottfried Masius (1653-1709) and his text from 1687 *Interesse principum circa religionem evangelicam ad serenissimum ac potentissimum Daniae regem*. Masius was a typical theologian of the absolutist regime from 1660, and when the Leipzig professor Christian Thomasius (1655-1728) published a critical review of Masius text, the reaction from Christian V was an appeal for the burning of Thomasius´ book in Copenhagen.<sup>277</sup> The case fell under the part of *crimine majestatis* in the Danish law. According to Crull, Masius stated in it that the Augsburg confession was the foundation of the Danish monarchy.<sup>278</sup> And even though Masius saw that Lutheran priest had no entire independence from the government, the

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<sup>272</sup> Ibid, 34.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid, 37.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid, 39-40.

<sup>275</sup> Scott Dixon, `The princely Reformation in Germany´ in ed Andrew Pettegree, *The Reformation World*, (London, 2000) 148.

<sup>276</sup> A.G Dickens, *The German Nation and Martin Luther*, (London, 1974), 99.

<sup>277</sup> Olden-Jørgensen, 2005: 73-74.

<sup>278</sup> Crull, 1694: 50.

case with Denmark was that, its monarchy was inseparable from maintaining the confession of Augsburg. Crull therefore criticized Molesworth for not enquiring more into this matter before he made his harsh conclusion about Danish obedience.<sup>279</sup>

An important point is that Crull labeled the *Account* as an historical treatise. Faced with a historical tract, Crull tried to beat Molesworth at his 'own game'. As we shall see, history was moreover, a fundamental battleground in this debate. It is therefore not without curiosity, how Henrik Horstbøll could argue that Molesworth's opponents resigned to historical arguments. He argued that the opponents only could adduce historical arguments since they were unable, in terms of political theory, to refute that Denmark was a despotism.<sup>280</sup> Certainly, one can argue that this is a misguided approach. Since there always is a danger in supposing that there was one set of question which different agents were all addressing,<sup>281</sup> it is highly unlikely that a refutation of 'despotism' was perceived as *the* important thing to do. Furthermore, Horstbøll implies that Molesworth's opponents felt short of their proper task, and that other repertoires were of minor relevance. This approach seems to have missed the key repertoire of history. For example, it was the holy laws of history which obliged Crull to take up the pen, according to himself,<sup>282</sup> and he frequently employed words such as 'sacred laws of history', 'rules of true history', 'a true historian'.<sup>283</sup> In the early modern era as well, the use of history did serve as an ideological disclaimer. To position oneself as unmasking, reflecting and transmitting the truth in history, was useful in facing political opponents.<sup>284</sup> This was also something which Molesworth's opponents did. A reason for this was also that the *Account*, to a large extent, was an historical treatise. It is more likely then, that the opponents actively were addressing his historical discourse instead of resigning to history.

Continuing this, Crull did not only address the Reformation. He also engaged in Molesworth's approach to Antiquity. First, Crull perceived Molesworth's veneration of ancient doctrines and deeds as vanity – especially since he sat them so far above contemporary ones.<sup>285</sup> He had obviously forgotten that, even though the Romans had

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<sup>279</sup> Ibid, 51-52.

<sup>280</sup> Horstbøll, 2007: 179.

<sup>281</sup> Skinner, 2002: 86.

<sup>282</sup> Crull, 1694: 216.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid, See page, 216, the part 'A letter to his friend'.

<sup>284</sup> Champion, 1992: 39.

<sup>285</sup> Crull, 1694: 84.

excellent laws and wise men, their society was nonetheless filled with vices.<sup>286</sup> Secondly, Crull attacked Molesworth's admiration of ancient education. Crull argued that Roman success was not owed to the teaching of philosophers. Their success rather came from parents' ability to instruct the young in military discipline, excellent laws and customs.<sup>287</sup> Lastly, it was a wonder why he did not go to the 'most ancient foundation itself', namely the Egyptians. To Crull, the Egyptians were the first who understood the rules of governing, and kept their laws the longest. Not only were Egyptian institutions admirable, but they also invented Astronomy, Arithmetic, Geometry and Physics. However, Crull suggested why Molesworth left them out. The reason was their system of hereditary princes, which they paid respect to. This did not 'agree with our Author's Romantic opinion of the transcendent virtues of Brutus'.<sup>288</sup>

Crull also intervened in Molesworth's all-encompassing historical narrative. Molesworth's idea of an Original Contract and a Gothic form of government implied that a representative body of the people chose, and legitimately could resist, their princes. Crull however, saw this as a wrong and romantic. Regarding the claim that England retained this ancient way of governing, by which they owed the original parliament to the Goths and Vandals, Crull said that; 'I know not whether this assertion have more pomp than truth in it, (to make use of his own words, which he has given us concerning the Romans)'. And Crull continued:

If we look rightly into the Matter, the government of these Nations when they at first extended their Conquest over Spain, Afrika and Italy, as the Franks did over France, and the Saxons did over England, being wholly adapted to Military Enterprises; there was, it's true, commonly a General chosen by the Army, and the Heads of the same were admitted to all Debates: yet it was in no ways to be compared with what of latter years has been called a Parliament.<sup>289</sup>

In this sense, Molesworth was right that the 'chiefs' were elective. But as a military enterprise, it was not a Parliament of the seventeenth century. This had further implications. For instance, where Molesworth saw that the original Parliaments often met and enacted laws, Crull mentioned that these military enterprises did not have any laws at all. It was clearly wrong to deduce the original parliaments, which were used in the best regulated governments in

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<sup>286</sup> Ibid, 89.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid, 87.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid, 78-80.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid, 243.

Europe 'from the barbarous and irregulated conventions of a savage people'.<sup>290</sup> Besides this, Crull was also critical to the notion, in the Gothic narrative, that Germany had been freer than any part of Europe. The case was that this was in the days where everybody was 'his own master'. Even though this was a condition of liberty, Crull saw that Germany not would have flourished as it had done if continuing this original state.<sup>291</sup>

### **5.3 History and Denmark: the 1660 narrative, and hereditary succession.**

Regarding the coup in 1660, Crull pointed out that Molesworth had been more concerned with the formalities instead of the 'true causes'. Interestingly, Crull's starting point was that the Danes were not free before 1660.<sup>292</sup> Molesworth's analysis then, by which it was a sudden turn from freedom to slavery, was a contradiction in itself.

What Crull saw in Danish history was an usurping nobility – gaining power on the expense of other estates. For instance, prior to 1660, royal prerogatives became considerably clipped after the crown was transferred to the Oldenburg family. Not only was the clergy's power quite abolished,<sup>293</sup> but the citizens were dependant on the nobility as well. In a more uncompromising statement, Crull argued that the peasants were entirely subjected to the will of the nobility – being partly their tenants, partly their vassals, and were not in any position to make any resistance against their overlords. This made him conclude that of all the estates, namely Nobility, Clergy, Citizens and Peasants, 'the power was effectually lodged in the first'.<sup>294</sup> The political situation before 1660 was in this sense unfavorable, according to Crull.

The late wars with Sweden ('Karl Gustav krigene' 1657-58, and 1658-60) had also taken its toll. For instance, the Commons laid their hardships owed to war, at 'the door of the Nobility'.<sup>295</sup> Crull was naturally right when he considered that the cost of the wars were high. Even though the causes for the events in 1660 were complex, it is true that Denmark-Norway was in poor condition, financially and otherwise. Copenhagen to mention some, had suffered

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<sup>290</sup> Ibid, 244.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid, 154-155.

<sup>292</sup> Ibid, 198.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid, 193.

<sup>294</sup> Ibid, 194.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid, 196.



through a one and a half year stalemate, which included a blockage and enemy fire.<sup>296</sup> And the overall rationale behind the meeting of the estates the 5 of august 1660 was the precarious financial situation.<sup>297</sup>

Because of an `usurping nobility´ and late wars, Crull treated the turn to absolutism as legitimate. It was no `reason for why it should not be justifiable in the Commons of Denmark to have taken the opportunity to free themselves of these incroachments made upon them by the nobility´.<sup>298</sup> The nobility perceived the other estates as slaves, and treated them likewise. Consequently, the other estates could either continue to be in slavery to the nobility at home, and being `in fear of foreign yolk from their neighbours´, or they could take measures to amend their situation. So, where Molesworth saw 1660 as an event where the Danes divested themselves with their personal liberty, Crull approached it as an event where the people freed themselves from the slavery of the nobles. In other words, where Molesworth saw decay, Crull saw improvements. Of course, the latter admitted that the Nobility was the chief losers. But on the whole, the situation had improved. To buy land and being admitted into public offices were, for example, something the other estates now enjoyed.<sup>299</sup>

Overall, it is important to recognize that there was many ways of legitimating political authority. For example, Crull´s rationale on 1660 resembles a more general point put forward by Jacques Bénigne Bossuet (1627-1704). Bossuet was a French bishop and theologian. Being a court preacher, he was a strong advocate of political absolutism and divine-right of kings; `if the prince is not scrupulously obeyed, public order is overthrown´.<sup>300</sup> The contention Crull resembled was stated in the same book, namely *Politics Drawn from the Very Words of Holy Scripture*. Here Bousset argued that `government is established to free all men from all oppression...´<sup>301</sup>. According to Crull, this was one of the most significant benefits with the newly established government from 1660. It removed all oppression. It is not necessarily that Crull was acquainted with Bossuet. But the point illustrate that Crull´s approach to political authority was shared by others, and that the neo-roman notion of a `free state´ was one of several starting points which could legitimate political institutions. The fact that Crull translated works from Pufendorf ought to make us aware that he could draw on a more vast

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<sup>296</sup> Knut Mykland, `Gjennom nødsår og krig 1648-1720´ in Knut Mykland (ed) *Norges historie* (Oslo, 1977) Bind 7, 73.

<sup>297</sup> Ståle Dyrvik, `Truede tvillingriker 1648-1720´ in *Danmark-Norge 1380-1814* Bind III. (Oslo, 1998) 71.

<sup>298</sup> Crull, 1694: 203.

<sup>299</sup> Ibid, 201- 202.

<sup>300</sup> Bossuet. `Politics drawn from the Very Words of Holy Scripture´ in Patrick Riley (ed) *Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought* (Cambridge, 1990) 173.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid, 264.

political repertoire.

The last point Crull concerned himself with was succession. According to him, monarchical progression was a sacred matter to the Danes. The government was far from adhering to such 'barbarous' methods which Molesworth depicted; which was 'much against the practice of the Ancient Danes'.<sup>302</sup> In order to highlight this, Crull listed up a number of instances in the Danish line of succession. From 804 to 1414, by example, the crown had been in a 'perpetual lineal succession' in one family.<sup>303</sup> The case was that the estates of Denmark, even in latter times, did not see themselves as having a 'free disposal' of the crown. Thus, Danish succession was not a precarious matter.<sup>304</sup> And the kingdom 'ought rather to be called hereditary'.<sup>305</sup> To Crull, this would also be obvious for anyone who would make thorough search into Danish history.<sup>306</sup> What Crull was doing, in other words, was to challenge Molesworth's ancient historical narrative in which the king and his successors, sat on the mere will of the people.

Regarding the aspect of succession, it is interesting to note that Crull disregarded the *de facto* change from 1660. He does not mention that, within the change from an elective kingdom to absolutism, Denmark- Norway also turned into a hereditary rule. When the estates offered Frederick III a hereditary right to the crown for himself and his successors, the formal pact from 1648 ('håndfestningen'), was delivered back to the king. The result was that the contract between the king and Rikrsådet was revoked.<sup>307</sup> The kingdom of Denmark-Norway *was* in other words, an elective kingdom. Håndfestningen, which the king signed at an election, was the symbol of this since it confirmed the mixed monarchy. So, despite the fact that the act of signing 'håndfestningen' in many ways was a formality, it was also a fundamental act which symbolized the upholding the rights of the estates. The proposal of turning the kingdom into a hereditary one then, carried within itself the germ of overturning the whole political system.<sup>308</sup> And indeed, the whole Danish system was overturned in 1660 Copenhagen. Why Crull occludes this may have several reasons. But one was likely that he to some extent, wanted to avoid the question of formalities – which he attacked Molesworth for being too concerned about. Another probable cause was that he wanted to prove that the

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<sup>302</sup> Crull, 1694: 167.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid, 168.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid, 176.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid, 168.

<sup>306</sup> Ibid, 184.

<sup>307</sup> Dyrvik, 1998: 76.

<sup>308</sup> Sebastian Olden-Jørgensen, *Poesi og Politik. Lejlighedsdigtningen ved enevældetsindførelse 1660*. (København, 1996) 22.

Danish royalties enjoyed some rights, and that succession not was as unlawful and barbarous as his opponent wanted it to be.

## **5.4 Crull's approach to Molesworth's neo-roman conception of liberty.**

Crull did not provide his own conception of liberty as an alternative to that of Molesworth. Thomas R. Rogers for example, as we shall see in the next chapter, did assert his own view as he argued that 'passive resistance' was the adoption of 'glorious liberty'. Crull however, first and foremost responded to Molesworth's historical discourse.

