Romance, narrative vision, and elect community in seventeenth-century England

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Dissertation

ROMANCE, NARRATIVE VISION,
AND ELECT COMMUNITY
IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND

by

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“Confusion of part of a tale for the tale entire
is the nonbeliever’s error and the false prophet’s lie.”
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My dissertation examines the intersections of romance, religion, and politics in England between 1588 and 1688, reading across the divide between centuries to enable a fuller understanding of romance during the English Civil War and its aftermath. In the decades that witnessed Charles I’s fall and his son’s restoration, royalists and republicans alike found solace, and grounds for resistance, in romance’s formal promise that suffering and disappointment would yield to the restoration of a story’s true champions. Although historicist efforts to contextualize seventeenth-century romance have productively complicated the structuralist view of it as a basic archetype, such studies are fraught with their own simplifications: romance is often depicted as a continental trend briefly embraced by midcentury royalists, especially women. While a few scholars have noted the artificiality of some of these limits, we have yet to come to terms with seventeenth-century romance’s long English tradition, its ability to penetrate other genres, and its hold over male and female writers and readers of diverse ideologies. To this end, my project
traces two interwoven threads. First, I argue that the potent subjectivity offered by romance correlated with the widespread Protestant belief in divine election, inviting seventeenth-century subjects to locate themselves and their allies within a providentially protected community. Far from being a royalist fad, romance became a battleground between royalists and Puritan republicans: both sides denigrated their enemies’ manipulation of the genre while tacitly or openly reclaiming it for themselves. Second, I consider how writers of romance contended with recurring problems of form, genre, and gender: due to the length of romantic plot and the related issue of multiple subjectivities, they found innovative ways to represent the friction between providential romance and national or personal tragedy, as well as the tension between gendered narrative perspectives. As England struggled to recuperate from its civil conflicts, writers also turned to romance not merely to represent elect community, but to reconstruct it, thinking critically about whether the genre might breach and repair the very perspectival divides in politics, religion, gender, and identity that it had been so instrumental in maintaining.
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In 1640, before the armed conflicts of the English Civil War began, Thomas Hobbes warned against the reading of romances in his *Elements of Law*, claiming that the pastime was conducive to foolish delusion and vain pride:

> the fiction (which also is imagination) of actions done by ourselves, which never were done, is glorying; but because it begetteth no appetite nor endeavour to any further attempt, it is merely vain and unprofitable; as when a man imagineth himself to do the actions whereof he readeth in some romant [...] And this is called VAIN GLORY: and is exemplified in the fable by the fly sitting on the axletree, and saying to himself, What a dust do I raise!¹

Romance, Hobbes proposes, produces ridiculous fancies in the “pusillanimous” individual, since his identification with the genre’s heroes is so intense that he imagines himself to be greater than he is. In the most extreme cases, the result is “spiritual pride or madness”: “The gallant madness of Don Quixote,” which “is nothing else but an expression of such height of vain glory as reading of romants may produce,” may be compared to “the example of one that preached in Cheapside from a cart there, instead of a pulpit, that he himself was Christ.”²

The most absurd victim of romantic imagination, for Hobbes, is the religious radical who believes himself to be the protagonist of a heroic story written not by man, but by God.

In 1651, when Hobbes published his better-known *Leviathan*, such people were no longer so easy to laugh at. The Puritan-dominated New Model Army, with Oliver Cromwell at its head, had successfully backed the forces of Parliament against those of King Charles I; Charles had been beheaded by a victorious parliamentary faction that owed its allegiance to God rather than the King; and the zealous and ambitious Cromwell

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² Ibid., 63.
was poised to become Lord Protector of England. In *Leviathan*, Hobbes discusses romance and imagination in terms much like those in the *Elements*, but romance has been unbound from the constraint that it “begetteth no appetite nor endeavour” and is therefore “merely vain”: “So when a man compoundeth the image of his own person with the image of the actions of another man, as when a man imagines himself a Hercules or an Alexander (which happeneth often to them that are much taken with reading of romances), it is a compound imagination, and properly but a fiction of the mind.”

Victoria Kahn offers a keen summation of the genre’s progressive threat to Hobbesian political order in the years of civil war between the *Elements* and *Leviathan*:

> The danger here is not simply that the reader of romance will imagine himself a lover and knight errant […] but that the reader of romance will imagine himself a Hercules or Alexander, that is, a military hero of epic proportions […] Romance vainglory is not simply unprofitable but dangerous, as it is when the parties to the civil war begin to imagine that their honor demands that they engage in violent conflict. Thus the errant activity of the imagination […] is not simply associated with moral and epistemological error […] It is also associated with political error—with what Hobbes called “sedition and contempt.”

Hobbes’ midcentury fear of romance was a reaction both to the immediate memory of the war and to a long English tradition of religiously-inflected chivalric narrative that offered readers a heroic subject position with which to identify and a sense that their endeavors had the support of divine providence. His premise—that romantic subjectivity was inherently unruly, conducing not just to individual pride but also to subversive factionalism and opposition to authority—is foundational to this project. As we will see, subjects who imagined themselves as lovers or knights-errant might prove

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just as politically dangerous as those who thought of themselves as martial heroes, since all these romantic identifications explicitly or implicitly depend upon an assumption that one has been chosen for a life of heroic exceptionalism, predestined to prevail under extraordinary circumstances. In the decades that witnessed the fall of Charles I, the collapse of Cromwell’s Interregnum regime, Charles II’s restoration to the throne, and eventually the expulsion of the Stuart dynasty, English men and women of diverse ideological communities often expressed mistrust and contempt for romance as a vehicle for their religious and political opponents’ vainglory; at the same time, they found solace, and grounds for resistance, in the genre’s structural promise that suffering and disappointment would give way to the triumph of a story’s true champions.

*Whose Romance?*

I shall not today attempt further to define the kinds of material I understand to be embraced within that shorthand description; and perhaps I could never succeed in intelligibly doing so. But I know it when I see it.5

Before proceeding, I want to set forth a stable meaning for “romance” throughout this project, both because it may be tempting to apply to the literary term United States Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart’s now famous, highly subjective test for the presence of pornography, and because I use the term somewhat differently than most recent scholars have done. Indeed, many critics who discuss romance do not attempt a precise definition of it, under the premise that the genre is constituted by a very large set of recognizable tropes or themes, including (but not at all limited to) “exotic settings, distant in time or place, or both; subject-matter concerning love or chivalry, or both […] high-ranking characters […]

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quests; magic and the supernatural” and “a concern with ideals” of heroic behavior. Before the rise of the internet “meme,” medieval scholars were using the word—denoting sameness or repetition—to describe romance’s recurring elements and plot devices: heroes of unknown parentage, shipwrecks, ladies lost at sea, rash promises, incestuous fathers, fairy abductions, and many, many more. Along these lines, Anthony Welch defines Renaissance romance very generally (though probably also too limitedly) “as a special precinct of courtly love, recreative fancy, and, in some of its forms, pastoral escape.” Helen Cooper has proposed a definition based upon the disqualifying absence, rather than the qualifying presence, of such tropes: “with romance, any of the features that might be taken as definitive for the genre may be absent in any particular case without damaging that sense of family resemblance, though the dissimilarity increases, ultimately beyond the point of recognition, in proportion as the various elements are missing.”

Such delineations, however, avoid fully explaining what they simultaneously allow for: the potential for extreme disparity between various works that are all commonly recognized as romances, or as derived from the romance tradition. In the chapters that follow, many of the romantic texts we will consider seem to have remarkably few features in common. For example, Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene* and Margaret Cavendish’s *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* both address erotic attraction, include episodes of battle, and share the trope of female virtue under threat. However, one “romance” is extremely long (indeed, unfinished) and the other remarkably short; one thrives on magic while the other

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8 Cooper, 9.
eschews it; one avoids the device of disaster at sea, which the other employs repeatedly; and one aspires to heroic idealism and the other to heroic pragmatism. If romance is an assemblage of tiles that form a recognizable mosaic, Spenser’s and Cavendish’s narratives would seem to produce two images that look practically nothing alike—and most of the other texts before us may seem similarly dissimilar. Some, in fact, are not often identified or studied as romance at all, typically because they exhibit more obvious signs of falling into some other genre, including epic, panegyric, biography, or even political pamphlet.

