

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Mindfulness in Milton's <i>Paradise Regained</i>: An Anatomy of the Second Temptation</b>
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Wong Yuet Tung Melody</b>
<b>Supervisor:</b>	<b>Professor Julian Lamb</b>

## **Abstract**

The capstone project explores the notion of mindfulness in Milton's poem *Paradise Regained*. "Mindfulness" has its roots in Christianity since John the Baptist. Taking inspiration from Matthew 4, Milton expands this short verse into hundreds of lines, describing and dramatizing the psychology of the desert. The project draws ideas from the sayings of the Desert Fathers, who are dwellers of wastelands to experience God through pain and suffering. Through imitating Christ's mindfulness in the desert, Milton systematically scrutinizes everything that is important to him. After these actions have been examined, they are purified from any self-interested motive and Milton re-discovers what they mean to him. Ultimately, Milton strives to live out his vision of being a prophetic poet chosen by God. The project dissects the second temptation into four sub-temptations: the temptation of wealth, political commitment, Roman empire, classical wisdom and intellectual fame. Each temptation parallels to an important facet of Milton's life.

Milton faced the temptation of wealth during his early career. At this stage, he struggled with defining and defending his vocation. The temptations of political commitment and Roman empire are discussed with regard to the political context of Milton's time. A contemporary radical religious group called Quakers is investigated in detail because their philosophy towards adversity bears great resemblance to Jesus's insights towards his own suffering. Then, Milton questioned presuppositions about kingship, authority and government through his meek, yet prophetic Jesus. The temptation of classical wisdom plays with Milton's deepest intellectual and aesthetic cravings. Finally, Milton realizes his calling at the same moment when Christ realizes His in the final temptation when Satan challenges Christ to cast Himself down from the temple.

## Reflection

I would like to thank my supervisor Professor Julian Lamb and my mentor Professor Carmen Lee for guiding me throughout this incredible journey. Writing my capstone propelled me to delve into the world of academic research and consolidated my love for the subject. In true English-major spirit, I genuinely enjoyed every elective be it literature or linguistics, modern or old. One thing I learned in my undergrad is that being an English major isn't about studying literature and linguistics, it really is about every single thing that can be expressed in English and how the English language became what it is today. Perhaps that is why I am still fascinated after messing with it for four years – there's still so much that I don't know. My undergraduate studies opened so many unexpected doors and I cannot wait to be inspired and enlightened all over again.