Yet, despite that Crull did not provide his own conception, he refused to agree with certain premises of neo-roman liberty. What is certain is that the agents in this debate were contemplating political theorists whose goal it was to produce a political manifesto. Obviously, Crull's lack of normative statements on liberty makes an analysis more challenging. But it does not make his pamphlet of any less interest. Our goal as historians should be, to try as far as possible, to think as our ancestors thought and to see things their way. And in order to do this, we need to recover the concepts they possess, the distinctions they drew and the chains of reasoning they followed in their attempt to make sense of the world.<sup>309</sup> Regarding Crull, a useful starting point can be his idea of 'the mistaken rules of liberty':

And how often the mistaken rules of liberty, have proved not only troublesome, but also fatal, the histories of all ages do abundantly testifies. It had therefore, in my judgement, been more suitable to the nature of an historical treatise, and the circumstances also of our present enjoyment of sufficient liberty, under the conduct of a wise and just king, to have given a true scheme of moderate liberty, than to represent to us at this time a romantick notion of the same.<sup>310</sup>

Even though Crull referred to England, his statement revealed the important fact that he saw Molesworth's conception of liberty as excessive. There was no limitation upon liberty in his (Molesworth's) 'beloved panegyrick of liberty'.<sup>311</sup> In a body- politic metaphor, Crull said that the excess of liberty was the same as excess of blood in a person. If not taken away, it would

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<sup>309</sup> Skinner, 2002: 47.

<sup>310</sup> Crull, 1694: 3.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid, 4.

cause inflammations and other diseases. Accordingly, too much liberty was the true cause of the diseases in government, and it was rather much more desirable to enjoy a fair portion of liberty.<sup>312</sup> Regarding this, it is important to remember that Molesworth and the Old Whigs talked about liberty and equality, and assumed the possibility of progress in a time when most Englishmen understood the constitution as sacred.<sup>313</sup> It is not unlikely that Crull had this in mind when he saw too much liberty as a threat. Interestingly, Crull referred to the Glorious Revolution as the ‘late happy Revolution’, and further praised William III role in it.<sup>314</sup> This was little compatible with the more progressive views championed by the Old Whigs in the 1690s.

Moreover, one can say that Crull’s approach was more pragmatic. Molesworth favored a theory which reduced the inhabitants in a kingdom to slaves if they found themselves within the arbitrary power of the king. It does not need much historical foresight, to see that this distinction lacked certain nuance – especially in a time when absolutism was on the rise throughout Europe. As such, Crull strongly challenged the notion that a random royal hand reduced you to a slave. If you were liable to have your rights of action curtailed or withdrawn at any time, neo-roman theory equated this as servitude.<sup>315</sup> When the event in 1660 removed ‘Riksrådet’ (being the nearest equivalent to a national assembly), it also introduced an unlimited absolutist regime. It is highly unlikely that this point had missed Crull. However, this did not stop him from seeing 1660 as an event which improved the situation. In doing this, he performed a move in which he turned Molesworth’s concept of slavery up-side down. By employing the phrase ‘slavery to the nobility’,<sup>316</sup> and using this term as contrary to Molesworth’s assumptions, Crull managed to describe 1660 as an event deserving praise. The result was that the presence of royal arbitrary will did not reduce you to a slave.

In line with his, Crull continued to play down the role of arbitrary will after 1600. ‘The constant effect of arbitrary rule’ was not a sufficient explanation. With regard to taxes for instance, Crull argued that they were not more frequent owed to the change in government. Rather, it was the late war with Sweden, and the increasing strength of Sweden and neighboring princes, which was the true cause of this. For the sake of defense, the Danish king was obliged to keep much greater army alert at all times.<sup>317</sup> As Crull concluded, it was

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<sup>312</sup> Ibid, 5-6.

<sup>313</sup> Robbins, 1959: 91. Also see Holt, 1968: 7.

<sup>314</sup> Crull, 1694: 7-8.

<sup>315</sup> Skinner, 1998 a: 70.

<sup>316</sup> Crull, 1694: 201.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid, 187-188.

from `thence evident, that a necessity of maintaining so considerable forces and fortresses, but not an arbitrary will' [...] which `enforced the paying of greater taxes now in Denmark than formerly'.<sup>318</sup> In other words, it was *necessity*, and not the constant effects arbitrary rule, which enforced taxes.

Crull also made an interesting point regarding Sweden. Like Denmark, Sweden became an absolutist regime in the latter course of the seventeenth century. This happened in 1680, and Crull refers to an event in Sweden happening `about fifteen or sixteen years ago'.<sup>319</sup> Crull was not ignorant (to use his own words), that the wings of the nobility, composing a senate, had been considerably clipped. But, even though the Swedish King greatly increased his powers and revenues, it was `from hence not necessarily to be concluded, that the rights of people is lost'. The estates still retained some of their native rights.<sup>320</sup> Although Crull not equated the possession of `rights' with liberty, his statements nonetheless suggest that an absolutist king not necessarily excludes liberty. This is also substantiated by his approach to 1660. To be sure, both absolutist Sweden and Denmark lacked safeguards upon royal authority. But although Crull was positive to a system where a democratic assembly and aristocratic senate figured as checks, (being the case with England), he did not, however, equate such a `free state' with liberty. If we acknowledge other terms Crull employs; `lawful liberty', `legal liberty', `legal government under a wise and brave king',<sup>321</sup> there is an essence that an individual could enjoy the right amount of liberty under a prudent absolutist king as well. It was then possible to enjoy the right amount of liberty in absolutist regimes such as Denmark and Sweden.

In order to fully appreciate this, we ought to recall what Crull said about original liberty. Crull was critical to the notion, in the Gothic narrative, that Germany had been freer than any part of Europe. The case was that this was when everybody was `his own master'. Despite a condition of liberty, Crull saw that Germany not would have flourished as it had done if continuing in this state.<sup>322</sup> This point paralleled the one where Molesworth's admired parliaments in reality was wild and savage.<sup>323</sup> In other words, Crull did not agree to that the state of nature was a condition of perfect freedom. It is not unlikely that he was influenced by Pufendorf in this matter. Crull translated works by Pufendorf, and Crull also seemed to

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<sup>318</sup> Ibid, 190.

<sup>319</sup> Ibid, 153.

<sup>320</sup> Ibid, 154.

<sup>321</sup> Ibid, 5, 6 18.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid, 154-155.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid, 244.

contend that social life and economic developments only could prosper in a state. So, in opposing Molesworth's original liberty, there is an essence in Crull's argument as well that, a state was a primary vehicle for order and stability.

Lastly, Crull objected to another neo-roman element as well. This was that absolutism caused spiritual decay. Needless to say, Crull did not agree to the premise that post 1660 was a state of servitude, and this is perhaps why, he did not take too much time to discuss this. Rather, the talk of 'slavery, laziness, and idle despondency' was rather a result of Molesworth's own tragic inventions.<sup>324</sup> And it was worth recalling as well, that 'lately Denmark has had its Puffendorf', and that 'learning is not at so low an ebb'.<sup>325</sup>

## 5.5 Summary.

Crull's main intention in writing the rejoinder from 1694 was to prove that 'blind obedience' not was a feature of Lutheranism, and beat Molesworth at 'his own game', which Crull saw as the field of history. This included comments on the Reformation, original Parliaments and Roman and Egyptian history. To mention some, Crull saw a military enterprise instead of an admirable ancient parliament, founded upon an Original contract. To him, it was wrong to deduce contemporary parliaments from such barbarous times. Regarding Denmark, Crull discussed the turn to absolutism in 1660 and Danish succession. A significant point was that the people freed themselves from the slavery and oppression of the nobles in 1660. Besides this, Crull also saw it more proper to designate the Danish kingdom as hereditary before the coup. Lastly, and even though Crull not put forward his own clear-cut view on liberty, he contradicted some key neo-roman assumptions. The most important idea Crull challenged was that the presence of arbitrary power reduced you to a slave. It was rather possible to enjoy certain rights and a favorable freedom in an absolutist regime. Individual freedom was in this sense, not equated with a 'free state'. Again, this ought also to be understood from his disapproval of original freedom, and the notion that a strong state was necessary for human prosperity.

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<sup>324</sup> Ibid, 204.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid, 215.



## **6 Thomas R. Rogers: *The Common-Wealths-Man unmasqu'd, or a just rebuke to the Authour of the Account of Denmark in two parts.***

This chapter examines Thomas R. Rogers's response to the *Account of Denmark*. It will highlight that the Tories used the same political languages as the Whigs, and discuss Rogers's take on the 'Original contract' and Magna Carta. It will also show that he viewed Molesworth's neo-roman liberty as dangerous, and that the language of 'divine-right kingship' and the idea of 'passive resistance' was key in Rogers's conception of liberty. Besides this, I have chosen to treat Rogers's accusation in which Molesworth was under the influence of Hobbes, in an autonomous subchapter. This is because the point is significant, and that it both encompasses history and liberty. Lastly, this chapter will apply a more holistic view, and situate the rejoinder in a broader historical background.

### **6.1 Christianity and the Church in danger: the High Church movement and Rogers's tract.**

In the interval between 1680 and 1720, the Church of England was attacked by many writers which, according to High Church Scholar Thomas Hearne, promoted 'Deistical Republican Principles'. The link between spiritual and civil tyranny continued to be stressed by opponents of Church, and such republican-minded authors often attacked the government since the clergy was part of it. As a result, these critics often replaced ritual and dogma with injunctions to virtue.<sup>326</sup> The Old Whigs frame of mind also often dwelt on the ethics of citizenship.<sup>327</sup> What is more is that Thomas Hearne likely would have placed the *Account* within his 'Deistical Republican' attack if he was faced with it. For instance, Molesworth's opponents tended to be as Hearne, High-Church.<sup>328</sup>

The High Church movement would eventually acquire the name of Tory. The 'High Church' term came into use around 1675. Then there came of age a confident and aggressive

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<sup>326</sup> Champion, 1992: 170.

<sup>327</sup> Goldie, 2006: 67.

<sup>328</sup> See Mayo: 2000: 12-13 and Pincus, 2011: 53.



style of Anglicanism coined 'High Church'.<sup>329</sup> The Church reacted sternly against those who tried to undermine its monopoly between 1660 and 1720.<sup>330</sup> Yet, their monopoly came to be confronted, and eventually loosened. For example, the *Toleration Act* of 1689 liberated the Protestant Nonconformists, or 'Dissenters's, who came to achieve prominence in English society. Owing to the act, an unprecedented religious pluralism was now preserved in statute.<sup>331</sup> If one takes a description from the 1690s of the Tories into account, it does not take much insight to see that the *Toleration Act* was a serious blow. For the MP and Whig financier Thomas Papillon, the Tories were 'those that stickle for the forms and ceremonies, and rail against the endeavor to discountenance all those that are otherwise minded.'<sup>332</sup>

The Revolution circumscribed the position of the church. This provoked a militant High Church movement, aiming at recapturing its lost authority.<sup>333</sup> This can be exemplified by that historical defenses of the Anglican establishment flooded the printing presses in the early eighteenth century.<sup>334</sup> And to a certain degree, the High Church movement makes it understandable why English Whiggism was born just as much out of anticlericalism as it was with constitutionalism. This meant that, Church history was just as popular to employ as parliamentary history for Whig polemicists.<sup>335</sup>

Thomas R. Rogers (1660-1694) was a representative for the Church. In 1694, Rogers published the rejoinder *The Common-Wealths-Man unmasqu'd, or a just rebuke to the Authour of the Account of Denmark in two parts*. The pamphlet can also be seen as defense for the Church of England. To Rogers, the Church of England was frequently being assaulted.<sup>336</sup> The admirable 'passive doctrines' was only maintained only by the 'genuine Sons of the Church of England.'<sup>337</sup> It was not only Molesworth's views which troubled him, but also 'the loss of the common cause of Christianity' in the western world.<sup>338</sup> Rogers did not only answer to Molesworth. He also intended to defend a tradition which increasingly was attacked during the Early English Enlightenment.

The pamphlet was organized into four sections. The first was a short epistle, addressed

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<sup>329</sup> Goldie, 1993: 212.

<sup>330</sup> Champion, 1992: 5.

<sup>331</sup> Goldie, 2006: 51.

<sup>332</sup> *Memoirs of Thomas Papillon, 1623-1702*. Ed. A.F.W Papillon (Reading, 1877) 374-5. Goldie, 1993: 213.

<sup>333</sup> Goldie, 2006:51.

<sup>334</sup> Champion, 1992: 51.

<sup>335</sup> Goldie, 1993: 214.

<sup>336</sup> Thomas R. Roger, *The Common-Wealths-Man unmasqu'd, or a just rebuke to the Author of the Account of Denmark. In Two Parts*. (London, Printed for Randal Taylor, 1694) 100.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid*, 159.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid*. Introduction.

to 'the Kings most excellent majesty'. The following Introduction was more engaged with the condition, or nature, of man. Thereafter followed the main part, *The Common-Wealths-Man unmasqu'd, or a just rebuke to the Authour of the Account of Denmark*. This part most explicitly discussed the *Account*. The last part was dubbed *The Consolation of the Cross: Or the Two Grand Pillars of Man's Security In this Worlds*. Here, Rogers showed that 'Passive doctrines' was a reasonable and commendable.<sup>339</sup> A crucial point about Rogers's rejoinder is that it, almost exclusively, discussed Molesworth's Preface. There were very few references to Denmark.

Before moving on to Rogers's take on Molesworth's use of history and his conception of liberty, a few general notes ought to be made. To begin with, it is critical to recognize that the debates and developments in the late seventeenth century England, regarding Church and state, religion and politics, was complex. Political thought was deeply attached to theological concerns.<sup>340</sup> As a result, there was no conceptual separation between issues of state and Church, politics and religion.<sup>341</sup> Debates about the nature of monarchical sovereignty therefore intersected with discussions about the competence and independence of the Church.<sup>342</sup> In addition, it meant that an attack on the Crown was an attack on the Church, and vice-versa.