We require, then, some additional approach to romance that helps explain both why we generally do know it when we see it—even when one romance is superficially unlike another—and why it sometimes manages to slip unseen into other generic categories. Before the structuralist movement fell into disfavor for its ahistorical method, Northrop Frye defined romance very broadly in terms not of its parts, but of its whole. As Frye’s eponymous “secular scripture,” romance is humanity’s “integrated vision of the world, parallel to the Christian and biblical vision”; if the Bible “is the epic of the creator, with God as its hero,” then romance is “the epic of the creature, man’s vision of his own life as a quest.”9 This epic human vision entails “a cyclical movement” of “descent” and “return” that fluctuates between two worlds: “a world associated with happiness, security, and peace,” and “a world of exciting adventures, but adventures which involve separation, loneliness, humiliation, pain, and the threat of more pain.”10 For Frye, the structure is recognizable for its positive teleology: “Most romances […] begin with a

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10 Ibid., 53-4.
departure” from the world of fulfillment into the lower world of desire—for love, for family, for power, for safety—“and end happily, with a return” to the realm that seemed lost.\(^{11}\) At the same time, he suggests, the world of suffering and of adventure is critical to our imagination of the human quest, since in the desired telos of the ideal world, “there is nothing to write about.”\(^{12}\) Milton, who managed to write several books of verse about life in Eden, might disagree with this last point, but Frye’s structuralist model of a secular quest that echoes the scriptural narrative of fall and redemption—and that tends to be creatively fixated not just on the redemption but also on the fallenness, loss, and longing—will be vital to my more historically-oriented project. Hobbes’ seventeenth-century authoritarian politics, after all, were threatened not by the lovers, warriors, or miraculous events that many romantic fictions contain, but by a narrative vision that made people imagine themselves as heroes and history as the landscape of their romance. This form that transforms lived experience into genre and thrives in the temporal space between loss and recovery, tragedy and triumph, lies at the core of all the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century texts we will consider here, including those that are not normally read through the lens of romance. Finally, Frye has suggested that “an identity between individual and social quests has always been latent in romance,” a genre that feeds both “the need to experience as part of a community and the need to experience as a withdrawn individual.”\(^{13}\) This study is strongly concerned with the relationship between individual romantic heroism and the coherence or construction of ideologically-charged

\(^{11}\) Ibid., 54.
\(^{12}\) Ibid.
\(^{13}\) Ibid., 58-9.
romantic community, for if Hobbes was unsettled by one Quixote or by one would-be Christ in a cart, an armed fellowship of godly knights posed a more substantial problem.

Despite its importance, Frye’s “secular scripture” is not the structuralist phrase that is most often cited in more recent treatments of the genre; that distinction must go to Patricia Parker’s also-eponymous term “inescapable romance.”

Parker, too, understands romance to be a narrative mode that simultaneously seeks and defers the telos of its quest, but as her title indicates, the emphasis of her study is on the deferral—on romance’s fundamental resistance to teleology, despite its heroes’ orientation toward a goal. This sense of romance as an inherently meandering, aimless form has become commonplace, and as a result, romance is now often discussed in opposition to epic. David Quint has famously distinguished the two genres according to both structure and historical politics: “To the victors belongs epic, with its linear teleology; to the losers belongs romance, with its random or circular wandering. Put another way, the victors experience history as a coherent, end-directed story told by their own power; the losers experience a contingency that they are powerless to shape to their own ends.”

This diametric opposition between romance and epic is relatively new in literary studies—for Frye, romance was synonymous with “the epic of the creature,” and for Hobbes, the reading of romances endowed men with delusions of epic grandeur—and I believe that Quint’s binary, however often it has been rearticulated, is frequently unhelpful to an understanding of romance’s role in the ideological politics of the seventeenth century (or any other period).

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This study does not position romance as the opposite of epic, or of any other genre; indeed, I believe that we can find romance infusing itself into various other forms, whether epic or lyric or historiography, because as a mode it is inherently adaptive rather than antagonistic. Contrary to Quint’s model, both victors and losers may experience their community’s history as driven either by human agency or by contingency or by divine providence, or perhaps by some combination of these, as we will see. Victors might see contingency even in their victory; losers might strive to glimpse a providentially “coherent, end-directed story” even in their defeat. Moreover, as Quint recognizes, victors may not remain victorious and losers may not remain cast down for long, which was certainly the case in seventeenth-century England. Romance, with its productive tension between teleological triumph and medial defeat or deferral, is uniquely suited for both victors and losers to locate themselves and their allies at different points on the form’s narrative arc, and while both success and failure could shape how political individuals and communities read and wrote romance in the seventeenth century, these vicissitudes did not initiate or terminate their engagement with it.

Helen Cooper, who stands out among recent critics for identifying “the happy ending” as “the characteristic most [...] definitive” of romance, draws our attention to narrative theorist Monika Fludernik’s term “duplicitous teleology,” that is, “the gap between ‘the characters’ plotting on the level of the fictional world and that narrative’s

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As Cooper puts it in the context of romance, “The reader will always know more than the protagonists (that they will survive their adventures, marry their beloved, win back their kingdom), but that knowledge is a shared assumption between author and audience that bypasses the characters themselves.”

Seventeenth-century Englishmen and women who were inclined toward a narrative vision of their individual and communal stories as quests could position themselves simultaneously as the characters, readers, and sometimes authors of the romance of history: while in the midst of profound political disappointment and personal doubt as characters ignorant of the future, they could presume an audience’s knowledge of the full form that promised to deliver them from their trials, and they could look to God as Author, their own authorial agency, or both to bring that deliverance about in the near or remote future. Frye has suggested that identifying romance as the genre of history allows one to interpret and represent “the maze without a plan and the maze not without a plan” as “two aspects of the same thing.”

Because the form of romance insisted upon—and offered narrative meaning to—both success and failure, both the presence and absence of fulfillment, and both randomness and order, it belongs equally to history’s victors and to its losers; moreover, it allows its subjects to be both of these at once.

While disturbing the assumption that romance is a genre only for losers, I also want to dismantle the critical commonplace that Civil War-era romance was a genre only for royalists. It is true that a number of royalists produced works of prose fiction, both

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18 Cooper, 47.
long and short, while in exile during the Interregnum; however, historicist efforts to contextualize such works have led to a general impression that Stuart royalist romance was the only romance in town in the mid-seventeenth century. Anthony Welch’s depiction of the genre as a literary realm to which defeated royalists fled for “privacy and stasis, a protective cocoon of rest from […] political action” is normative. However, this combination of Parker’s anti-progressive structure, Quint’s sense of romance as antithetical to the political concerns of the victors’ epic, and a limiting restriction of the mode to prose narratives of love and fancy threatens to mistake one facet of seventeenth-century romance for the whole. Likewise common is a critical focus on romance as a genre for women (especially royalist women), and as a midcentury trend adopted into England from seventeenth-century continental (especially French) texts. When Nigel Smith rightly notes that “where romances were read, they could become the dominant way in which an individual understood him or herself,” he is speaking more particularly about recent continental models of the genre, focused on domesticity and psychology, that did indeed become popular among royalist women readers. Because seventeenth-century women most certainly did produce and consume romance, important scholarship about women as writers and readers (including work by Mary Beth Rose, Helen Hackett, and Michelle Dowd and Julie Eckerle, among others) may contribute to a necessary understanding of women’s engagement with the genre while indirectly downplaying romance’s importance across and between genders during the period. Similarly, while it

20 Welch, 578.
21 Smith, 243.
22 See Mary Beth Rose, “Gender, Genre, and History: Seventeenth-Century English Women and the Art of Autobiography,” in Mary Beth Rose (ed.) Women in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Literary and
is worthwhile to recognize that English literature was not isolated from continental writing, we lose a full sense of nationalistic English romance in the seventeenth-century when we disregard the genre’s native tradition and that tradition’s appeal to multiple ideological communities.

Historicist scholars who have challenged certain of these assumptions typically leave a number of others intact. Erica Veevers, Ann Baynes Coiro, and Karen Britland have examined how earlier Stuart romance, instead of salving war-wounds, celebrated the monarchical power and the flourishing marriage of Charles I and Henrietta Maria, and thrived in court drama, poetry, and the visual arts (as in Rubens’ portrait of the royal couple as Saint George and the princess rescued from the dragon); however, their focus remains restricted to royalist culture.²³ Annabel Patterson, Paul Salzman, Victoria Kahn, Amelia Zurcher Sandy, and Lois Potter have shown that midcentury romance, far from fleeing politics, could be intently and incisively political, often concerned not just with defeat but with resistance, recovery, and the maintenance of power; like my study, Kahn’s and Zurcher Sandy’s books closely read romance by both men and women, and Zurcher Sandy acknowledges the influence of native romance by beginning with Sidney’s Arcadia.²⁴ Lori Humphrey Newcomb, too, considers the English romance

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²⁴ See Annabel Patterson, Censorship and Interpretation: The Conditions of Writing and Reading in Early Modern England (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1984); Paul Salzman, English Prose Fiction, 1558-1700: A
tradition’s vitality and its appeal across lines of gender (as well as class). Again, though, these treatments remain primarily focused on prose fiction, royalist writing, or both. Smith has proposed that we rethink the genre’s royalist associations, arguing (as I do) that just as Hobbes feared, “Romance was seen to be a political form by members of both sides of the political conflict,” and drawing our attention to elements of romance in the republican James Harrington’s *Oceana*; still, most of the romance that Smith considers is royalist, virtually all of it is in the form of long prose fiction, and he regards romance as a discrete genre separate from epic and other modes. In this project, I consider politically-engaged romance that can be derived from a native English tradition in the writing of men and women on both sides of the Civil War, though my primary emphasis is on Puritan and republican writers, since their (often intense) investment in romance has received far less critical attention.