Secondly, the Church position should not be approached as opposed and confined to a mere reaction against 'radical attacks'. The 'Deistical Republican principles' Hearne noted, was not the only challenge representatives of the Church faced. By example, in the latter part of the 1680s, the Church party had aimed to restore Stuart monarchy to its proper place in the Anglican firmament. The party tried to force James back into the mould of the Tory régime of the early 1680s – which James brutally had curtailed.<sup>343</sup> In other words, they were faced with problems from 'within', in which the Church party sought to overturn the monarch's ministers and policies to gain control.

Lastly, modern commentary on Hobbes absolutism, and that of Locke, with his insistence on the right of armed rebellion, has tended to occluded to middle ground. This middle ground was more of a 'church' or scholastic absolutism, which made considerable

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<sup>339</sup> Rogers, 1694: 120.

<sup>340</sup> Spellman, 1998: 31.

<sup>341</sup> Campion, 1992: 6.

<sup>342</sup> Ibid 5-6.

<sup>343</sup> Mark Goldie, 'Political Thought of the Anglican Revolution' in ed Robert Beddard *The Revolutions of 1688. The Andrew Browning Lectures 1988* (Oxford, 1991). 107-108. For more information on the complexity of the Anglican position and development, see Goldie, *ibid*.

room for a duty of passive resistance.<sup>344</sup> Indeed, there was also a passive element in Thomas R. Rogers's rejoinder. Although Rogers acknowledged that man was entitled to certain privileges and civil rights, man was also a subject in which he was entitled to obedience.<sup>345</sup> And if one lived under a cruel government, Rogers reminded his reader that Christ left an example – by which a true follower of Christ also must share his suffering.<sup>346</sup>

## 6.2 The 'anti-monarchial project' and the discourse of history.

As with other engaged in debates, Rogers sought to claim authority over his utterances. He therefore attacked Molesworth's character, in which he intended to denounce his opponent. For Rogers, the author of the *Account* was a good example of the 'vanity of fallen and darkened mankind'. The author fancied himself to be wiser than the clergy, both universities, the king and Parliament.<sup>347</sup> Rogers could not see anything which resembled a clear intellectual perception. Rather, imagination was the most supreme faculty the Molesworth had.<sup>348</sup> To Rogers, the *Account* was written under the false pretence of the all-encompassing 'freedom of the subject, and the masque of popular liberty'.<sup>349</sup> As the title 'Common-Wealths-Man unmasqu'd indicate, Rogers saw that Molesworth really intended to demolish English monarchy.

The *Account* was repeatedly designated as anti-monarchial. Regarding Molesworth's connection with William III, and Molesworth's praise for him, Rogers simply concluded that 'Judas still can kiss'.<sup>350</sup> Rogers asked rhetorically if the author could be a good subject, or a friend of monarchy, if he at the same time adorned the memory of Algernon Sidney. Since Sidney was executed for (allegedly) plotting to overthrow the government of King Charles II (ruled from 1660-85), the answer was obviously no. As a 'snarling Republican',<sup>351</sup> the 'republican brother' did not disguise his anti-monarchial sentiment well enough.<sup>352</sup> The description of Denmark was more a part of Molesworth's anti-monarchial plan than a genuine

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<sup>344</sup> Ibid, 113.

<sup>345</sup> Rogers, 1694: 63.

<sup>346</sup> Ibid, 137-138.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid, 1-2.

<sup>348</sup> Ibid, 73.

<sup>349</sup> Ibid, 2.

<sup>350</sup> Ibid, 74.

<sup>351</sup> Ibid, 110.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid, 75.

wish to enlighten his readers.<sup>353</sup> As such, Rogers did not read the *Account* as having republican or neo-roman elements. The ‘anti-monarchical project’ was a term applied over and over, and if not a republican manifesto, the author was certainly a republican *per se* – wanting to destroy monarchy and the church.<sup>354</sup> Interestingly enough, such accusations did not prevent Rogers from saying that he proceeded fairly against the author.<sup>355</sup>

The Church party used the same political languages as the Whigs. The Tories also called upon Magna Carta, The Ancient Constitution, natural law and English law and history.<sup>356</sup> This becomes evident in reading Rogers take on Molesworth’s historical discourse.

To begin with, Rogers addressed Molesworth’s all-encompassing historical narrative by daring him to find proof of the ‘Original contract’. According to Rogers, even the most learned in the law did not know anything of such a record.<sup>357</sup> As mentioned, Molesworth contended that most European countries originated by a pact between king and community.<sup>358</sup> In founding the government on the consent of the people, one party supposed a contract by which they legitimately could resist their king. Not only did Rogers see this as a misguided historical analysis, but he wanted written proof on the first erection of the English monarchy. As Rogers said; ‘if he knows where to find it, let him place it on open view’.<sup>359</sup> It was common that opponents of the Church were accused of fabricating a historical past.<sup>360</sup> So, when Rogers denied the existence of an Original Contract, further accusing his adversary by constructing a historical past, it was in this sense, not a unique example from the period.

To Rogers, the idea of an Original Contract was imaginary. Magna Carta, however, was the sole proof for that political power derived from the king:

In Magna Charta (which is the great Record of our Liberties) the People’s Rights and Priviledges are fetch’d purely from the Kings Grants and Donations[...] And the higher we ascend in the Scale of

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<sup>353</sup> Ibid, 46.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid, 109.

<sup>355</sup> Ibid, 108.

<sup>356</sup> Lois G. Schwoerer, ‘The right to resist: Whig resistance theory, 1688 to 1694’ in Nicholar Phillipson and Quentin Skinner (eds) *Ideas in context. ‘Political discourse in early modern Britain.* (Cambridge, 1993) 236.

<sup>357</sup> Rogers, 1694: 102.

<sup>358</sup> Thompson, 1976: 492.

<sup>359</sup> Rogers, 1694: 102.

<sup>360</sup> Champion, 1992: 26.

Monarchy, we find the King's more unlimited and free; There were no restrictions or reserves under the first and most Ancient Governments; no Laws, but what lay in the Prince's Bosom.<sup>361</sup>

For Rogers, Molesworth's historical narrative was part of his republican plot. When he 'amused the multitude' with talk about an Original contract, and drawing 'wild inferences' from that, it was a step in pulling down monarchy. Because the starting point was the community, and not the allegiance owed to the king, Rogers argued that the reader of the *Account* heard nothing but the word of tyranny, and the dispatching of kings without ceremony.<sup>362</sup> But as Rogers intended to show, the only real evidence for original power was found in Magna Carta. And there was certainly no element in it, which could affirm the rights of the people. Rather, the king had granted rights to the people by choice, and there was no representative body which exercised power over the king from ancient time. Political power had been unlimited in the hands of the king.

An authoritative history of the Church had been the aim of Anglican apologists since the Reformation.<sup>363</sup> And as Rogers concluded, the Church of England was still true towards her Ancient motto, which was the 'unshaken allegiance to her Prince'.<sup>364</sup> But as history was employed by Churchmen such as Rogers to legitimize the present, so it also was used by freethinkers such as Molesworth and Toland. Moreover, both Churchmen and Freethinkers wished to secure moral convictions for their audiences and claim authority of their utterances. One commonplace way of doing this was by writing historical defenses. For churchmen, to simply claim to be good, religious and true was not enough. And for Freethinkers, to claim that status quo with regard to religion was wrong, was not enough either. It was therefore necessary to supply theological and philosophical arguments with historical perspectives.<sup>365</sup>

Molesworth was well read in the languages of Rome. Owing to this, a significant part of the 'language games' in Rogers's tract centers on ancient conceptions. As Rogers said, it was important to confront the enemies with their 'own weapons'.<sup>366</sup> The first point Rogers's disputed was learning. According to Molesworth, contemporary education did not make

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<sup>361</sup> Rogers, 1694: 103.

<sup>362</sup> Ibid, 100-101.

<sup>363</sup> Champion, 1992: 21.

<sup>364</sup> Rogers, 1694: 160.

<sup>365</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>366</sup> Ibid, 87.

people useful to society. By contrast, Greek and Roman learning had made students useful.<sup>367</sup> According to Rogers, however, it was wrong to extol Greek and Roman education above the modern.<sup>368</sup> The reason was that contemporary learning retained what was good from the ancient, and at the same time had the advantage of modern improvements.<sup>369</sup>

Rogers saw that Molesworth venerated the commonality and old philosophy – especially above the king.<sup>370</sup> Rogers countered this by showing that monarchy was a legitimate rule among the ancients. As such, he argued that Aristotle confirmed both in his *Ethics* and *Politics* that, of all forms of government, the monarchial was best.<sup>371</sup> This was (allegedly) the case for which Molesworth undervalued Aristotle. It was no surprise to Rogers then, that Molesworth also concealed titles and prerogatives given to kings by Homer, Plato, and other famous philosophers.<sup>372</sup> In order to understand this, one has to take seriously that Rogers truly believed that his opponent intended to demolish the English monarchy. This was the reason for which the *Account* occluded the ancients which were positively inclined to monarchy. However, as this thesis has argued, Molesworth was really trying to bring awareness on liberty – not to overthrow the monarchy. The monarchial element, as long as it remained mixed with a strong senate and democratic assembly, did actually constitute an important part of the ‘English system of liberty’. As long safeguards were imposed on the legislative authority of a king, many neo-roman writers preferred a mixed-government,<sup>373</sup> and so did Molesworth.

Another point Rogers made regarding history was that now, every each ‘youthful or Grey-headed pedant aspires to the historical faculty.’ An individual could just travel for a while, lie down, and suddenly rise up as an illuminated historian. In this, the new historian fancied it to be his ‘peculiar province the expose the sacred office to contempt, and ridicule the priesthood.’<sup>374</sup> Although Molesworth definitely had been critical to the clergy on his text, this attack was in all likelihood not just aimed at him. The term ‘Priestcraft’ suddenly became commonplace in the 1690s.<sup>375</sup> It is worth recalling that in 1694, in the same year as Rogers published his pamphlet, Sir Robert Howard’s *History of Religion* came out. Howard was a

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<sup>367</sup> Molesworth, (Preface) 11. (again, pagenumbers listed on the Preface is based on an ordinary A4 printing).

<sup>368</sup> Rogers, 1694: 93.

<sup>369</sup> Ibid, 93-94.

<sup>370</sup> Ibid, 13.

<sup>371</sup> Ibid, 92.

<sup>372</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>373</sup> Skinner, 1998 a: 54.

<sup>374</sup> Rogers, 1694: 36.

<sup>375</sup> Goldie, 1993: 219.

Whig, a courtier and a fashionable playwright of the 1660s. In his *History of Religion*, he aimed to show how religion had been corrupted, almost from the beginning, by Priestcraft. Howards blueprint, were again standard weapons in the Whig armory.<sup>376</sup> As such, one can argue that Rogers's intention not just was to criticize Molesworth use of history – it was also to denounce the Whig's historical blueprint on the corrupted priesthood.

### 6.3 Rogers's criticism of Molesworth's conception of liberty.

The employed rhetoric in some sections, such as 'an ill-natur'd Republican sound', 'fanatical notions of liberty', 'pretensions of a free people' and 'vanity of secular greatness'<sup>377</sup> to mention some, should indicate from the outset, that Rogers strongly disagreed with Molesworth's conception of liberty. As mention before, a key starting point in the latter's neo-roman conception was that, in order to live in a 'free state', the body politic must be determined be the will of the members as a whole.<sup>378</sup> This implied, among other things, that the government in a free state must be by laws to which the people have consented.<sup>379</sup> But if the matter was that a mixed government, in which the multitude decided, was equated with liberty, it was according to Rogers, not only wrong, but also dangerous and detrimental. To Rogers, it was natural for men 'to turn their liberty into Vanity, by too high admiration of it'.<sup>380</sup> And he said in a more aggressive tone that;

Publick Liberty in the mouth of a Flaming Enthusiastick Zealot, is, like a naked Sword in the hands of a Lunatick Brother, dangerous and destructive; and the one should no more be trusted alone without a limitation, than the other without a Scabbard.<sup>381</sup>

In another passage, Rogers substantiated this by pointing out what would happen in a government in which the multitude decided. Rogers's asked rhetorically what settlement could be achieved in government when the 'people bear Sway', and the 'multitude decree justice'. The answer was nothing, since such a government would be wild and uncertain. The danger was factionalism and tumult, and as such, there was no value of liberty since it meant

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<sup>376</sup> Ibid, 220-221.

<sup>377</sup> Rogers, 1694: 64, 54-55, 23.

<sup>378</sup> Skinner, 1998 a: 26-27.

<sup>379</sup> Robbins, 1959:111.

<sup>380</sup> Rogers, 1694: 144.

<sup>381</sup> Ibid, 63.

living in fear.<sup>382</sup> Rogers's argument was not unique in the sense that he underscored this. Overall, the Tories and defenders of the Church emphasized the theoretical, and actual possibilities of anarchy and popular tyranny which they said were encouraged by the Whigs.<sup>383</sup> Relevant to this, Rogers pointed out that any politician, and not only Molesworth, could make an unfortunate mistake, such as an involuntary tax or other trivial transgressions, appear as an advance to tyranny and absolute dominion.<sup>384</sup>

The case about factionalism and chaos was correlated with another point on absolute monarchy. The case was that, if William III truly was absolute, one would at least enjoy security. This was for Rogers, certainly a more favorable than to live under the 'imaginary freedom of the purest popular state'.<sup>385</sup> If one looks closely to the language games here, it is noteworthy to see how Rogers employed a rhetorical strategy in this section. He was applying the terms 'absolute' and 'despotic' (generally used to express disapproval) with an intention to express approval or at least neutrality. He challenged his opponent, or his readers, to reconsider the feelings of disapproval connected with the terms involved.<sup>386</sup> In short, to live under an absolute rule was certainly more favorable if one took into account that one would enjoy security.

A useful starting point in understanding Rogers's position can be to say that he were defending status quo. As such, it is worth recalling that Molesworth wanted to improve the old mixed constitution. He and the Old Whigs, for example, supported a greater freedom than the *Toleration Act* of 1689 allowed.<sup>387</sup> So, if not a republican with revolutionary intent, as Rogers accused him to be, Molesworth did certainly envision changes *through* established government. And without doubt, these potential changes would *not* benefit the monopoly of the Church of England, or the executive power of the king. This radical sentiment was probably a reason for which Rogers reminded his reader that, he that is 'free-born', is likewise born in state of subjection to laws. And although he enjoyed certain rights, he was by being a 'subject' also entitled to some measures of obedience.<sup>388</sup> Furthermore, Molesworth had argued with regard to Denmark and Sweden that, people previously had enjoyed vast rights. Rogers did not only perceive this as wrong, but also underlined the misguided premise for this

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<sup>382</sup> Ibid, 42.

<sup>383</sup> Schwoerer, 1993: 236.

<sup>384</sup> Rogers, 1694: 37.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid, 39-40.

<sup>386</sup> This point about rhetorical strategy is taken from Skinner, 2002: 151.

<sup>387</sup> Robbins, 1959: 114.

<sup>388</sup> Rogers, 1694: 63.



view; as if the 'lowest of the People amongst us ought to assume the same rights'.<sup>389</sup>

At the heart of Rogers attack on Molesworth's conception of liberty then, was the idea that an uncritical notion of liberty was dangerous. For example, a free state where the multitude decided and enacted laws, was equated with chaos and tumult. Security was more important. In addition, even if the lower strata of society enjoyed some limited rights, they were, however, first and foremost subjects – and in this sense, unsuited to partake in government.

#### **6.4 Rogers's conception: 'passive resistance' as the most admirable liberty.**

Rogers's conception of liberty rested upon the language of divine-right kingship. This theory was often used by Tories. According to them, the king received his authority directly from God. The king therefore possessed an indefeasible hereditary right to the crown. As a result, he was not to be resisted with force either. This theory encompassed absolute, and not arbitrary government.<sup>390</sup> In line with this, Rogers made a normative statement in which 'all kings' were limited and bounded by the eternal laws of reason. More importantly, a king was under the immediate influence of the Deity he represented.<sup>391</sup> Later, Rogers addressed Molesworth (the *Prefacer*) and asked him to be:

So civil and good natur'd for the future, as to give God leave to Govern the Kingdoms of the Earth in his own way; that he would acknowledge all power is from God, that by him Kings Reign, and princes decree Justice.<sup>392</sup>

According to Rogers, not only was the king under the influence of God, but the Parliament was too.<sup>393</sup> The king – by being directed by God and his tutelary Angels – was *de facto* God's vicegerent on earth. As such, it was a very reasonable request, not to revise current political regime. There was no reason for the key neo-roman contention, that the actions of the body politic needed to be determined by the will of the members as a whole. If this was equated with personal freedom, such a freedom was certainly contradictory, and sign of poor belief, in

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<sup>389</sup> Ibid, 60.

<sup>390</sup> Schwoerer, 1993: 236.

<sup>391</sup> Rogers, 1694: 40.

<sup>392</sup> Ibid, 98.

<sup>393</sup> Ibid, 99.

the eyes of God.

Moreover, it is worth recalling that the Reformation did not exclude a Protestant view in which the sacred operated in the secular world.<sup>394</sup> For instance, the idea of Providence was not unconventional in late seventeenth century. After the Glorious Revolution by example, many Tories invoked the idea of Providence to explain the Revolution.<sup>395</sup> This meant that God was, in one way or another, the real cause for the events. Admittedly, this idea eased some troubled High-Church minds as well. It was not altogether easy to cherish the idea of passive resistance in the 1690s England, remembering as well that James II spent his days in exile at St Germain-en-Laye, just outside Paris.<sup>396</sup>

In order to amplify that the political regime mirrored a God-given order, Rogers's demonstrated in the last part, *The Consolation of the Cross: Or the Two Grand Pillars of Man's Security In this Worlds*, that the 'Passive Doctrines' was reasonable. Rogers's illocutionary force, seems to have been, to illuminate this. In other words, he was not just writing something, he was also doing something.

Rogers contended that men ought to remember their place in the world; not to rebel in the face of tyrant, and not be carried away of the dangerous notion of liberty. This paralleled the divine-right outlook. Mankind was subjects in a God-given order, and therefore entitled to measures of obedience.<sup>397</sup> Accordingly, even if one promoted liberty in the face of a tyrant, which really meant chaos and insecurity, it would be, to rebel against God. This was the case for which Rogers said that; 'this passive sate is not a state of slavery, but of adoption and Glorious Liberty'.<sup>398</sup> The stoic subject then, embracing his suffering under a tyranny, would in this sense enjoy personal liberty. Perhaps needless to say, this was not a view without some serious implications – especially with regard to evil. For instance, as Rogers's said, Nero had been one of many persecuting emperors in Rome which, in the hands of God, had been the 'real whips' of mankind.<sup>399</sup>

To Rogers however, glorious liberty – equated as passive resistance – was the most admirable of all. This was connected to human life in the temporal realm. In short, life was never going to be easy. It was likely to be a struggle for every individual. For example,

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<sup>394</sup> Robert W Scribner: "The Reformation, Popular Magic, and the 'Disenchantment of the World' *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol 23, (The MIT Press, 1993) 484.

<sup>395</sup> Schworer, 1993: 236.

<sup>396</sup> James spent the rest of his days exiled in St Germain-en-Laye. See, Harris, 2006: 477.

<sup>397</sup> Rogers, 1694: 63.

<sup>398</sup> Ibid, 148.

<sup>399</sup> Ibid, 41.

Rogers ridiculed Molesworth because he thought that human affairs were a kind of `Epicurean state of Carnal Ease and complacency'.<sup>400</sup> So, when Rogers said that God was the `Sole Disposer of all Events',<sup>401</sup> he also intended to show that suffering was part of God's handwork. Christ left us an example that we should follow in his steps, and sometimes have to share his suffering.<sup>402</sup>

Rogers was a passionate Christian, and he was here hitting the drum of the `insufficiency of man'. That man by nature was insufficient had longer traditions in Christian thought. A central element in the mystical movement called *devotio moderna* for instance, developed in Germany and the Netherlands at the end of the fourteenth century, was that the aim of the faithful soul must be to remain passive in its acceptance of God's grace.<sup>403</sup> Luther would later draw on this strand of thought – emphasizing the sinner to place the whole of his trust in God.<sup>404</sup>

As Rogers said, this meant that men were bound to be passive whether God pleased to take away our lives by pestilence, famine, the actions of a Tyrant, or a sword of the destroying angel.<sup>405</sup> To be sure, such miseries were much more honorable before God than it could be before the eyes of men. Rogers encapsulated this by saying that, `our soul will shine bright' when standing above the hardship in the world.<sup>406</sup> There was, in other words, no coincidence when Rogers applied the term `vanity of secular greatness'. In short, earthly pleasures were never going to be a remedy for the eternal soul.

Two aspects ought to be discussed regarding Rogers take on political authority. First, the passive doctrines did not generally mean that, pastors were to stay passive facing an ungodly king. Rather, pastors had the right to school their prince in true religion. For example, in the events of 1688, the first revolution, namely the Anglican, was an act of a Reformation, conducted by the clergy against their ungodly king.<sup>407</sup> It was the subsequent Williamite revolution, which led to the dynastic coup.<sup>408</sup> To put it briefly then, there were seeds of resistance in Anglican political thought – even if this went along a precise concern to

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<sup>400</sup> Ibid, 118.

<sup>401</sup> Ibid, 150.

<sup>402</sup> Ibid, 137-138.

<sup>403</sup> Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought, Volume 2: The Age of Reformation* (Cambridge, 1978) 22.

<sup>404</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>405</sup> Rogers, 1694: 127.

<sup>406</sup> Ibid, 158.

<sup>407</sup> Goldie, 1991: 107 and 111.

<sup>408</sup> Ibid, 107, 109.

distance itself from the 'king-killing' doctrines of the Whigs.<sup>409</sup> It did not mean either, that the Revolution was altogether easy to legitimize for the Tories. Secondly, and even though Rogers ideas may seem original to a modern mind, they were not, however, so unconventional. As mentioned above, some views had longer traditions. By example, there are elements in Rogers's text resembling Luther's *On Secular Authority: how far does the Obedience owed to it extend?*. The latter work was from 1524, in the early period before Protestants were driven to more radical positions. In this notable text, Luther invoked the injunctions by St. Paul, and stressed that; 'Power is the ordinance of God [...] Those in power do not bear the sword in vain. For power is the handmaiden of God...'.<sup>410</sup> In other words, we should submit ourselves to the highest power and treat them as ordained by God.<sup>411</sup> Whilst Luther did not permit armed resistance, even against tyrants, he no less insisted on the duty to disobey commands contrary to the word of God.<sup>412</sup> So the text gave, to some extent, legitimacy for clerical resistance. Accordingly, there were examples of English divines in the 1670s and 1680s, which recapitulated Luther's early position.<sup>413</sup>

## 6.5 The accusation of following Hobbes in matters of religion.

Rogers said a few times that Molesworth was influenced by Hobbes.<sup>414</sup> Yet, as this thesis has demonstrated, neo-roman liberty was clearly distinct from that of Hobbes. According to the neo-roman theory, an individual could only enjoy liberty in a 'free state'. In addition, the neo-roman adherents saw arbitrary rule, in which you were under the power of someone else, as slavery *per se*. The event in 1660 Copenhagen was therefore treated as a definitive change from freedom to slavery. Hobbes approached on the other hand, this alleged freedom as just a contradiction in terms. Every form of government meant subjection. It was therefore nonsense to speak of liberty under a government.

So how then, could Molesworth be influenced by Hobbes? On the outset, the

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<sup>409</sup> Ibid, 115.

<sup>410</sup> Martin Luther; *On Secular Authority: how far does the Obedience owed to it extend?* (1524) 7. (Due to lack of page numbers in this translation, the page- numbers listed here are based on a regular A4 printing of the document). Accessed from: <http://home.roadrunner.com/~rickgardiner/texts/secauth.html> (05/02/2014)

<sup>411</sup> Skinner, 1978: 15.

<sup>412</sup> Goldie, 1991: 114.

<sup>413</sup> Ibid, 113-114.

<sup>414</sup> By example, see Rogers, 1694: 15, 33and 92.

association of a neo-roman with the monarchial absolutist might seem odd. But Molesworth was not the only neo-roman to be accused of this. His intellectual forerunner, James Harrington, was also accused of following Hobbes's *Leviathan* in matters of religion. In Harrington's ideal Commonwealth, the senate had supreme authority – also over religion. More importantly, such an accusation was possible since Hobbes was, on an ecclesiological level, a Whig.<sup>415</sup>

Advocates of the church position often classified their critics with Spinoza and Hobbes on the basis of their supposed intentions.<sup>416</sup> As such, Rogers put forward a serious allegation claiming that Molesworth was following; '*Leviathan* (part 3. Cap 47) where Mr. Hobbs endeavoring to over-throw Christ kingdom in this world'.<sup>417</sup> Rogers argued that Hobbes in this part contended that the Roman clergy's main design had been to support their secular greatness. From a historical outlook then, religion seemed to be a pretense for clerical greed. That religion had been corrupted from the beginning by priests was, if we recall, also the theme in Sir Robert Howard's *History of Religion*. This was something Rogers saw as important to dispute. As such, it was a riddle to him how Christ's kingdom on Earth could be a Popish fraud to advance the greedy clergy, when this doctrine was preached by Christ himself.<sup>418</sup>

However, whether if Molesworth was under the influence of Hobbes or not, he too concluded that clergy, and not just the Popish, could become a corrupting factor.<sup>419</sup> Consequently, Rogers said that Molesworth viewed every prince, which was zealous for the Church and clergy, as an usurper.<sup>420</sup> If not an usurper, Molesworth was clearly hostile to governments in which clerics dominated. With regard to Hobbes, he also saw that, as religion was essential to the state, it also could become corrupting.<sup>421</sup> So, although their approach to liberty was incompatible, both nonetheless perceived religion as potentially corrupting to political life.

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<sup>415</sup> Goldie, 1693: 217.

<sup>416</sup> James Dybikowski, 'The Critique of Christianity', in Martin Fitzpatrick, Peter Jones, Christa Knellwolf and Ian McCalman (eds) *The Enlightenment World*, (London and New York, 2004) 42.

<sup>417</sup> Rogers, 1694: 33.

<sup>418</sup> *Ibid*, 34.

<sup>419</sup> Molesworth, 1693: 235-236.

<sup>420</sup> Rogers, 1694: 32.

<sup>421</sup> Champion, 1992: 174.

## 6.6 Summary.

Going against his `anti-monarchial' opponent, Rogers denied the existence of an Original Contract, and rather used Magna Carta to prove that political power from the start was lodged within the king. Besides this, Rogers argued that contemporary education benefited of modern improvements, and that, many well-know ancients, such as Aristotle, treated monarchy as a legit form of government. Regarding neo-roman liberty, it was better to live under an absolute government, which provided security, than to live under a `free-state' in which the multitude decided. The latter meant chaos and tumult. Furthermore, Rogers's conception of liberty rested on divine-right kingship. The king was God's vicegerent on earth, and God was the disposer of all events. Political institutions, good or bad, therefore mirrored a God-given order. The most admirable liberty therefore, was not equated with a certain form of government, institutional practice, laws, or so on. The most admirable liberty *was* passive resistance. Where the Old Whigs emphasized the duty of the citizen to participate in government, Rogers rather underlined the duty of staying passive after the model of Christ. This liberty was perhaps not the most pleasurable in the temporal realm, but it was the remedy for the soul.