*Adaptive Romance*

The reason that Puritan and republican romance has often gone unrecognized and unstudied, I believe, is that we have become accustomed to looking for romance as a mode chiefly in *romances*, narratives (usually in prose) that dedicate themselves solely to telling romantic stories. Such romance-exclusive texts were popular among royalists in the seventeenth century, and their opponents largely avoided them in part because of their

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26 Smith, 236; see also 234-49. Zurcher Sandy, in *Seventeenth-Century English Romance*, likewise offers a reading of Harrington’s *Oceana* but spends many more pages on royalist prose.
association with royalism. In order to recognize romance in the work of Puritan republicans like John Milton and Lucy Hutchinson (or, for that matter, in royalist propaganda pamphlets or the lyric poetry of John Dryden), we must bear in mind its structural premise—that life and history may be expressed as teleologically-directed heroic quests—and so be prepared to find that premise, and romance’s many recurring tropes, adapting themselves to other genres. Seventeenth-century Englishmen and women were used to seeing romance outside of romances: as we will see, Milton complained of romance in Charles I’s (auto)biographical confession *Eikon Basilike*, Hutchinson may have objected to romance in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, Margaret Cavendish derided romance in republican historiography, and Samuel Pepys scoffed that Cavendish lived her entire life like a romance.

It will be immediately evident from these examples that people in the seventeenth century habitually condemned romance when and where they found it; Hobbes was hardly alone. I have encountered no study of romance that does not discuss how strongly the genre was mocked and denounced in the Early Modern period, and much scholarship has demonstrated that widespread critiques of romance went hand in hand with its widespread popularity, sometimes showing that even writers who disavowed romance tacitly employed it.\(^\text{27}\) My work takes largely for granted the fact that those who voiced their disapproval of romance often ended up reading and writing it anyway; I hope to go beyond simply locating romance in places where it is not “supposed” to be in order to

\(^{27}\) One such example is Robert Wilcher’s “Lucy Hutchinson and *Genesis*: Paraphrase, Epic, Romance,” *Oxford Journals: English* 59 (2010), 25-42. While Wilcher locates romance in Hutchinson’s *Order and Disorder*, despite Hutchinson’s disavowal of the genre, he does not discuss what the romance mode might be accomplishing in and for Hutchinson’s *Genesis* epic, or why she might have chosen to incorporate it.
show what specifically it is doing there, why its authors embraced it against their own protestations to the contrary, and the complex web of ideological functions it performs.

I propose that where we find explicit references to romance’s tropes and memes, we also typically find appeals, sometimes implicit, to romance’s structure—that is, to the narrative vision of individual life or communal history as a quest. *Eikon Basilike*’s use of a captive princess’ prayer from Sidney’s *New Arcadia* offended Milton in large part because it insinuated that the King, too, was a godly romantic hero; Milton’s own references in *Areopagitica* to the “warfaring Christian” or the legend of Isis and Osiris are meant to reinforce his premise that history entails a long, often frustrated quest for divine truth. One fine example of a non-romantic text that employs a romantic trope in a gesture toward the genre’s larger form is John Donne’s audacious sonnet “Show me dear Christ thy spouse”:

Show me dear Christ, thy spouse, so bright and clear.  
What, is it she, which on the other shore  
Goes richly painted? or which robbed and tore  
Laments and mourns in Germany and here?  
Sleeps she a thousand, then peeps up one year?  
Is she self truth and errs? now new, now outwore?  
Doth she, and did she, and shall she evermore  
On one, on seven, or on no hill appear?  
Dwells she with us, or like adventuring knights  
First travail we to seek and then make love?  
Betray kind husband thy spouse to our sights,  
And let mine amorous soul court thy mild dove,  
Who is most true, and pleasing to thee, then  
When she’ is embraced and open to most men.28

Donne’s poem, a plea for enlightenment about the nature of God’s Church (whether Protestant or Catholic), compares Christians in search of this truth to knights errant on an adulterous (yet holy) quest for “knowledge” of the Bride of Christ. God becomes the

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author of the romance of history, and believers become characters within it; the speaker prays that his ignorance and love-longing will be relieved by the still-obscured divine telos of his journey and “travail.” This appeal to an orthodox Christian narrative is also doctrinally brash and potentially ideologically subversive. The speaker’s speculation that his role as a Christian knight might license him (and a whole community of his fellows) to have spiritual sex with Christ’s spouse, together with his suggestion that the identity of the Church was still a romantic mystery and might not be Anglican, lend credence to Hobbes’ concern that romance led people to imagine grandiose identities and actions for themselves, and so might make them recalcitrant to temporal authority.

Donne’s turn to a romantic mode in his sonnet is explicit and deliberate, even jarring, consciously intended to produce a certain effect. However, smoother and less calculated uses of romance may help us better appreciate how easily accessible it was to, and how deeply embedded within, seventeenth-century England’s cultural imagination. In the rest of this section, two manuscripts will serve as examples of romance’s easy adaptability to other forms of discourse, and of its application to concerns both individual and communal, both private and public: first, Bishop Arthur Lake’s series of six sermons, Christ’s Conflict with and Conquest of the Tempter; second, a collection of letters from Mary Hatton to her fiancé, Randolph Helsby.

Lake’s sermons, preached at Worcester during Lent of 1613, were compiled into a neat manuscript in 1661 that they might “Now” be “first presented to Publik view”; although the manuscript seems to have been intended for the printer, the text apparently
never went to press. The sermons offer a detailed explication of the text of Matthew 4:1-12, in which Jesus is “led up of the Spirit into the Wildernesse to be tempted of the Devill,” and stress the theme of the Son of God’s exemplarity rather than his exceptionality (5). In so doing, they employ the extended metaphor of chivalric combat, reaching back to the medieval English tradition of representing Christ as a knight or hero of romance, and so suggesting that tradition’s enduring familiarity in the early and mid-seventeenth century. It has become commonplace for readers of Milton’s *Paradise Regained* to wonder why Milton chose the temptation in the wilderness, rather than the Passion, for the subject of his “sequel” to *Paradise Lost*; Lake understands both scriptural episodes as two linked battles of comparable importance, although only Christ’s conquest in the first can be wholly imitated by his human followers. Lake explains that the devil

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29 Arthur Lake, *Christ’s Conflict with and Conquest of the Tempter*, Folger Shakespeare Library ms. V.a.394, page 4. All subsequent references to this text will appear parenthetically by manuscript page number.

30 Indeed, *Christ’s Conflict with and Conquest of the Tempter* often speaks to some of *Paradise Regained’s* greatest interpretive dilemmas. Although Milton would have had no access to these sermons, Lake’s exegesis may reveal that some of Milton’s more frustrating moves had interpretive precedent within the seventeenth-century Church of England. For example, Lake presumes and addresses his congregation’s concern that Christ’s responses to Satan may be irrelevant or incomplete: “if you looke to [the devils] pretence, [Christ] seemes to say litt[le] to him,” whereas “if you respect th[e] devils intent,” he “answereth him fullie.” He urges his audience to “marke, how wisely Christ hath handled this Conflict” in his cagey dealings with Satan and his refusal to identify himself in no uncertain terms as the Son of God:

> At *the* first both parties concealed themselves: & the purpose was of the Tempter to know who Christ was; and not onely to know, but to trie, whether hee could infect him with sinne. Marke the issue: Christ drave the Tempter to betray himself; but he gave not the least advantage unto him whereby he might know Christ, to bee other than an holy man, *that* ruled himself by the Law of God. Whether cunningly or plainlie hee sett upon Christ, he still failed of his purpose, being defeated by Christ.

Another popular twentieth-century critical debate about *Paradise Regained* concerned whether Jesus performs a miraculous feat by standing on the pinnacle of the temple. Lake takes this issue on too, deciding in the negative and giving his congregation a brief lesson in architecture and etymology:

> What is meant by *the* pinnacle, the word πληρογιον maketh plaine. It signifieth a little wing. Some referre it unto the iron which men use to sett Wethercocks upon: because that which serveth for the fan or wethercocke seemeth to resemble wings. But it is more probable, that thereby is meant some lower battlments of *the* Temple, such as wee call Iles: for *the* name Ile is but a Corruption of the word Ala a wing. And if you marke the Outside of the Church in the battlments, the middle part riseth like the bodie of a bird, & the sides spread like wings. Vilipand seemeth to describe *the* forme of the Temple of Hierusalem as if it were not much unlike our Cathedrall Churches; excepting the Crosse Ile.
will “[play] the Lion” in the cosmic conflict soon enough, “when the time will occasion us to consider Christ’s passion,” but that for the time being, Christ’s and humanity’s foe appears “as a Serpent,” both the dragon of romance and the wily antagonist in Eden (5).

Lake never appears uncomfortable with his titular, and consistent, comparison of Christ to a secular martial hero; his analysis relies early and often upon the accessibility of a romance of combat to his congregation. Proposing in the first sermon that Christ is driven into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit not by physical impulsion, but by “a kind of morall violence,” Lake turns to lesser heroic examples to clarify his meaning:

A morall violence I call that, when the understanding is so assured & the will so resolute, that without casting those doubts which would trouble ordinarie providence, & without dreading those dangers which will stop ordinarie courages, men adventure upon high attempts: we may call them Heroicall motions. Such as were the Acts of Moses, Ioshua, the Judges, the worthies of K. David in the old Testament (to say nothing of Alexander, Cyrus & others in prophane histories).