## 7 William King: *Animadversions On a Pretended Account of Denmark*.

This chapter examines William King's (1663-1712) contribution to the debate. The chapter will give a short historical background, for instance with regard to what prompted the appearance of the *Animadversions*, which again differed from Crull and Rogers. It also discusses King's illocutionary intent, and naturally, King's historical discourse, and his approach to Molesworth's neo-roman conception of liberty.

### 7.1 Background:

The *Animadversions On a Pretended Account of Denmark* was anonymously published in the early autumn of 1694. The exact date is difficult to assess, but Jan Payen La Foulere, the Danish associate in London, mentioned the rejoinder in a letter he sent to Copenhagen, dated 17 august 1694. In this, Foulere told that there was a scholar in London who had taken the time to reply to Molesworth's arrogant book.<sup>422</sup> Foulere would two years later expand King's rejoinder, and this was coupled with editions of the *Animadversions* in Dutch and German.<sup>423</sup>

The author of the *Animadversions* was an Oxford professor and arch-Tory, Dr William King.<sup>424</sup> King was rewarded with an office as a secretary to Princess Anne in January 1695 as a result of the tract.<sup>425</sup> King belonged to England's high aristocracy. He was already a well-known name on the literary scene before Molesworth's *Account* appeared, and he wrote several other works during his lifetime.<sup>426</sup> In 1711 for example, his *Historical Account of the Heathen Gods and Heroes, necessary for the understanding of the ancient Poets* appeared. It became an acknowledged work, published in several editions. Besides this, King had a hand, often in a sarcastic way, in many political essays of that period.<sup>427</sup> This engagement must be

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<sup>422</sup> Brasch, 1879: 77.

<sup>423</sup> Olden Jørgensen, 2008:71.

<sup>424</sup> Ibid, 71.

<sup>425</sup> Brasch, 1879: 75.

<sup>426</sup> Ibid 73, 76.

<sup>427</sup> William King, *The Original Works of William King, LL.D. Advocate of the doctors commons; judge of the high court of Admiralty and keeper of the records in Ireland and vicar general to the lord primate. Now first*



understood from his religious disposition and his warm zeal for the church. For instance, he was on the side of Oxford fellow Henry Sacheverell— a prominent High-church man who attacked the Whig's in his sermons – in a political dispute in 1710.<sup>428</sup> Furthermore, and as one of his biographers says, King would never enter upon any business of the day till he had performed his duties, and read several portions of Scripture out of the Psalms, the Prophets, and the New Testament.<sup>429</sup> King died at a young age, 49 years old. He was buried in Westminster Abbey.<sup>430</sup>

The *Animadversions* was written on a request by the Danish chaplain in London, Iver Brink. Brink was born in Norway. He had worked a couple of years as a priest for the Danish auxiliary troops in the service of England, before he came to London in 1692.<sup>431</sup> It was Molesworth who secured these troops during his stay in Denmark. Nonetheless, faced with the *Account's* success, Brink's patriotism led him to see this as a national matter. The *Account* also affected him and his parish in its relation to England. One must assume that Brink was at unease with the fact that an English representative wrote the tract, which was so explicit in its criticism of Denmark. This was probably the case for why King wrote in the beginning of the *Animadversions*, that the author of the *Account* should rather 'have chosen an Enemies Country for the subject of his Satyr'. Not only was 7000 Danes fighting in 'their Majesties Service', but 'our very Ancestors came originally from one of its provinces'.<sup>432</sup>

William King published a satirical tract in 1693, and it is likely that this directed Brink's attention towards King. This meant that the court in Copenhagen did not have any part in the publishing of the *Animadversions*. Its appearance was rather owed to the effort of Danish-Norwegian patriot, Iver Brink.<sup>433</sup> Continuing this, Brink provided King with knowledge about Denmark in a memoir. Unlike Rogers then for example, King showed a great deal of knowledge about Denmark, by which he did not only discuss the *Account's* Preface. This can be illustrated with the composition of the *Animadversions*. The 202 page long pamphlet was organized in the same manner as Molesworth's tract; seventeen chapters with the same titles.

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*collected into three volumes: with historical notes, and memoirs of the author. Volume the first.* Ed John Nichols, (printed for the editor, and sold by n, Conant, London 1776) Xxi- xxii.

<sup>428</sup> Brasch, 1879:76.

<sup>429</sup> King, 1776: xxviii.

<sup>430</sup> Brasch, 1879:76.

<sup>431</sup> Ibid 72.

<sup>432</sup> William King, *Animadversions on a pretended Account of Denmark*. (London, printed for Tho.Bennet, 1694) 1-2.

<sup>433</sup> Ibid, 72-73.

## 7.2 King's attack: rhetorical manipulation, satire, and the exposing of a Commonwealthman.

Before moving on to King's historical discourse, and his approach to Molesworth's neo-roman conception of liberty, it is necessary – in order to gain a satisfactory understanding of the text – to discuss what King was doing in writing. To gain uptake on this requires an analysis of his illocutionary intent.<sup>434</sup> There are particular two aspect of this. The most significant is that King tried to expose Molesworth by using his utterances again him. This was done with irony and satire. As Christian Brasch pointed out in his notable survey from 1879, the vast approval the *Animadversions* received from Christian V and prince George, must be ascribed to this.<sup>435</sup> What King was doing then was to employ some rhetorical strategies, with the intention to denounce and make fun of his political opponent.

This rhetorical manipulation can be illustrated by the front cover of the *Animadversions*. On the title page, King cited Molesworth on; 'I think it very pertinent to take notice that in Denmark there are no seditions, mutinies, or libels against the government'.<sup>436</sup> Thus, the strong value of patriotism and love of the father country, which Molesworth championed as a virtue, was arguably found in Denmark.<sup>437</sup> King said more explicitly that 'it would be tedious to the reader to account all the contradictions that are to be met with'.<sup>438</sup> Not only had this author an 'excellent faculty at crowding a great many errors into little room', but the 'the author cannot write consistently two pages together'.<sup>439</sup> For example, it was contradictory to say that the clergy were 'entirely dependant upon the crown', (as if their salary was wholly given them by the king) when in the next passage, the 'best subsistence of the priest in cities and towns being voluntary benovelence'.<sup>440</sup> And how could Funen, with plenty of corn, hogs, lakes, and woods, produce 'nothing for the merchant to export, except some few horses'?<sup>441</sup> These two examples are but a few of them King listed up, but they demonstrate what King was doing. By pointing out such minor flaws over and over, the serious theme in the *Account* became less significant. As King himself pointed out, how could anybody take anyone seriously if they constantly contradicted themselves?

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<sup>434</sup> Skinner, 2002: 100.

<sup>435</sup> Brasch, 1879: 82.

<sup>436</sup> See title page, and Molesworth, 1693: 226.

<sup>437</sup> Brasch, 1879: 83.

<sup>438</sup> King, 1694:, 32.

<sup>439</sup> Ibid, 47, and Preface.

<sup>440</sup> King, 1694: 182 and Molesworth, 1693: 229, 231.

<sup>441</sup> King, 1694: 33 and Molesworth, 1693: 26.

The other important aspect of what King was doing in writing was to expose Molesworth as a true Commonwealthman. In his Preface, which he had organized as a satirical defense for Molesworth, King wrote that that there were several maxims in the *Account* which would favor much of a Commonwealth. These maxims were not compatible with a person who had served their majesties and their interest, or the Glory of the English nation.<sup>442</sup> The ironic case King tried to make was that, it was a serious insult to assign the anonymous *Account*, with its abhorrent political content to a 'gentleman' like Molesworth.<sup>443</sup> Therefore, King concluded his Preface by saying that 'I would not, Sir, believe any thing like this of you'.

Of course, King knew that it was Molesworth had written the tract. When he commented on chapter VI, *Of their Form of Government*, which King saw as 'our authors masterpiece', he expressively equated the author as a Commonwealthman.<sup>444</sup> And he said that;

The constitution of a government by a parliament is signal blessing, but for the most part, those who make the greatest bluster with it, are men who would leave out the principal part of it, and commit the greatest errors about it.<sup>445</sup>

King was in other words positioning himself with Thomas Rogers, and the anti-monarchical attack he launched. According to King, there was no proper Parliament without a strong royal element.<sup>446</sup> And Molesworth, as a Commonwealthman, would naturally leave this element out. This was the case for why King finished his tract by saying that; if the present state of both kingdoms (Denmark and England) continued to be fixed and durable, Molesworth's book lost its design.<sup>447</sup> In line with this statement, Molesworth was not trying to bring awareness of liberty, and defend status quo from 1688. He was rather trying to rebel against it.

It is worth recognizing that King emphasized the word Commonwealthman. It illustrate to some extent, the serious of implication of the word Commonwealth in the 1690s England. As mentioned in the chapter on Molesworth, the term Commonwealthmen was applied by their political adversaries which, allegedly, signified an intention to introduce a

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<sup>442</sup> King, 1694: see Preface.

<sup>443</sup> Brasch, 1879: 80-81.

<sup>444</sup> King, 1694: 76.

<sup>445</sup> Ibid, 56.

<sup>446</sup> Ibid, 57.

<sup>447</sup> Ibid, 202.

new republic after Cromwell's pattern.<sup>448</sup> The name Commonwealth therefore, were often associated with anarchy, confusion, sedition and leveling by the more conservative minded.<sup>449</sup> And as an arch-Tory, King also associated the word with this.

To sum up King's main illocutionary force then, it was first and foremost to use Molesworth's words against him, and draw on the repertoire of satire, in order to expose the project for what it really was; since advanced by a Commonwealthman in disguise, the *Account* was dishonest and rebellious.

### **7.3 The historical discourse: The grand historical narrative, 1660, and the languages of Rome.**

King provided his own all-encompassing narrative in the *Animadversions*. In this, the Danes and the English had a shared history; 'Our very ancestors' came from the Danes provinces, and the Danes, had 'once been our master'.<sup>450</sup> King was here referring to Norse expansion and conquest from the ninth century. King continued this by saying that The Danes originated from the warlike nation of the Goths. Since they never submitted to the Roman Empire, the Goths royal line, and their succession, had gone uninterrupted for hundreds of years. King argued that the laws of the Goths were so agreeable to the northern people that, when William the Conqueror was the give laws to the English, he made the greatest use 'of the Danish laws to that purpose from the love he bore to the Danes, from which the Normans took their original'.<sup>451</sup> As a result, Danish law had also influenced the English equivalent.

Molesworth also held that the ancient form of government of the Goths and Vandals was the same in the north.<sup>452</sup> However, what King took issue with, was the idea of a contract, with which the subject legitimately could resist and exercise power over the royal office. He ridiculed Molesworth historical narrative in which the 'King was chosen by the people of all sorts', and that 'they frequently deposed' the king if he ruled tyrannically.<sup>453</sup> King said in a sarcastic way that;

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<sup>448</sup> Holt, 1968: 5.

<sup>449</sup> Robbins, 1959: 127.

<sup>450</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>451</sup> King, 1694: 167-168.

<sup>452</sup> Molesworth, 1693: 38.

<sup>453</sup> Ibid, 39-40.

... They oftener threw their voices away upon some private person, who according to this authors description, might possibly be some honest drunken sleepy fellow, that had a crown dropt into his mouth as he lay yawning[...]the villain, who had dispatched his prince succeeded him; hence there arose a well ordered Government.<sup>454</sup>

This lost practice was that Molesworth complained so much about. But to King, this `constitutional practice´ was surely nothing to strive for. More importantly, this was far away from the ancient custom in the north. According to King, history showed that strict obedience, and entire submission to the prince, was the reigning principle `from immemorial times´.<sup>455</sup> It was far away from a republic. And regarding the practice of election, historians had shown that there were vast reasons for inheritance. As such, King pointed out that the estates were summoned after the death of a prince – but this was symbolic act, in which they did *not* elect, but rather confirm their next heir. King acknowledged that the Danes sometimes renounced their allegiance to their royals. But these instances were extremely few, and the Danes perceived such incidents as `their greatest misfortunes´.<sup>456</sup>

This historical analysis affected King´s approach to the events in 1660. King mentioned that Denmark laid aside their assembly of the state some years ago, and gave `their king greater extent of power in that particular, than his predecessors formerly enjoyed´.<sup>457</sup> But this transition to absolute dominion was not so drastic when strict obedience, and submission to the crown was an ancient custom. Besides, the estates consent was just a formality as well. In addition, King argued that absolute power was not given to the king before the necessity became unavoidable. The nobility had throughout oppressed the commonality, and being exempted from taxes. After the war with Sweden, the Commons found themselves unable to live longer under such oppressions.<sup>458</sup> Denmark was `being upon the brink of ruin´, when both lords and commons offered the king to make him absolute. These two considerations were important in playing down 1660 as a truly transformative event.

Interestingly, King echoed Crull when he told that Otte Nielsen Krag, a representative for the Danish nobility, had labeled the commons as slaves during the events in 1660. Crull approached 1660, if we recall, as an event where the people freed themselves from the slavery of the nobles. King also drew on this analysis. He asked rhetorically, how they could part with their liberty entirely, when they `gave this power to the king, on the express purpose to gain

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<sup>454</sup> King, 1694: 67.

<sup>455</sup> Ibid, 61.