(12)

Christ, like Cyrus (also a favorite example of heroic virtue for Sidney in the Defense of Poesy), is drawn into battle with his adversary by the “Heroicall motions” that bolster his resolution. As his sermons progress, Lake tends to prefer the martial imagery of “prophane histories”—the term, for him, is remarkably free of moral baggage—over further specific references to his Old Testament alternatives. He warns his audience not to confuse true “Heroicall motions” with the kind of “desperate humours” that might provoke them into vainglorious mock-tourneys with Satan:

The Lesson that wee must learn is, that wee may not be like unto the swaggerers, who stick not in the vanitie of theire drunken or desperate humours to defie the devil & be bold to enter the lists with him: but manie of them have to theire cost proved how hardie they were. Our Prayer must bee: 1’, Lead us not into temptation. 2. If we be led, that we be led thereunto & therein by the holie Spirit:
So conforming our selves to Christ in the entrance to the Conflict, wee may in some sort speed as Christ did in the event thereof.

Lake explains the devil’s eagerness for combat by noting that he is urged forward by his own sense of martial vanity: “As in warfare, souldiers choose to set upon the markablest enemies, & thinke it the greatest honour to give such a one an overthrow: So is the devils malice speciallie bent against the eminentest servants of God” (5). Both combatants, then, understand themselves to be engaged in a romantic episode of “courage,” “adventure,” and “honour,” although only one is led by the “morall violence” of extraordinary providence. Crucially, Lake here preemptively distinguishes between Hobbesian vainglorious romance and romance of some other kind: the first may be the genre of self-interested soldiers or of the devil, but the second—though it may look much like its antithesis—is justified because inspired by an authorial God.

Both Christ and Satan likewise possess their respective “weapons” of attack and strategies for defense, metaphors Lake typically employs in his exhortations to his congregation to take Christ as an example for their own “Heroicall” spirituality. “Though he were both God & Man,” he insists, “yet did he carrie himself, not as God but as man: fighting with those weapons which are common to him with us, that wee might learne how to resist by that patterne which wee have of him” (19). Because all of God’s people have access to the same weaponry as their chief, “the difference between Adam & Christ, was not in the weapons whereby the devill was to be encountred, but in the use of the weapons. The second Adam had them & did use them, & made the devill feele the force of them” (19). Similarly, while one of the devil’s weapons is his manipulation of biblical
text, Christ’s godly knowledge and employment of scripture is his spiritual armor, a martial metaphor that is itself scriptural in origin and is available to all believers:

it must bee to us as armour not hangd up but putt on; seing Tentations will day and night sett on us, Texts of scripture must bee alwaies readie to repell them from us. As Christ, so wee must resist the Tempter with scriptum est it is written. Wee see, that the Tempter gives no rest to Christ, but goeth on trying, Whether he be armed at all points. St Paul Ephes. 6. teacheth that wee have a Panoplie, a spirituall armour to cover us from top to toe. And that wee have need to have it all on, God is pleased to shew us in the example of Christ.

(18)

As the community of Christian soldiers must learn, through Christ’s chivalric conduct, the right uses of the weapons and armor at their disposal, so must they become familiar with the “politik” martial strategies of Satan’s perverse romance: “For whereas in warre the field may bee forsaken […] politikly,” Lake notes, “as when an Armie maketh shew to flie, but with a purpose to draw the enemie into the more danger […] Even so doth the Tempter […] he leaveth a worse place to gain a better” (46). The result, he suggests, is that our spiritual combat is not merely an episode, but never ends while we live:

Trulie is it said, The life of man is a warfare. During this life wee must ever stand upon our guard, & not thinke ourselves secure, though we have once given the enemy a foile. The greatest Captaines that profane histories doe mention, have never received greater blows than when, overjoyfull of a victorie, they have been fearelesse, & not expected the return of the enemie: by whose second courage they have been unexpectedly surprized. […]

But a greater Captaine than any is our Saviour Christ, even the Captain of the Lords armies: who standing out in our persons, representeth the Conditions of our state, & biddeth we provide for a new assault so soon as a former is ended. Our lesson must bee […] We must work out our salvation with feare & trembling. For the difference between Corporall & spirituall warre is this, that in Spirituall warre there is no Truce much lesse peace: whereas in the Corporall there are both. The Tempter doth watch us, how he may have opportunitie to assaile us: wee must never thinke that hee is the least time at one with us, Though wee doe not feele him setting on us: & yet seldom are wee free from onsets.

(20-1)

Both “the greatest Captaines that profane histories doe mention” and “the Captain of the
Lords armies” stand as examples to the congregation, the one negative and the other positive. Moreover, Lake indicates that the entire life of each believer is always already a romance of combat—one that is indeed, in some sense, inescapable. The Lord’s army may be destined for a final “conquest,” but on the other face of this communal, eschatological victory are a nearly infinite number of solitary battles with the serpent.

In the last of the six sermons, Lake invites his audience to consider chivalric romance not simply as a useful metaphor, but as an inherent presence in the episode of the temptation in the wilderness, and as an essential element of Christian narrative. He urges reflection upon the fact that while Christ is often attended by angels or disciples throughout the gospels, he is always alone during his greatest trials and triumphs. This heroic solitude, the bishop proposes, is essential for the glorification of his exploits: “God, to prevent all such derogating from the Redemption, wrought by Christ, provided that at those times he should be alone; no Angels, no men with him: there was no helping either Angell or man, when hee encountred either the Serpent or the Lion” (48). And not just Christ’s isolation, but the divine orchestration of chivalric narrative itself, is necessary for the instruction of the godly: “Christ could have putt him off at the first approach; but hee would not. Hee stood out for us, & hee would be an Example unto us: an example, with what shield we should quench all the fierie darts of the devill, & with what sword we should putt him to flight: Christ would be a patterne unto us in both” (46-7). Fallen individuals and the worldly church are compelled to live within an ongoing narrative of conflict and conquest, but the Son of God freely chooses romance rather than instantaneous success, fitting his conduct to the genre of the community he has come to deliver.
While Lake’s sermons envision an individual and communal Christian romance whose superficial resemblance to the genre of “swaggerers” is distinguished by “Heroicall motions” of divine origin, the letters of Mary Hatton offer a reading of private life as romance,\(^{31}\) as well as a preoccupation with the proper relationship between “Heroicall motions” and public action. The letters that we have from Hatton to Randolph Helsby mainly span the couple’s engagement between 1653 and 1655 (although a final letter in the collection, dated 1668, reveals a brief glimpse of an apparently happy companionate marriage, along with a young son named Jack and a houseful of naughty servants, fifteen years later).\(^{32}\) Crucially for our purposes, the vibrant letters that the pair exchanged indicate that they also exchanged reading material, including romances. Evidently, they enjoyed both sixteenth-century classics and contemporary texts. In March of 1654, Hatton informs Helsby, “I am a reading of your newe booke of mr Spensers which I like well,” and offers a strong endorsement: “I do believe his poetry for excellency is as aboundantly great & in as handsome & pretty language as many of the beste in the worlde.”\(^{33}\) A year later, as preparations for their imminent wedding were

\(^{31}\) For other arguments that one may experience both daily life and history through the hermeneutic of genre, including romance, see Smith, 243; Mary Ellen Lamb, “Merging the Secular and the Spiritual in Lady Anne Halkett’s Memoirs,” in Dowd and Eckerle, eds., 81-96; and Hayden White, *The Fiction of Narrative: Essays on History, Literature, and Theory, 1957-2007*, ed. Robert Doran (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins U P, 2010).

\(^{32}\) Mary Hatton Helsby’s unconventional flirtatiousness in this later letter (which recounts for her absent husband, in loving detail, her corporal punishment of a pretty young maidservant) also tells us that the couple’s relationship had not lost its erotic spark. The letter, Folger Shakespeare Library ms. X.d.493 (7), will be the subject of my talk, “Queer Heterosexuality, Discipline, and Domesticity in the Letters of Mary Hatton Helsby” at the April 2014 meeting of the Shakespeare Association of America.

underway, Helsby seems to have asked Hatton about her recent reading of a certain prose
romance that the letters do not identify; she answers, “I am so busey in makeing ready all
my garnishments that I have but had little time to read […] butt I did read abed after we
rid from Chester upon that wild windie day.” She is less impressed by this particular
romance than by Spenser’s poetry, and offers Helsby her review of what she has read:

I do not methinks approve of stories of romaunce all so alike that they seem as if
I had read the same one hundred times. Besides that how vain it was (for him
which writt it) to make the yong gentle woman run awaie with a sweet hearte
(her younger of manie years) when all were agreed upon the matche save only his
more sober unckle. Tis all as olde as Helsby towre but this, and this is in deede
some thing very freshe & newe as such a youthe could make itt. If you have not
read itt I would advise you sadly if by my commendations you would waste a
candell over itt. I had rather do some thing of more use than he that writ it by
turning my wheel without a stop till some other had read throu itt in my stead.
But it hath little bits in it that shewe he could not with carefullness & practise be
without much commendation.

At first glance, her report may look like a straightforward dismissal of the genre, perhaps
not much different from a critique of today’s romance novels: they are full of ridiculously
implausible plot devices, and are packed so full of clichés that a person who has read one
may as well have read them all. Hatton also gestures to her feminine domestic virtues by
suggesting that she would rather be spinning than reading, and that her housework is “of
more use” than either the composition or the consumption of such a romance.

However, if we were to take only this message from her letter, we would be
ignoring much of what her poor review of this particular story implies. Far from calling
romances bad, Hatton is complaining that this one is a bad romance—and she seems to
have read enough of them to distinguish the ones she enjoys from the ones that are “all so

34 Folger Shakespeare Library ms. X.d.493 (6).
35 Ibid.
alike” that they resemble “one hundred” others she has seen already. In criticizing the lovers’ gratuitous elopement, she suggests that this silly plot point is the work of an amateur, who nevertheless might “with carefullness & practise” come to produce something better later in his career, since he shows “little bits” of creative promise elsewhere. In essence, Hatton seems to regard herself not as a dabbler in romances, but as a connoisseur of them, someone who knows the “freshe” from the trite and can tell whether a certain narrative is a waste of time (even if she has gone ahead and read it anyway). In offering to tell the wrong kind of romance (in her opinion) from the right kind, she is not unlike Lake, different though their standards of judgment may be. What is more, reading poetry and romances is apparently a pastime that these real life lovers share and take pleasure in discussing. The volume of Spenser that Hatton praises is “[Helsby’s] newe booke,” either on loan to her or given as a gift; he has asked what she thinks of this latest romance; and she advises him not to waste his time and candles on it “If [he has] not read itt” already (which she sees as a possibility), offering a specific example of its nonsense as evidence for why he should choose a better one. Between the lines of her review, Hatton tells Helsby that in marriage to her he will have both a dutiful, sensible housewife and a discerning, enthusiastic literary companion.

Hatton concludes her review with another dual indication of her contempt for bad romance and her love for the better kind: “I do scorne & disdaine these trifling pass times & nought else can I learne from manie of them. There is so much more prettyness in yo\textsuperscript{ur poetrie} that I shall keep itt with all the rest.”\textsuperscript{36} The “prettiest” love-language, evidently, comes from

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
Helsby in his poetry to her. This, too, she critiques, with both playfulness and ardor: “But why do you tell me that hath so small a portion that I am so very rich? There your similitie stoppeth. But when we are married you can then say in very truth that I shal be rich beyond all earthly riches with that affectio you will give to me.”

Better than reading an amorous romance, Hatton finds, is living in one—and her writing elsewhere reveals her inclination to think and speak about her relationship with Helsby in the effusive narrative style of the texts they both enjoy. In the same letter, she reassures Helsby, who seems to be worried about where they will take up residence after their wedding, by reminding him of an experience they shared as though she were recounting an episode of courtship from a romance (one that does, in this case, look like Welch’s genre of “love, recreative fancy, and […] pastoral escape”):

I shall ever account myselfe […] the happiest of women wheresoever we shall dwell or abide, pray then be content. Do you not remember when wee met now soe long agoe in the great old Inne at Stanemore when my pillyon girth brake and when we walked together over the pastures to the cottage engarlanded with ivie & honey suckle & in the middest of a gardene bloomeing with flowers. If twere for joyfulness & content tis there I would fain dwell with you for ever & ever. But tis follie for me to write thus (as so manye have talked) or I could allmost weep with pleasure at the thought of dwelling there wrapt in the peace of each others love untill that last daye of our marriage when as shaddows wee shall have departed.

Hatton makes a move in her discussion of the love story of her life that is remarkably similar to the gestures she performs in her review of the silly romance: she disassociates herself from the romantic mode and embraces it at the same time. It is “follie,” she admits, for her to dwell on such episodes or to write and think in such florid impracticalities, “or [she] could almost” indulge in them wholeheartedly—which, in the end, she does anyway in her vision of the real-life lovers’ eternal marital bliss, as though true love legitimizes her literary license.

37 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
Finally, the conceptual vocabulary of romance helps Hatton express herself in times of trouble and fear as well as on happy or amorous occasions. From a historical or political standpoint, by far the most noteworthy elements of the Hatton/Helsby correspondence are its hints that Helsby, while still a bachelor living in London, may have been on the periphery of some subversive action against Oliver Cromwell. The plot must have died in its cradle (as Mary Hatton was anxious it should). Hatton, having heard something of it, reveals her feelings upon receiving her latest letter from Helsby: “How greatly your letters rejoyced me none can tell save one shipwrack’d & draifiting hither & thither halfe dead in the waving seas which at last suddenly eyeth the succours that seemed awhile agoe utterlie beyond the vision of even hope.”\(^39\) Having communicated her intense relief by employing the stock romance devices of shipwreck and miraculous providential rescue, she hopes for similar divine protection for Helsby in his precarious position, but seems anxious about a distinction similar to the one Lake draws between the “Heroicall motions” of providence and the “desperate humours” that make men “bold to enter the lists” with the devil, “to theire costs.” Hatton confesses her fear “to think how matters might ensue in that great Babylon [i.e., London] to your ill fortune. Yet godd knoweth the unfearing trust I have in him for your well fare now & hereafter. For it is in vaine that we praye to him in which we have not either hopes nor truste. But liken unto any other things both may att tymes faill us when the cloudynesses of life blinde the eyes to the ever watchfull Saviour.”\(^40\) Both she and Helsby are caught up in the “cloudyness” of a metaphorical tempest that prevents them from knowing which heroic impulses are divine and which are vain, and which may

\(^{39}\) Folger Shakespeare ms. X.d.493 (3).
\(^{40}\) Ibid.
likewise temporarily obstruct their faith in providential oversight. In the absence of this conviction, she desperately (and cryptically) advises him to “Bear watchefully the changes till time ripens the fruits that you talke of,” and not “to followe those who be placed lesse advantageously than the verie fewe others that can note discretely from their overseeing place the tymes & oportunities for fortunate action.”

Caught up the seas or mists of life, and “by reason of the utter darkness & uncertaineties of the tymes,” Hatton suggests, Helsby lacks the broad historical narrative vision that “verie fewe” possess, which alone can reveal the best occasion for agency and determine whether one’s “Heroicall motions” are valid or vainglorious. Such dangerous circumstances, she adds, may favor the few who are granted this vision—like, possibly, Cromwell himself—but are disastrous for others and may be unstable for all alike:

> It was not matteres of this favour that created Oliver (& others to be read of) but some suche matter did holpen the uncrowneing of the poore king. Tis true tis out of the verie mudd & mire of the tyme that a bolde man of partes & some place, tho he may not pick his way, maye fly upwards to fortune, by his clear vision of the wayes that lead unto her (straightly or crookedly). But he who would over throwe him when there must wait upon patience to know if such an Oliver power can hold all he hath gotten. Of all I have ever read this I conceive to be the greatest of trialls Conquerers can be putt to.

All that Hatton has “ever read,” whether histories or romances of conquest, has made her wary of occasions that depend upon the favor of “fortune,” and she urges Helsby to wait

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41 Ibid.
42 Hatton’s personal politics are difficult to discern from her correspondence. She discusses them most directly in this letter, in a difficult passage in which she condemns the religious hypocrisy and “selff love” of both parties in the War: “But if godd be truely in the heart of gentile or iewe it mattereth so little for the forme in which they shewe it that I would as soone be for king as round head or the last as the first, & to fight for the forme would not be worth one arrowe head or a blast of powder. Yet moste of the evill of the tymes hath come from much selff love of forme that is of prejudice to the minde of onely the ungodlie (whether they that love it or they that love it not). For godliness expelleth the evills of our nature & it is the veriest of follie to nurse in our flesh the illnesses that doome us to miserie whilst we have such a medicine of the true Spirit to purge us of it without verie much helpe from the doctors” (ibid).
43 Ibid.
with “patience” until both time and providence can illuminate the darkness of the age and determine whether his heroic impulse destined for a successful telos. Given that the idea remained confined to their private correspondence, Hatton seems vindicated in her fear that the national narrative was not on the side of her fiancé’s drive toward public heroism. Her letters anticipate other texts throughout this project in their concern with the distinction (both light and serious) between worthwhile and vain romance, with the disturbing difficulty of knowing whether one has correctly intuited one’s role in the narrative of history, and with the possibility of tension between male and female partners’ readings of life as genre.