<sup>456</sup> Ibid, 62.

<sup>457</sup> Ibid, 60.

<sup>458</sup> Ibid, 71-72.

it?<sup>459</sup> King's point was obvious; you cannot part with something you do not possess. Not only did King contradict that 1660 was a sudden turn from freedom to slavery, but he also suggested that the multitude of the Danes got more freedom after 1660.

King continued this by making two other reflections. The first was that the king in Denmark was no more absolute than the protestant religion allowed him to be. The king was under the 'obligations', that is limited, by the Holy Scripture, and the Confession of Augsburg.<sup>460</sup> The other was that the people after 1660 was granted certain privileges, not previously enjoyed. These privileges were 'far from insignificant'. Some privileges were given to the benefit of trade, besides 'the liberty to purchase any lands and lordship whatsoever'. What is more is that parents had the comfort to see their children being admitted to all honors, public offices, military and civil employments.<sup>461</sup> The Danish King was therefore still limited – however not by the estates, but by Scripture and the Confession of Augsburg. Just as important was that certain rights, not previously enjoyed, were given to the Danes after the transition to absolute dominion.

Even though the Danish royals were limited by the Holy Scripture, this did not mean, however, that the balance of power within court was in favor of the ecclesiastics. For example, when Danish bishops took the oath of allegiance, the primary emphasis was on the duty they owed to their absolutist king. Their ecclesiastic duties were of secondary importance.<sup>462</sup> Article 4 in *Kongeloven* also said that the king alone possessed the authority to 'isette og afsette alle Betiente, høye og lawe'. This implied that all officials had one source, which was God's viceregent on earth, the Danish king. On the whole, religion was not a limiting factor. It was rather perceived as an effective tool in exercising royal authority. The theocratic position was preferred in the decades after 1660. Prominent Danish theologians passionately advocated divine right theory,<sup>463</sup> and in official documents such as the Danish Law (1683), there was a reinforced version of the idea that God had granted his king absolute and hereditary power.<sup>464</sup> One can say that Molesworth reflection did not emerge out from

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<sup>459</sup> Ibid, 77-78.

<sup>460</sup> Ibid, 68.

<sup>461</sup> Ibid, 88.

<sup>462</sup> Rian, 2014: 118.

<sup>463</sup> Ibid, 113-114.

<sup>464</sup> Jeppe Nevers, 'The Transformation of Danish Monarchism in the Age of Enlightenment' in Pasi Ihalainen, Michael Bregnsbo, Karin Sennefelt, Patrik Winton, (eds) *Scandinavia in the Age of Revolution. Nordic Political Cultures, 1740-1820* (Farnham, 2011) 158.

nothing. As Molesworth contended, the priests were a sure card, and the prince – by having them on his side – could hardly fail.<sup>465</sup>

Lastly in discussing the historical discourse, it has to be mentioned, that King took issue with Molesworth veneration of Rome. Even though he did not debate it extensively, he made a couple of remarks in the Preface. One serious aspect was that Molesworth chose Brutus, among all the Roman heroes, to be his ‘model of exact virtue’. In relation to Cæsar, Brutus obviously had deserted the virtues he pretended to admire, according to King. The ironic tone was evident as well when he said that Brutus ‘was a very fine model indeed for a man of quality’. Crull and Rogers also highlighted the seriousness of choosing Brutus as model. The latter said that; ‘no less than Brutus, his beloved, magnanimous, the brave and king-killing Brutus, must be his guide and director’.<sup>466</sup> Going back to King, there is perhaps no surprise that he went to the Bible, and argued that Christ was the best example if one wanted to pitch upon admirable virtues. His ‘greatness of mind’ and ‘contempt of death’ clearly surpassed that of the Greek and Roman heroes.<sup>467</sup> In commenting on Molesworth’s views on education, King also invoked the Bible; although ‘Tully’s offices be a very good book, yet the bible, in my opinion, is a better’.<sup>468</sup>

Even though King’s remarks were few on this subject, they are of importance. In admiring the ancient Romans and Greeks, it was not only Molesworth who tried to construct a system of virtue independent of religion, or the belief of a Deity. It was other in his circle as well, such as Toland and Shaftesbury – the latter a true republican idealist and freethinking cosmopolitan.<sup>469</sup> As mentioned in the Introduction, there was a link between republican-minded men like Molesworth and religious skepticism. Even though atheism was marginal,<sup>470</sup> Christian monopoly as the sole guide for human behavior, became increasingly challenged during the latter part of the seventeenth century. Naturally, it was also defended – which the birth High Church movement demonstrated. Molesworth’s and King’s statements highlight this dynamic.

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<sup>465</sup> Molesworth, 1693: 239.

<sup>466</sup> Rogers, 1694: 66-67.

<sup>467</sup> King, 1694: see Preface.

<sup>468</sup> Ibid, Preface.

<sup>469</sup> Israel, 2006: 348.

<sup>470</sup> Goldie, 1993: 211.

## 7.4 King's approach to Molesworth's neo-roman conception of liberty.

Post-1688 Britain was an essentially parliamentary monarchy. It was chiefly managed by a landed aristocracy, and had a strong established church which revered the monarch as its head.<sup>471</sup> The last aspect of a revered monarch is important to remember, and it can be a useful starting point in a discussion of King's approach to the neo-roman thought in the *Account*. Interestingly, the only time (more or less) King operates within the idioms of 'slavery' and 'freedom', essential for the neo-roman conception, is when he mentioned the first civil war in England. Even though King did not provide a normative statement of what liberty was, he nonetheless did it regarding slavery. In the Preface King said that;

...long before these later ages of slavery; that is, before Milton ever wrote, or England suffer'd under the tyranny of a Commonwealth; even passive obedience, however unintelligible to this Author, as stated by revered and learned divines[...] would be more suitable to sovereign authority, and the welfare of these nations, than any doctrines since coined.<sup>472</sup>

King identified slavery and tyranny with a Commonwealth. The prominent neo-roman adherent John Milton had, if we recall, treated the impending restoration of the English monarchy as a return to servitude.<sup>473</sup> Milton wrote many anti-monarchical tracts, and this was likely what King had in mind when wrote so negatively about him. According to King, the English Parliament was lost several years from the death of King Charles the first, to the restoration of his son. The reason was that, it was impossible by nature, to have a Parliament in its true perfection, 'without a King in his full prerogative and splendor'.<sup>474</sup> Advanced by an arch-Tory, this statement can be used to underline that the Church revered the king as its head after 1688. Furthermore, one can argue that King's statement turned the argument of the most forthright neo-roman theorists upside down. Where these invoked the argument of Livy, in which no community living under a king can be regarded as a free state, King argued that no community living in a Commonwealth has any title to be regarded as a free state (or at least should be perceived as a legitimate form of rule). A natural consequence of slavery within a Commonwealth is that you do not enjoy liberty in it.

Another neo-roman contention King challenged was the maxim where subjects were

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<sup>471</sup> Israel, 2006: 243.

<sup>472</sup> King, 1694: Preface.

<sup>473</sup> Skinner, 2008: 215.

<sup>474</sup> King, 1694: 60.



reduced to slaves, if they were within arbitrary range. With regard to Denmark, King acknowledged that the government in Denmark could become corrupt.<sup>475</sup> But this was not the case, even post 1660, since the king did not misuse his powers. The king of Denmark was rather universally loved by his people.<sup>476</sup> As such, King argued in a body-politic metaphor, that the Danes were 'so far from finding themselves in a *sickly constitution*'.<sup>477</sup> To be within arbitrary range then, did not reduce you to a slave. Since the king had to *de facto* misuse his powers, it was not enough that a government was arbitrary in theory. Even in an absolutist regime, King argued that the Danes continued their 'free and merry way of living'.<sup>478</sup> King did not agree with the premise then, in which a free state and its actions needed to be determined by the will of its members, in order to be seen as preferable. The lack of national assembly did not deprive you of your personal liberty either.

When King discussed Denmark, he turned what Molesworth saw as vices, into virtues. This was especially the case with Molesworth notion of clashing of interests. It was originally Machiavelli, the republican hero for the later neo-roman's, who introduced this as something positive in political life during the Renaissance. In Machiavelli's *Discourses on Livy*, and his praise for Roman republicanism, Machiavelli argued that Rome's liberty was protected by the discord between the people and *grandi*.<sup>479</sup> In insisting on that political conflict was something good, Machiavelli departed from his republican predecessors. The belief that faction constituted one of the gravest threats to political liberty had been one of the leading themes of Florentine political theory ever since the end of the thirteenth century.<sup>480</sup> Drawing on the idea put forward by Machiavelli, Molesworth also approached clashing of interests as a genuine positive thing. The lack of it rendered a constitution sickly – thereby producing habitual slavery and intellectual decay. To King, however, clashing of interest in political life was an unhealthy sign, a vice. According to him, Molesworth was a 'mighty lover of seditions within a kingdom'.<sup>481</sup> King saw that the *Ancien Regime* was more preferable than Denmark to 'our author' since the clergy were under the influence of Rome. The reason was that the influence of Rome provided clashing of interests – a 'check'.<sup>482</sup> King was right. In Molesworth neo-roman conception, France was less prone to fall into habitual slavery and decay because of

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<sup>475</sup> Ibid, 100.

<sup>476</sup> Ibid, 156.

<sup>477</sup> Ibid, 91.

<sup>478</sup> Ibid, 90.

<sup>479</sup> John M Najemy, *A history of Florence 1200-1575*, (Malden, 2008), 437.

<sup>480</sup> Skinner, 1998 b: 182.

<sup>481</sup> King, 1694: 160.

<sup>482</sup> Ibid, 195.

this opposition. Yet, the interesting point King made was that that blind obedience and habitual slavery in reality was a contended mind – owed to a strong and vigorous government.<sup>483</sup> So, where Molesworth saw the lack of clashing of interests as something corrupting for political life, King saw the opposite. This was also the point King had tried to make on his front cover, where he cited Molesworth on that there was no mutinies or libels against the government in Denmark. Many of the negative aspects Molesworth put forward, was moreover ‘blessings and cements which make government happy, and consequently will render this of Denmark fix and durable’<sup>484</sup>

On the whole, the situation in Denmark was not dreadful as Molesworth saw them. Firstly, King suggested that the King of Denmark not was so arbitrary as Molesworth wanted him to be.<sup>485</sup> Secondly, and owed to the Law, the Danes knew that what ‘they have *to day*, shall not be taken from them *to morrow*’.<sup>486</sup> Here King attacked Molesworth’s contention, in which the Danes spent all their money at once, and lived ‘*to day*’ as the poet advised’.<sup>487</sup> The reason for this was that the Danes knew what they had, might be taken from them at any time. Thirdly, the Danes were not treated as slaves when they met with some sort of royal or official envoy.<sup>488</sup> This was one of the greatest inconveniences in Denmark in the eyes of Molesworth. These points paralleled King’s historical narrative in which the situation had improved after 1660. The effect was that King challenged Molesworth’s key contention, in which all the negative aspects in post-1660 Denmark was the constant effects of arbitrary rule.<sup>489</sup>

King did not, however, expressively say that Danes enjoyed liberty, even though they continued their ‘free and merry way of living’. An answer to this is possibly that, Denmark lacked a Parliament, and that King hinted that such a Parliament with a strong royal element was the most preferable. That being said, however, there is one passage which suggests why King occluded to say this. In short, King took issue with the neo-roman idea of a perfect natural state. In addressing his opponent, King said that:

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<sup>483</sup> Ibid, 90.

<sup>484</sup> Ibid, 201.

<sup>485</sup> Ibid, 149.

<sup>486</sup> Ibid, 104.

<sup>487</sup> Molesworth, 1693: 76.

<sup>488</sup> King, 1694: 113.

<sup>489</sup> See Molesworth, 1693: 43.

But alas the love of Liberty (which was that of knight errantry, and rambling to seek their fortunes in foreign countries, being now quite extinct in the North, they find sufficient conveniences at home, where obedience to their prince secures their ease.<sup>490</sup>

King's arguments resembled the Hobbesian. Hobbes argued that any government implied absolute subjection.<sup>491</sup> Absolute subjection was indeed most desirable since, the natural state were one in which anyone could rightly kill or despoil anyone else.<sup>492</sup> King's statement also suggests a similar approach to liberty. In this, civility and security was preferred before an ancient liberty. King ridiculed Molesworth's ancient historical narrative, where chaos and murder gave rise to a 'well-ordered' government. Even though one perhaps enjoyed liberty in this natural state, it was simply not admirable. As King said, such 'liberty' really was princely adventure and conquest.

In order to appreciate such an assessment of King's political argument in the *Animadversions*, one has to recall the approach to political authority by his fellow Tories. The Tories used the language of divine-right kingship and relied on Scripture when they promoted that a King received his authority directly from God. More importantly, this was a theory of absolute, and not arbitrary government.<sup>493</sup> There is indeed an essence of this in the *Animadversions*, in which King approached Denmark as absolute, but not as arbitrary. The government could become corrupt. Yet, the king had not transgressed out of bonds of Scripture, and in general, misused his powers. In line with this, Denmark could be seen as preferable after 1660— at least more preferable than the freedom enjoyed in the natural state. Hypothetically, if the regime had turned from absolute to arbitrary, it is not altogether certain that King would have held this vantage point.

The last neo-roman assumption King challenged was that the lack of a free state breeds intellectual decay. In the *Animadversions*, King argued that learning not was at a low ebb. He did this by naming 'some of those great men in all sciences, which have been eminent for their learning'.<sup>494</sup> But he did not compare pre-and post 1660 in that regard.<sup>495</sup> He just argued that learning still was cultivated by public examinations, lectures etc in all arts and sciences. In addition, the Danes generally understood Latin, English, French, Italian and

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<sup>490</sup> King, 1694: 199.