Right Romance

Between Donne’s, Lake’s, and Hatton’s writing, we have observed romance’s adaptive facility: these texts feature romance beyond royalist prose fiction and outside of romances entirely. Taken together, they also illustrate several additional factors that are crucial to this project. First, they show us that seventeenth-century Englishmen and women who are attuned to romance are engaging not just with continental works, but also with England’s medieval chivalric tradition and with sixteenth-century writers like Spenser. Second, they remind us that romance, while read by women, was not primarily a women’s genre; it was also a genre of masculine fellowship (as in Donne’s sonnet), of communal Christianity (as in Lake’s sermons), and of communication between men and women (as in Hatton’s letters)—communication that might highlight divergent gendered perspectives on how to interpret life as romance. Along similar lines, these examples

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44 For a discussion of romance and male intimacy in royalist writing, see Kahn, Wayward Contracts, 223-51.
reveal romance as more than a mode of isolation or withdrawal (although Hatton’s vision of amorous seclusion with Helsby partly speaks to this aspect); it is likewise a mode of forging bonds between individuals and within groups, a genre for expressing and creating fellowship, as when Lake’s Christ retreats alone into the wilderness in order to lead and strengthen his community of followers. Next, they offer further evidence of Hobbes’ concern with the potency of romantic subjectivity: subjects who identify with the heroes of romance perceive their power to resist not just Satan, but also church teaching or state leadership. Finally, Lake’s and Hatton’s texts are each concerned in their own way with making, and sometimes worrying over, distinctions between right romance and wrong romance: if the first kind is inspired and justified by God, by true love, or by a clear vision of the path to historical fortune, the second kind might be a silly waste of time; the vanity of the world, the flesh, and the devil; or a delusion that tempts would-be heroes toward danger and tragedy. How might those who believed in both wrong romance and right romance decide which was which, and what circumstances tested their belief in the usefulness of that distinction?

To explore these matters further, and to present a more complete picture of romance and ideology in seventeenth-century England, this project traces two interwoven threads. First, I examine the relationship between the individual romantic subjectivity that Hobbes denounced as vainglorious and the formation of romantic community based on a shared sense of heroic identity, which was even more threatening to established authority. Expanding on ideas proposed by critics such as Sacvan Bercovitch, who finds
romance at the root of Puritan subjectivity, mythmaking, and conquest in America, and Michael McKeon, who links romance to nonconformist religious “enthusiasm,” or (according to seventeenth-century critics) “claims to spirituality which reflect the pride of human sufficiency by being inadequately tied to rational [...] evidences,” I argue that the potent heroic subjectivity offered by romance often correlated with the widespread Protestant belief in divine election. Seventeenth-century subjects (especially, though not only, Puritans) who read themselves as the heroes of romance regularly attributed authorship of that romance to God; as characters predestined for trials and triumph within a divine narrative, they were essentially equivalent to the community of the elect. Their belief in their romantic heroism, as well as in their Christian salvation, finds its source in a private conviction of their election by God—an impression that can never be “tied to rational [...] evidences” and therefore cannot be proven false. Both election and romance could draw individual believers together into a community united by its members’ shared faith in their exceptional status—a community that also, by its very nature, excluded the “unregenerate” who did not share its collective subjectivity.

Like the private experience of conversion, which could then be shared and validated by others’ similar experiences so that it also became a public and communal identity, the genre could function as a powerful shibboleth, drawing its adherents together

47 Hobbes, in *Leviathan*, was adamant that a sacred destiny or contract could never be proven; of course, his real concern was that it could never be disproven either, and might seem to be confirmed by contingency: “For when Christian men take not their Christian sovereign for God’s prophet, they must either take their own dreams for the prophecy they mean to be governed by, and the tumor of their own hearts for the Spirit of God, or they must suffer themselves to be led by [...] some of their fellow subjects that can bewitch them, by slander of the government, into rebellion (without other miracle to confirm their calling than sometimes an extraordinary success and impunity), and by this means destroying all laws, both divine and human, reduce all order, government, and society to the first chaos of violence and civil war” (293).
while excluding and resisting those who will not or cannot participate in the “right” kind of romance.\footnote{Nigel Smith, while distinguishing romance from epic, briefly sets forth a claim about epic that I wish to make a similar version of, in more detail, about romance: “The history of the epic during the English Revolution is a process […] in which kinds of subjectivity are ‘discovered’—as epic and heroic patterns are worked upon by divided perceptions and divided ideological requirements […] [Epic] enabled religious difference to be voiced as a state of mind, as an internal history of the Puritan and Quaker individual: an odyssey of subjectivity. Where this might involve an inward turn for the defeated and withdrawn Royalist, puritan republicanism was most heroically engaged in its inwardness” (232-3).} Patterson and Potter have shown that genre could function as a code accessible only to members of a royalist romantic community,\footnote{See Patterson, \textit{Censorship and Interpretation}, 167-210; and Potter, 72-112.} and Kahn has argued that royalists formed affective political communities based on their prose romances of sentiment and sympathy.\footnote{See Kahn, \textit{Wayward Contracts}, 223-51.} I argue that Puritans and republicans formed exclusive romantic communities of their own, based on both affective piety and a shared sense of elect exceptionalism. Because royalists were not the only romantic subjects, part of the Civil War and its aftermath was an ongoing ideological battle over whose romance was the right romance: both sides mocked and condemned the other side’s manipulation of the genre while simultaneously appropriating and reclaiming it in order to represent their champions, and their community, as the true heroes of national and sacred history. I also show, especially in later chapters, how this competition became increasingly self-conscious and sometimes self-critical: both republicans and royalists recognized that their romantic rivalry and its inherently non-rational subjectivity needed to be acknowledged and wrestled with, and began to suggest that individual heroism and communal identification might depend upon romance’s mediation between conviction and uncertainty. Finally, I address how postwar writers might turn to romance not merely to represent elect community, but to reconsider and reconstruct it, thinking critically about
whether (or not) the genre might breach and repair the very divides in subjectivity and identity that it had been so instrumental in maintaining, and where the limits of romance for constructing civic and religious narratives might lie.

In the second thread of this project, I explore how seventeenth-century writers who were drawn to romance contended with recurring problems of narrative vision, genre, and gender. As the structure of the form suggests, romance’s length and its “duplicitous teleology” were well suited to the vagaries of an always-unfolding national history. But because of these vicissitudes, while romantic subjectivity might be powerful, liberating, and inspiring, it also demanded experiences of disappointment, suffering, and ignorance in which the genre of life might look much more like tragedy. To mitigate this burden, writers of national or elect romance frequently imagined their characters—and, implicitly, themselves—being granted some prophetic perspective on the complete teleological narrative of history. As we will see, such visions are often limited, often fleeting, and often unevenly bestowed on masculine and feminine subjects: like Mary Hatton, who could not foresee a happy end to Randolph Helsby’s “Heroicall motions” through “the utter darkness & uncertaneties of the tymes,” female subjects and writers of romance were apt to express skepticism about, or feel excluded from, the narrative visions of their male counterparts. I argue, then, that due to romance’s long form and the problem of multiple ideological and individual subjectivities, we encounter many seventeenth-century struggles with the generic tension between providential romance and the tragedies of personal or national history. Further, much of this generic friction is also gendered, arising from the norm of male subjects’ visions of themselves as lofty chivalric heroes and
women’s self-identification as constrained lovers, wives, and mothers. Finally, I propose that as writers reconsidered the formation and restrictions of elect community, they also strove to rethink formal divides in romance, interrogating new ways of approaching mixed genre, gendered perspective, and masculine and feminine heroism.

Beginning in 1588, the year that Fulke Greville began work on the publication of his late friend Philip Sidney’s *New Arcadia*, and ending one hundred years later in 1688, the year that Aphra Behn published *Oroonoko* and the “Glorious Revolution” ended the Stuart dynasty, this project reads across the divide between centuries in order to enable a new understanding of romance, elect community, and narrative vision during the English Civil War, the Restoration, and its aftermath. In chapter one, “Protestant Re-Visions of Romance: Philip Sidney’s *New Arcadia* and Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene,*” I consider the two key works that grappled with romance’s civic potential and its limitations for a newly-Protestant state and profoundly influenced seventeenth-century approaches to the genre. Against critical claims that Sidney and Spenser judged romance too worldly to function in harmony with their religious patriotism, I argue that they each developed distinctive postures that acknowledged the genre’s challenges while affirming its Calvinist resonances. Sidney’s Pyrocles, asked to justify his erotic passion, counters that “they onely know it, which inwardly feele it,” setting up an intricate correspondence between the turn to romance and the conversion of the elect: both rely on non-rational subjectivity to exclude the uninitiated from a community of believers. Sidney’s zealous lovers form affective bonds through their shared stories and thus resist the tyranny of the unregenerate. Spenser, in turn, contends with romance’s errant structure by portraying the
genre’s tortuous temporality as a yoke to which the elect must submit as they navigate the hard course of providential history. His heroes may be granted prophetic narrative perspective to help them bear this burden: as a male hero, Redcrosse receives a mountaintop vision of the New Jerusalem, while the lady knight Britomart is promised a fruitful “tree” of offspring. Sidney’s and Spenser’s two models of romance—as a subjective shibboleth that can empower an elect community, and as a temporal pattern that endeavors to mediate between triumph and tragedy—would endure with widespread and multivalent applications amid the ideological conflicts of the next century.