<sup>491</sup> Skinner, 2008: 75.

<sup>492</sup> Ibid, 99.

<sup>493</sup> Schwoerer, 1993: 236.

<sup>494</sup> King, 1694: 185.

<sup>495</sup> Brasch, 1879: 92.

German languages.<sup>496</sup> And their music was admirable as well.<sup>497</sup> With regard to Molesworth's claim that every Dane kept the beaten road of sense, and that you saw no madmen, natural fools or fanciful folks, King again used Molesworth's utterances against him. King said that `ever since I first read his book, when I have been troubled with a *fanciful fool*, that I could not in good manners get rid of, I have often wish'd my self in Denmark.<sup>498</sup> Perhaps the people in Denmark displayed lack of originality. But they were better of than dealing with men such as Molesworth.

## 7.5 Summary:

In his reply, which was written on a request, King intended to expose Molesworth by using his utterances against him, and to show that the previous envoy to Denmark was a Commonwealthman. Regarding the historical discourse, King ridiculed Molesworth's ancient historical narrative, and argued that the estates in Denmark previously did not elect, but rather confirmed a new heir. The result of this, coupled with the Danes natural submission to their prince, was that 1660 not was such a transformative event. King also echoed Crull when he argued that the commonality was in slavery in the hands of the nobles before 1660. Regarding neo-roman theory, the Danes did not lose their liberty after the installment of the absolutist regime. The Danes continued their free way of living because the government not was arbitrary in practice. A consequence was that lack of a national assembly did not deprive you of your personal liberty. Interestingly, King turned the argument of the most forthright neo-roman around, and equated slavery with a Commonwealth. Lastly, King challenged Molesworth's neo-roman assumption that the state of nature, and its parliamentary practice, was a state of perfect freedom. King's argument resembled Hobbes. It was perhaps state of freedom, but it was surely nothing admirable owed to insecurity, chaos, and princely conquest.

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<sup>496</sup> King, 1694: 188-189.

<sup>497</sup> Ibid, 190.

<sup>498</sup> Ibid, 194.



## 8 Jean Payen La Foulere's *Deffence du Danemark* and Crull's *Memoirs of Denmark*.

This chapter will briefly discuss some aspects of the rejoinders appearing after 1694. Regarding Foulere's two editions, it will mention that Foulere's animosity towards Molesworth was the cause for its appearance, and discuss an interesting statement from Molesworth in Copenhagen. Examining Crull's following reply, it will point out that it mainly was concerned with Slesvig-Holstein's relation to Denmark. It will also highlight that Crull to a large extent recaptured his approach to 1660.

### 8.1 La Foulere's *Deffence du Danemark*.

Jean Payen La Foulere's *Deffence du Danemark. Ou Examen d'un Libelle, qvi a pour titre Relation de l'etat de Danemark, comme il etait l'an 1692. Traduit de l'Anglois avec Additions du Traducteur*<sup>499</sup> came out in 1696. He published it by his own initiative, and it came in two different editions. Like most of the other rejoinders, it was anonymously published. Despite that there were published translations from King's tract in 1696, Foulere's work was also translation from King. Yet, Foulere added his own remarks, and it is them which justifies his editions as 'independent' contributions.<sup>500</sup>

Even though Foulere translated several English works on the Revolution from 1689, which he then sent to Christian V,<sup>501</sup> it was first and foremost, Foulere's animosity towards Molesworth which was the chief cause for why he took up the pen. As a Danish official, he was not free to write whatever he wanted. But he intended to further rebuke Molesworth by adding his own remarks. The occasion for this hostility was a diplomatic rupture. The Danish mercenary troops, which were going to be used in the service of William III, had unfortunately been delayed. This was highly unpopular since it potentially would benefit France in the war. Foulere was at that time dealing directly with William III and his representatives in England. But as Christian Henrik Brasch suggest, Foulere was not the

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<sup>499</sup> A Cologne 1696. The information of Foulere's account is based on Brasch's study.

<sup>500</sup> Brasch, 1879: 101-102.

<sup>501</sup> Ibid, 119-220.

right man for the job.<sup>502</sup> Yet, even if he lacked the right qualities or not, Molesworth's role in these events (then situated in Copenhagen) was the chief cause for why Foulereuse got removed from his diplomatic post.<sup>503</sup>

Going to the tract, there is one remark which is interesting. This was an episode which took place during a dinner party at the Danish court. According to Foulereuse, Molesworth said that he would be 'the first to avenge the people' if he found himself in country where the king undertook even a minor intervention against the laws of the state.<sup>504</sup> In other words, he would do this were a king acted arbitrary and amended laws without the consent of the 'people'. There are certainly reasons for believing in this story. For one thing, it is highly unlikely that he invented it, and we have seen that Molesworth somewhat was a loose cannon at court. This resulted in several incidents during his stay. King for example, mentions two of events in his tract, which certainly contributed to undermine the character of the previous envoy. But most importantly, this statement was certainly not at odds with his neo-roman conception of liberty. The reader should be familiar with the neo-roman theory by now, and more specifically, why an arbitrary king, or any arbitrary power for that matter, was perceived as detrimental. Laws were to be created by consent of representative body, and as soon as a state was arbitrary, also in theory, you were deprived of your personal liberty. Needless to say, it was a radical statement in the 1690s, and even more so at the court of one of the most notorious absolutist regimes in Europe.

## 8.2 Crull's *Memoirs of Denmark*.

Jodocus Crull's *Memoirs of Denmark, Containing the Life of the late King of Denmark, Norway, &c Christian V* was published in 1700 with the backing of the Danish government. Unlike the first reply from 1694 then, Crull was a hired agent when he wrote this. His subsequent rejoinder highlights that the Danish government sought to control and promote information about the regime. The public sphere in Denmark-Norway was far away from the more diverse and free English, Dutch and German counterparts.<sup>505</sup> Throughout, the Danish government increased its efforts to regulate conditions for public utterances. Christian V's

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<sup>502</sup> Ibid, 113-114.

<sup>503</sup> Ibid, 107,117. For a more detailed description of this, see Brasch's chapter on Foulereuse.

<sup>504</sup> Ibid, 125.

<sup>505</sup> Rian, 2014: 87.

*Danske Lov* (1683) and Christian V's *Norske Lov* (1687) by example, included a systematic assertion of the authority the Crown had in the public sphere.<sup>506</sup> This also went alongside Danish espionage. During the first half of the eighteenth century for instance, the Danish government scrutinized mails sent abroad in order to reveal plots and to spy on diplomatic connections.<sup>507</sup> The *Memoirs* can be understood from the Danish Government's effort to control and promote information.

Even though the content is unrelated to the discourse of history and the conception of liberty, Crull nonetheless mentioned the *Account* as a chief cause to which he wrote this tract. According to Crull, Molesworth had a thin insight in the affairs of the north. He was not acquainted with language and the 'true state of those countries', and the description of the Danish court was also unreasonable. The *Account* therefore served as a favorable opportunity to 'vindicate in some measure, the Memory of a Brave and Generous Prince, (Christian V).<sup>508</sup> To Crull, the good qualities of Christian V were 'such as deserve to be rank'd amongst the best our age has produced'.<sup>509</sup> Besides this, Crull was not only replying to Molesworth, but also the unstable political climate between the two houses of Denmark and Holstein Gottorp.

In 1544, Christian III (1503-1559) had split his dukedoms, and given the half of Slesvig and the half of Holstein to his brother Adolf (1526-86). Adolf became the ancestor to a new branch of the Oldenburg family, and the name 'Gottorp' was derived from their resident castle. Yet, it did not take long before a hostile relationship evolved between the two.<sup>510</sup> This split was according to Crull, likely to start a war in the North.<sup>511</sup> To be sure, the situation was not determined before 1700. The Duke of Gottorp became independent from the Danish king after the war with Sweden in 1658. During the peace at *Frederiksborg* in 1720 after The Nordic War, however, the Duke of Gottorp had to renounce his part of Slesvig to the Danish king.<sup>512</sup> One can say that Crull's tract overall was an effort to depict the relation between these two houses, dealing with the 'origin of the differences', 'what occasioned the rupture' and so on. More importantly, it is obvious, that Crull's descriptions served as legitimating for Danish interests.

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<sup>506</sup> Ibid, 150.

<sup>507</sup> Sune Christian Pedersen, *Postal Censorship and the Control of the Public Sentiment in Late Absolutist Denmark*, Pasi Ihalainen, Michael Bregnsbo, Karin Sennfelt, Patrik Winton, (eds) 'Scandinavia in the Age of Revolution. Nordic Political Cultures, 1740-1820 (Farnham, 2011). 81

<sup>508</sup> Jodocus Crull's *Memoirs of Denmark, Containing the Life of the late King of Denmark, Norway, & Christian V*, (London, Printed, and Sold by John Nutt neat Stationers-Hall. 1700), Preface.

<sup>509</sup> Ibid, 145.

<sup>510</sup> Dyrvik, 2011: 53.

<sup>511</sup> Crull, 1700: Preface.

<sup>512</sup> Dyrvik, 2011: 78-79.



Yet, Crull made some interesting remarks in his *Introduction* relevant to the discourse of history. The first regards the ancient historical narrative, and the 'Original Contract'. It is a point he not mentioned in this manner before. To Crull, Denmark was along with other kingdoms in the north, among the most ancient in Europe. The result was that the first authentic record of the kingdom was 'buried in oblivion'.<sup>513</sup> Crull was here referring to physical evidence of the origin and first deeds of the monarchs. This was something Thomas Rogers's also had done. Rogers's denied the existence of an Original contract, and dared Molesworth to find it. The reason was that he saw this as essential proving Molesworth's historical narrative. But since it did not exist, Molesworth's narrative was to him a result of a colorful imagination rather than a work of a historian.

Crull also recaptured his approach to 1660. The war with Sweden was again mentioned as significant. But the nobility aggressive policy was the most important. In line with this, Crull said that the nobility made it their business for 'several ages together to aggrandize their own power, by suppressing both the royal prerogatives, and the liberties of the other estates'.<sup>514</sup> The first step in trying to enlarge their power happened already during the reign of Eric of Pomerania (the term reign is somewhat misguided since Eric ruled in Norway from 1389-1442, Denmark and Sweden 1396-1439). But the greatest step towards 'that grandeur they attain'd to afterwards', was under the reign of Frederick I (Denmark 1523-33, Norway 1524-33).<sup>515</sup> The result was that political power was in the hands of the nobility up until 1660. This was probably the case for why Crull, like King, mentioned Otte Nielsen Krag – the Danish nobleman which designated the other estates as slaves during the events in 1660.<sup>516</sup> Lastly, the nobility was not just aggressive, but their right to elect a king, was just a pretended right as well.<sup>517</sup>

The ambitious policy of the nobility then, proved to be their downfall, and Crull explicitly said that the nobility lost their own power and liberty because of this.<sup>518</sup> . Since it was written with the backing of the Danish government, one has to assume that the topos of the 'aggressive nobility' was another adequate explanation of the events in 1660. Since *Kongeloven* actually was published in 1709, it is not that the official explanation from 1665 was outdated. The narrative in *Kongeloven* was that God had moved the estates to renounce

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<sup>513</sup> Crull, 1700, 1.

<sup>514</sup> Ibid, Preface.

<sup>515</sup> Ibid, 4, 8.

<sup>516</sup> Ibid, 18.

<sup>517</sup> Ibid, 8-9.

<sup>518</sup> Ibid, 28.

their rights. So although it was a voluntary act, the real cause was providence.<sup>519</sup> Yet there glimmers a possibility for this in Crull's text as well. To be sure, it was to him, 'one of the most surprising things in the World, to see those very men, who but a few days before had carried things on with so much haughtiness, to resign so tamely at once all their privileges'.<sup>520</sup>

### 8.3 Summary.

Fouleresse published his rejoinder by his own initiative. In it, he expanded King's work by adding other remarks. An interesting remark was when Molesworth said that he would avenge the people if a king amended a law after his own wish. Even though it was a radical statement, it ought to be understood from a neo-roman approach to the nature of human liberty. Written with the backing of the Danish government, Crull's subsequent rejoinder mostly concerned itself with questions relating to Holstein-Guttorp. Yet, it is interesting that he followed the same approach to 1660 as he did from 1694. Again, the nobility was the prime target. The coup in 1660 was by large justified from the fact that the nobility oppressed the other estates.

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<sup>519</sup> Rian, 2914: 113.

<sup>520</sup> Crull, 1700: 27-28.



## 9 : Conclusion.

The *Allegory of Good and Bad Government* was painted by Ambrogio Lorenzetti in the mid fourteenth-century Siena. Located in the Palazzo Pubblico, or the Town Hall, the frescoed walls provided visual models on the effects of good and bad government. If officials governed well, they would observe buildings in good repair, students studying, commerce thriving, people dancing and young women enjoying security of a well-policed state. This was positive effects which came from living peaceable under a just form of government. If they governed ill however, and misruled as tyrants, they would witness urban ruin and streets ruled by armed thugs.<sup>521</sup> The *Allegory of Good and Bad Government* is another example of that people throughout has seen a crucial link between political institutions and individual prosperity. Whether it has been neo-roman theory, Florentine Humanists from fifteenth century, French revolutionaries from the eighteenth, or later Marxists from the twentieth, they have in some way or another, conceptualized and underlined this connection. Molesworth did also describe the effects of bad government in his *Account*. It was in the end, all about liberty, and the negative consequences of living under an unlimited rule personified by a king. Molesworth showed by example that an arbitrary king was corrupting to human life. The absolutist regime from 1660 had not only led to heavier burdens on the people, for instance with regard to more random taxes, but the Danes were also deprived of their personal liberty. Over the past decades, this state of servitude had breed spiritual and intellectual decay. This had become so manifest that the Danes likely were unable to make use of liberty, even if it was offered to them.