Chapter two (“‘Heroical’ Histories: Writing Lives into National Romance”) examines how Sidney and Spenser’s twin hermeneutics permeate four works of romantic historiography composed by royalists and republicans during and after the civil wars, as both sides sought to mark their community and leaders as the true heroes of the national narrative. Two texts highlight Sidney and Spenser’s complex midcentury reception: first, the 1648 pamphlet “The Faerie Leveller” extols Charles I as the living antitype of Spenser’s Knight of Justice, casting Spenser as a prophet who forecasted Cromwell’s unlikely defeat and reclaiming him from his Puritan devotees by insisting that readers loyal to the king hold the real key to his allegory. Next, the 1652 first printing of Fulke Greville’s Life of the Renowned Sir Philip Sidney wrestles with the correspondence between Sidney’s romantic heroism and his tragic death while allowing its Interregnum audience to read him as either a courtly royalist or a godly proto-republican visionary. A second pair of works, the royalist Margaret Cavendish’s and the parliamentarian Lucy Hutchinson’s memoirs of their war-hero husbands, diverge politically yet share a generic and gendered tension
between the men’s lofty romantic vision and their wives’ rootedness in pragmatic concerns. All four texts reveal ideological competition over the right uses of romance for representing individual and communal history as story, alongside a pervasive sense that the genre is fraught with problems of variable personal and historical perspective.

Each remaining chapter pairs a republican writer with one or more royalist ones in order to illuminate these ongoing struggles over romance. In chapter three (“The Fall and the Summit: Milton’s Counter-Revision of Romantic Structure in Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained”), I explore both parties’ efforts to contend with the problem of subjectivity and the experiences of contingency and defeat, reading Milton’s post-Restoration biblical poetics against post-regicide romances by Margaret Cavendish and Percy Herbert. Much as Kahn has proposed, Cavendish and Herbert offer their fellow royalists a rationalist way around Hobbes’ distaste for romance, creating skeptical characters who accept and exploit the genre’s flexible subject positions and its indeterminacy between divine providence and atomistic fortune. Milton, however, assigns this relativism to Satan, pitting his anti-teleological skepticism against the protagonists’ embattled faith and reaffirming the reality of a godly subjectivity unique to the community of the elect. Contrary to the common argument that Milton came to reject romance as too royalist, I show that he develops his own sense of Puritan right romance that embraces the gap between conviction and uncertainty, and the distance between the promise of narrative fulfillment and the present unreality of that telos.

In the last two chapters, I consider late seventeenth-century writers’ attempts to rethink romance in relationship to election, community, gender, and generic form.
Chapter four (“‘My victorious triumphs are all thine’: Amorous Romance and Elect Community in Lucy Hutchinson’s Order and Disorder”) reads Hutchinson’s Genesis epic against John Dryden’s panegyric to the restored Charles II, “Astraea Redux.” I argue that Dryden’s poem, reconceiving romance as reparative rather than exclusive, depicts the Restoration as the universalist telos to the turbulent national story: God blesses and elects all English people equally in their spiritual marriage to Charles II, an ecstatic union that subsumes distinctions of gender and ideology by reinscribing all subjects as feminine in sinfulness, as masculine by marriage, and as royalist. Hutchinson resists this triumphalistic narrative, insisting in her romantic treatment of her biblical protagonists that both teleological plot and redemptive eroticism are gifts reserved for the Puritan elect, and suggesting—differently than in her Memoirs—that male and female believers may not be divided by hierarchical narrative vision, sharing equally in the promise of reproduction and in prophetic glimpses of the still-remote “full Restoration.”

The fifth and final chapter (“‘In the next world’: John Bunyan, Aphra Behn, and the Limits of Romance”) mounts readings of John Bunyan’s The Pilgrim’s Progress, Part Two, and Aphra Behn’s Oroonoko, texts known for ideological intricacy and resistance to generic categorization. I aim to show how this complexity relates to both authors’ self-conscious interrogation of romance and elect community, as they return at the dawn of the eighteenth century to questions much like those that challenged Spenser and Sidney a hundred years before: can romance function as a meaningful model for history? What are its civic and religious applications and limitations? Bunyan, I argue, orchestrates productive conflicts between romantic norms and Calvinist allegory, ultimately proposing
that romance’s value lies in its ability to stand for (rather than embody) sacred narrative form, to empower a nontraditional family of dissenters, and to imagine new modes of godly eroticism and feminine heroism. Behn, too, affirms the genre’s capacity to unite a diverse community: Oroonoko and his male and female friends are politically heterogeneous, and the African prince subverts Calvinism’s exclusion of Ham’s black descendants from the narrative of the elect. Rather than being empowered or providentially protected, however, their group is marginalized and destroyed by colonialists who lack their romantic sensibility. While Bunyan draws romance to the fore, Behn enacts its recession in her transatlantic tragedy; her prophetic narrative vision as a royalist woman reveals not the New Jerusalem but the New World, a spatial and temporal zone she finds hostile to the ideas that allowed romance to flourish across ideological boundaries in seventeenth-century England.
Chapter One

Protestant Re-Visions of Romance: Sir Philip Sidney’s *New Arcadia* and Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*

Before we can fully appreciate seventeenth-century writers’ ideological appropriations of romance, we must consider the most influential English narratives from the end of the previous century that served as foundations and sources for countless texts that followed them. Although we are examining them proleptically, Sir Philip Sidney’s *New Arcadia* and Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene* were both composed with one authorial eye toward England’s “modern” Protestant present and future and the other toward its troubled recent past. Near the sixteenth century’s close, and in the wake of England’s religious and political turmoil under the Tudor dynasty, Sidney and Spenser were keenly aware of romance’s medieval and Catholic history, and they were eager to reconsider the cherished genre’s religious and civic potential for their newly Protestant state. What, they asked themselves and their readers, might romance come to mean for God’s elect nation? What kind of literary arena could it provide for contending with questions of England’s faith, its monarchy, its history, and its destiny?

The aim of this chapter is not to detail the complete inheritance that Sidney and Spenser’s struggles with romance’s Protestant nationalist potential left to seventeenth-century Britons; such an effort would require a book unto itself (or more likely two). Rather, it is to explore four specific elements of their re-vision of romance—two from each author—that proved especially fruitful to the Civil War and Restoration writers we consider in these pages. Sidney’s *New Arcadia* bequeathed to English romance the two
traits that would eventually inspire Thomas Hobbes’ warnings about its subversive tendencies: first, a non-rational and therefore powerfully malleable heroic subjectivity, derived from the hero’s zealous faith in his or her election and protection by providence; second, the genre’s related ability to function as an ideological shibboleth, uniting an elect community of self-identified heroes and empowering them to exclude and resist those whom they deem inimical to their shared sacred narrative. Spenser’s *Faerie Queene* established two key points of tension in his patriotic and religious epic that prepared seventeenth-century writers to engage constructively with romance’s structural challenges: first, a tension in generic perspective, wrought by providential romance’s interplay with the tragic burdens of personal and national history; second, a tension in gendered perspective, emblematized by male and female subjects’ receipt of separate, and not necessarily equal, prophetic insights into romance’s long and errant form. Sidney and Spenser’s twin legacies—of romantic subjectivity and exclusive elect community, and of romance’s productive problems of genre and gender—would flourish with widespread applications and innovations amid the conflicts of the century to come.

I. “They onely know it, which inwardly feele it”: Romantic Subjectivity and Romance as Shibboleth in Sir Philip Sidney’s *New Arcadia*

Immediately following his untimely death at the Battle of Zutphen in the name of a unified Protestant Europe, Sir Philip Sidney grew into a legendary figure much like the idealized hero of romance who unites all virtues within himself. As we will discover in the next chapter, readers of diverse ideologies shored up Sidney’s reputation as the consummate “Renaissance man”: an exemplary soldier, scholar, subject, courtier, poet,
lover, and Christian, all in one.\footnote{For discussions of the conjunctions and disjunctions between Sidney’s popular biographical image and the appropriation and appreciation of his works, see Alan Hager, “The Exemplary Mirage: Fabrication of Sir Philip Sidney’s Biographical Image and the Sidney Reader,” \textit{ELH} 48.1 (1981), 1-16; and Richard Hillyer, \textit{Sir Philip Sidney, Cultural Icon} (New York: Palgrave Macmillan), 2010.} Much contemporary criticism of Sidney has been a reaction against this legend, an attempt to discern his true principles beneath layers of error and hyperbole. Andrew Weiner, for instance, pits “the romantic image of the courtier-lover-poet that was for so long an obstacle to the understanding of his works” against the “real” Philip Sidney, a devout Protestant whose zeal sometimes jarred with Elizabeth I’s more moderate policies, and a serious scholar of (and commentator on) the religion and politics of his age.\footnote{Andrew D. Weiner, \textit{Sir Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Protestantism: A Study of Contexts} (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1978), 3. In partial contrast to Weiner, Katherine Duncan-Jones’ later biography of Sidney, \textit{Sir Philip Sidney: Courtier Poet} (New Haven, CT: Yale U P, 1991), proposes “not to ‘debunk’ Sidney,” but to explore his complexity and integrate his romantic, religious, and political legacies (xii).} Weiner’s seminal \textit{Sir Philip Sidney and the Poetics of Protestantism} opposed several earlier arguments that Sidney’s prose fiction celebrated erotic love despite its moral hazards and extolled conventional romantic heroism despite the protagonists’ flaws.\footnote{These earlier critics with a more conventionally “romantic” interpretation of Sidney’s narrative include Walter R. Davis, \textit{A Map of Arcadia: Sidney’s Romance in Its Tradition} (New Haven, CT: Yale U P, 1965); Jon S. Lawry, \textit{Sidney’s Two Arcadias: Pattern and Proceeding} (Ithaca, NY: Cornell U P, 1972); and Dorothy Connell, \textit{Sir Philip Sidney: The Maker’s Mind} (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977).} Examining Sidney’s finished first romance, now known as the \textit{Old Arcadia}, Weiner concluded that “Sidney did not intend [his protagonists] to be exemplars of heroism or virtue” and that the characters’ amorous exploits represent distractions from temporal ethics and temptations away from spiritual concerns.\footnote{Weiner, 100. An earlier argument for a didactically non-heroic \textit{Old Arcadia}, minus Weiner’s attention to Sidney’s devout Calvinism, is Richard Lanham’s \textit{The Old Arcadia} (New Haven, CT: Yale U P, 1965).} Weiner’s basic reading remains current—Blair Worden’s major study, for one, argues that the \textit{Old Arcadia} deems love inimical to the devout statesman’s public duty and self-
— and the *Old Arcadia* remains Sidney’s more frequently studied prose narrative, probably due to the combined factors of its shorter length, its more focused structure, and its completion.