The-neo roman theory arose as a response to the royalists and Hobbes by the parliamentary supporters during the Civil Wars (1642-51). This assertion of a more classical understanding of liberty gave rise to a particular ideology in Early Modern political thought, and it was this neo-roman liberty which was at the very heart of the *Account of Denmark*. The clearest formulation of the classical allegiance regarded the notion of slavery. The neo-roman's were inspired by roman moralists and historians, and Sallust, Livy and Machiavelli were all literary heroes to them. Regarding the essence of slavery, and to lack personal liberty, this was equated as being within the power of someone else. This was also the crux of Molesworth's political argument – exemplified by the Danish state of servitude. One can

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<sup>521</sup> Edward Muir, 'Representations of power' in John A. Davis, John M. Najemy (eds) *Italy in the Age of the Renaissance 1300-1550* (Oxford,2004) 231.

therefore say that Molesworth to a large extent theorized an absolutist Scandinavian regime, with the political languages from ancient Rome. Furthermore, and like other neo-roman's, Molesworth saw that it only was possible to enjoy personal liberty in a 'free state'. The Danes therefore lacked personal liberty since 'Riksrådet' was abolished. This had a crucial implication, by which public and private liberty became exactly the same thing. Yet, neo-roman theory, despite a strong republican tradition, was not exclusively anti-monarchical. To Molesworth for example, a 'free state' was a state where an aristocratic senate and a democratic assembly represented the people, and figured as checks on royal power.

The neo-roman theory became short lived. It was not only a growing 'fiscal military state' and the emergence of classical utilitarianism which was the reason for this. The rise of the bourgeois class, a growing polite and commercial culture, can be said to have made the independent, land-based and virtuous country gentleman seem less relevant. Perhaps most important though, which this debate illustrates, was that people continued to challenge key neo-roman assumptions. It was not only Crull who would accuse men like Molesworth for applying the 'mistaken rules of liberty'. They would continue to be faced with political opponents who would take issue with key neo-roman principles. To be sure, it is certainly interesting that Crull, Rogers and King, all took issue, and saw it as misleading, that it only was possible to enjoy freedom in a free state. King for example, concluded that the Danes continued their free way of life in an absolutist regime. He therefore challenged that there was a connection between the preservation of individual liberty and a particular form of government. A number of more 'eminent' critics would also do this.<sup>522</sup>

The rise and fall of the neo-roman theory illustrate that historical underpinning and change is crucial in how people go about to theorize, praise, criticize political affairs. One cannot strip the history of ideas from social context either, which the old intellectual history prevalent up until the 1960s had done. So, even if its true that the neo-roman's, Florentine humanists, French Revolutionaries, Marxists and so on, have seen a crucial link between political institutions and individual prosperity, it is perhaps more important, that the emergence of such movements has been part of the battleground. This means that different movements and theories have historical contexts. These contexts are essential for the historian – not only to understand why such theories emergence in the first place, but also why they change over time, why some take on certain characteristics, favor some elements, and leave other out and so on. These battlegrounds then, each unique in their own way, is the case for

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<sup>522</sup> See Skinner, 1998 a: 79, 97.

why different societies conceptualize the vocabulary of politics and morals in different ways.

In the Early Modern era, another example of a crucial historical context was the Glorious Revolution. The extent to which it was a modern revolution or not have been debated by historians, and will likely continue to do so. But if not a modern revolution, it was certainly a dynastic coup with a deep and lasting impact. For one thing, it influenced contemporaries who had experienced it. Molesworth's conception of politics rested to a large extent on the English system of liberty, which had been preserved in statute, in 1688. To him, it was the Glorious Revolution which secured in that England was a free state, and naturally, that the English people enjoyed personal liberty. It further secured one of the few remaining Gothic systems in which he saw he was living under. Besides this, it was also the Glorious Revolution which justified his attack on the Danish system of politics. To start with, it is not so certain that Molesworth would have been so positively inclined to the English system if James II had succeeded in creating a Catholic polity after the model of Louis XIV. Yet, more importantly was that the gentry and the nobles played a vital role in government in England. This was not the case with Denmark-Norway. It was possibly the most notorious absolutist regime in Europe, where the source of political power, from a theoretical standpoint, was lodged within court and king. This did not mean that the Danish nobility was unable to exercise political influence after 1660. But even if Molesworth's political outlook operated to rigidly with ideal types of government, he was without doubt right when he saw that the regimes in England and Denmark-Norway were far apart. The result of this was that this debate involved two competing systems of the Early Modern era; namely the absolutist regime, or the constitutional or limited monarchy.

But just as the Glorious Revolution deeply influenced Molesworth, and in many cases laid the down the premises for this debate, it also effected later Englishmen's approaches to politics. In this regard, it is interesting that English people from the eighteenth century followed Molesworth. Like him, they saw political institutions and society as nurturing for the individual. There was no clash between potential individual prosperity and the political system. This was one reason for which eighteenth century Englishmen continued to celebrate their liberty. This was by example, not the case with France. The French people and *philosophes* bewailed upon the oppression and the unjust rule around them, and they would not celebrate their liberty until after the French Revolution. Furthermore, one can argue that they also knew, like Molesworth, that their own system of politics was unique. This conception and awareness of the 'other', with a growing sense of national identity in the

eighteenth century, ought also to be understood from the parliamentary victory in 1688.

However, the immediate result of the Glorious Revolution was a following war. Kings were to reign, win territory and fight in the Early Modern period, and William III was no exception. But just as the Revolution circumscribed royal power, the subsequent Nine Year's war also sat limitations on Parliamentary power. It served as justification for military expenditure and growth, and that William was his own prime minister. The result was a powerful army within the control of the king. This was a dangerous policy, and England needed to be warned. In order to fully understand Molesworth's move, we need to recognize a seventeenth century ideal of historiography. In short, by providing examples, the use of history was to improve civil society. Regarding the threats of a standing army and the fiscal military state, the point for Molesworth was that history showed that this was a dangerous policy. According to him, the overthrow of the Gothic system in 1660 Copenhagen, and the installment of an absolutist regime, showed how swift a turn from freedom to slavery could be. By using an example, he instructed his readers to be aware on the value of liberty and the dangers of a standing army back home.

This instruction derived from two historical narratives, which to a certain extent, answers why history became such key battleground. But as this thesis has sought to stress, the repertoire of history was also something which the opponents actively sought to make use of. History had some sacred rules, according to Crull, and moreover, this debate showed that it was prestigious to master the art of historical argumentation.

History then, was important. Another reason for its significance was that it could be used as a tool for defending, attacking or unmasking an ideological position. This debate also illustrates this, and it can also help to explain why Crull, Rogers or King did not have to provide their own clear cut view on liberty. Since Molesworth did it, one way of undermining his neo-roman conception was to point out historical flaws. For example, it was according to Crull, the sake of defense, and not arbitrary will, which enforced the taxes in Denmark. And as both King and Crull argued, the Danes could not lose their personal liberty in 1660, when they were treated as slaves before. By using the repertoire of history then, Crull and King could contradict that 1660 was such a transformative event, and also discredit the link between liberty and slavery pre-and post 1660. In doing this, they took issue with that a free state was equivalent to personal liberty, and that, the presence of arbitrary will reduced you to a slave.

That history could serve as an ideological disclaimer was also the case in facing

Molesworth's ancient historical narrative. Although he and other neo-roman's looked to Rome, they departed from Roman and Renaissance texts when they saw the natural state as a state of perfect freedom. By supposing an Original Contract, Molesworth saw an admirable ancient practice – perfectly qualifying them to be 'free states'. This had an ideological implication. Like some other seventeenth century neo-roman writers, Molesworth contended that the rights and liberties enjoyed in this natural state ought to be recognized as God-given birth right. Interestingly, Crull, Rogers, King and Foulereesse (given that he acknowledged King's work by translating it) saw this 'perfect freedom' as misguided. While Rogers dared Molesworth to find proof of the contract, both King and Crull saw this 'admirable' practice as unlawful and barbarous. In doing this, they could undermine a key premise in the neo-roman political outlook.

The attack on the neo-roman assumption on the perfect natural state went hand in hand with another point. There is indeed an essence in all the rejoinders that a strong king and state was vital for stability and order. Here, it is somewhat tempting to say that they did not view the concept of liberty as essential as Molesworth did. And to a certain extent, it is true as well. Crull's, Rogers's and King's political outlook did not operate in the same manner between the notions of 'liberty' and 'slavery'. In the Early Modern ambience, they took a more common path. The increasing importance of the state was a reality between 1500-1800. Growing concerns for political and social stability caused more frequent interventions from the king into local centers. The idea of the state as a vehicle for stability and order served to justify this, and it was a line of argument several prominent thinkers drew on – including Hobbes and Pufendorf. Crull had actually translated works by Pufendorf, and Crull contended in a same manner that, Germany not would have flourished in the same way if continuing in the natural state. It was, without doubt, much more preferable to enjoy the right amount of liberty. This meant less liberty in favor of strong state – which again secured itself against a too powerful democratic element where the multitude exercised political power. In addition, the importance of the state and a powerful king was underpinned by the Tory divine-right kingship theory of Rogers and King. Interestingly, Rogers also said that it would be more preferable to live under absolute rule and enjoy security, than it would be to live under the imaginary freedom which Molesworth promoted. Molesworth's ideal government was a world of chaos, insecurity and tumult. Such a start point was also evident in King's approach to Denmark. Not only had the situation improved post 1660, but the absolutist regime could also be admired since there not were mutinies against government. There was in other words a



strong absolutist king – giving stability and order, and reigning justly. The needs of the Danish people were therefore satisfied. The result of this emphasis was that they all diminished the prestige of liberty.

Relevant to this, the previous chapters have shown that Crull, Rogers and King perceived Molesworth as radical. Crull's argument in which too much liberty would cause diseases in government, Rogers's notion of factionalism and tumult, and King's move in which he equated a Commonwealth with slavery, was all part of their effort to discredit what they saw as a dangerous political opponent. Admittedly, they were not altogether wrong in seeing this. When the Old Whigs presented themselves on the political scene with the *Account*, they would continue to strive for reform when most perceived the constitution as sacred. Even if the Revolution secured liberty, it did not mean that it not was room for improvements. So, even if Molesworth was part of the land-based gentry, opposition minded, and anti-commercial, he was in fact, the 'radical' in this debate. As a leader of the Old Whigs for example, and drawing on his English republican trajectories, he championed several views which most contemporaries did not adhere to. One of them was that an Englishman was entitled to be ruled by laws, to which he had consented, at home or abroad. It was perhaps no surprise then, that the Old Whigs political achievements were limited.

That being said, this did not mean that Molesworth was the radical *par excellence*. The Dutch republicanism was more radical than its English counterpart – being more anti-monarchical, anti-hierarchical and more concerned with equality. The idea of the 'people' for Molesworth and other Whigs meant those of some state and consequence in the community. Compared with Dutch republicanism, one can say that the English republicanism of the landed gentry had a stronger aristocratic and anti-democratic drift. Moreover, in the latter part of the seventeenth century, Holland was the place where radical ideas would be most fully formulated. The radical philosopher Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677), and the spread of his ideas labeled as 'Spinozism,' was an example of this.

Despite that the neo-roman theory was short-lived, and that Dutch republicanism was more radical, it did leave a legacy after the seventeenth century as well. The neo-roman theory was most contentiously restated by Commonwealthmen emerging after Molesworth. Given that the English Republic was not to prevail after the death of Cromwell, and that the Old Whigs achievements were limited in the 1690s, one can perhaps say that it was with the later emigration to America that the legacy of the republican train of thought, inspired by Machiavelli, Sidney and Harrington, was to be felt. Or at least, it is possible to trace a

revolutionary tradition from one century to another, in which the English struggle against tyranny is linked to the American efforts of independence.

Even though Molesworth's *Account* was all about liberty, and the negative effects of living under an arbitrary king, there was on the whole, no single context. The debate can be approached from various angles. Continuing this, it can also be seen as a symptom of the shifts occurring during long Enlightenment (ca1670-1800). Especially Rogers's tract and the High Church movement highlight a religious transformation. Up until the late seventeenth century, more or less all debates penetrating the public sphere, revolved around confessional issues such as Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican etc. And in the 1690s, politics was still deeply connected to theological concerns. Unlike Molesworth, Rogers sought to resolve the problems of man, politics and liberty by subjugating them to confessional issues. It was 'the loss of the common cause of Christianity' which prompted Rogers to take up the pen. Christ had left an example to share his suffering, and in the spirit of the Christian ethos, it was passive resistance which was the most glorious liberty of them all. Unlike the neo-roman conception of liberty, political institutions and practice was in Rogers's glorious liberty, of secondary importance. Faced with the *Account*, what Rogers was doing was to defend an older tradition which increasingly came under attack during the Enlightenment.

Rogers illustrate that this debate from the 1690s happened in a period of shifts. As such, the debate points simultaneously backwards and forward. Some would perhaps argue that it would misguided to label the late seventeenth century as a time of upheaval – that is compared with later revolutions and wars. True or not, it was certainly a time when changes was in the horizon, in which previous uncontested views concerning human affairs, such as political authority, religion and man, was to become increasingly challenges by new approaches.



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