When Sidney died in the Low Countries, however, he left behind him in England an unfinished revision of his romance, featuring the same characters (plus new ones) and a similar but more expansive plot. His old friend and subsequent biographer Fulke Greville was convinced that this version was superior, despite being incomplete, and that it offered a more accurate reflection of Sidney’s literary, religious, and political values. In 1588, Greville objected to an unauthorized publication of parts of the first romance and proposed that Sidney’s “correction,” entrusted to him, was “fitter to be printed”; two years later, he ensured that the *New Arcadia* did appear in print, breaking off mid-sentence during a momentous scene, just as Sidney had left it. We know from numerous sixteenth- and seventeenth-century references, continuations, and sequels that the revised romance was widely read and well loved. Contemporary criticism sometimes assumes that the *Old Arcadia*’s ironic critique of erotic and chivalric romance goes more or less unchanged in the *New*. Clare Kinney and Mary Ellen Lamb read the *New Arcadia*’s new elements of meta-genre—including added chivalric pageantry, numerous embedded

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romance narratives, and characters’ retellings of those digressions—as evidence that Sidney’s didactic intention was to undermine romance and its sinful conventions.\textsuperscript{58} The New Arcadia is indeed the text to read for a fuller sense of Sidney’s self-conscious engagement with romance as a zealous Protestant; I propose, however, that its heightened meta-generic awareness illustrates not a simple moral critique of romance, but the keenness of Sidney’s interest in romance’s complex applications and implications for his Calvinist countrymen (and women).\textsuperscript{59}

The sections that follow are particularly concerned with elements unique to Sidney’s revision of Arcadia that are central to his Protestant re-\-vision of heroic narrative. Interpolations and repetitions of romantic sub-\-narratives, together with new characters such as the conflicted Amphialus and the villainous Cecropia, draw out the resonances Sidney perceived between amorous romance, Calvinist religious identity, and English nationalism.\textsuperscript{60} First, Sidney’s reiterations of the psychological process of falling


\textsuperscript{59} The Defense of Poesy famously reflects Sidney’s profound concern with the fraught relationship between erotic or heroic literature, sin and vice, and Christian virtue. His defense of romance from the allegation that “it abuseth men’s wit, training it to wanton sinfulness and lustful love” is wistfully ambiguous: Alas, Love, I would thou couldst as well defend thy self as thou canst offend others [...] But grant love of beauty to be a beastly fault, although it be very hard, since only man and no beast hath the gift to discern beauty; grant that lovely name of Love to deserve all hateful reproaches, although even some of my masters the philosophers spent a good deal of their lamp oil in setting forth the excellency of it; grant, I say, whatsoever they will have granted [...] yet, think I, when this is granted, they will find their sentence may with good manners put the last words foremost, and not say that poetry abuseth man’s wit, but that man’s wit abuseth poetry. See Peter C. Herman, ed., Sir Philip Sidney’s An Apology for Poetry and Astrophil and Stella: Texts and Contexts (Glen Allen, VA: College Publishing, 2001), 100.

\textsuperscript{60} Barbara Brumbaugh relies on Amphialus and Cecropia to argue for a reading of the New Arcadia as an allegory of the spiritual struggle between the True (Protestant) and False (Catholic) churches, in which the heroes and heroines are ordained to prevail (see both “Cecropia and the Church of Antichrist” and “Jerusalem Delivered and the Allegory of Sidney’s Revised Arcadia”).
in love set up an intricate correspondence between the emotional experience of erotic surrender and the religious conversion of the elect: both endow the individual subject with a powerfully non-rational (but not intrinsically invalid) sense of sacred heroism and providential destiny. Next, Sidney suggests that this interplay between romantic and religious subjectivity allows believers to form a community through their shared narratives and to exclude the unregenerate who lack their sensitivity to, and their faith in, the right kind of romance. Finally, Sidney reveals the full potential of this subjective and communal power, as his heroes and heroines’ devotion to romance and to one another enables their resistance to Catholic-inflected menace and absolutist tyranny.61

ROMANTIC SUBJECTIVITY: EROTIC ELECTION AND COMMUNAL NARRATIVE

The New Arcadia, with its many narrative expansions, is singularly preoccupied with love not as a single event but as a recurring, patterned process. The repeated stages through which Pyrocles, Musidorus, Philoclea, and Pamela each submit to Love’s authority are recounted for us in detail: each of the four protagonists first becomes receptive to love by means of some external stimulus, then undergoes a profound internal revelation of its power, and finally ecstatically embraces it as a divine force that demands the believer’s absolute devotion and extraordinary obedience.62 The second sonnet of Astrophil and Stella reinforces Sidney’s investment in this pattern, condensing the

62 Patrick Scanlon has remarked on the “ritualized” nature of love in the New Arcadia, but does not discuss the religious resonances of Sidney’s “stylized” eroticism—which, as I will argue, is paradoxically individualized and deeply personal for each lover even as it is also consistent from character to character (“Emblematic Narrative and the Argument of Love in Sidney’s ‘New Arcadia,’” The Journal of Narrative Technique 15.3 [1985], 219-233, 219).
process into a single lyric. Astrophil recalls that Love gained “full conquest” of him “Not at first sight,” but “by degrees” like those we find reiterated throughout the *New Arcadia*:

I saw and liked, I liked, but lovèd not,  
I loved, but straight did not what Love decreed.  
At length to Love’s decrees I—forced—agreed […]  
Now even that footstep of lost liberty  
Is gone, and now like slave-born Muscovite  
I call it praise to suffer tyranny.63

I propose that Sidney’s multiple engagements with this set narrative process—which explicitly delineates a departure from the sudden shock of Petrarchan love—stem from his interest in its marked resemblance to the Calvinist *ordo salutis*, the process by which the elect soul receives salvation through God’s grace.

Theodore Beza, Calvin’s disciple and Sidney’s contemporary, embellished extensively upon this point of doctrine, which holds (in simplified form) that an individual whom God has *predestined for election* from the beginning of time is first attracted by an *outward calling* to the Gospel, then convinced to embrace it by an intensely personal *inward calling*. He or she then experiences an individualized *conversion* to faith and *justification* by God’s grace. These stages lead to the believer’s *sanctification*, or increasing godliness, and ultimately to his or her *glorification* with God at the end of time.64 Beza’s model was adopted and translated by the English Calvinist William Perkins in his popular book *A Golden Chaine*, which distilled its story of salvation into a dense diagram (Fig. 1), and the pattern became a staple of Calvinist conversion narratives: a century after Sidney, John Bunyan recalled in *Grace Abounding*.

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63 Herman, ed., 129.  
64 Calvinist doctrine emphasizes that the *ordo salutis* is not strictly chronological: various stages may overlap or recur. Nevertheless, each stage is an essential element of salvation.
to the Chief of Sinners that he became attracted to scripture and to godly preaching long before he experienced any interior impression of his election or became convinced of his sincere conversion to Christ.\textsuperscript{65} Sidney’s erotic variation on the Calvinist ordo appears at times to satirize his lovers’ idolatrous extremities of devotion, and at others to reflect genuine fascination with possible correspondences between pagan Love and Calvinism’s exacting, arbitrary God. Crucially, though, Sidney seems most interested in the conversion process’ psychological impact on believers, both singly and as a community. Like Calvinist election, he finds, the mimetic “election” by Love that the protagonists of his romance experience instills in them a powerful sense of identity and purpose, a subjectivity that prompts them both to set themselves apart from the “unregenerate” and to form affective bonds with other converts who venerate Love’s external narratives and recognize its internal effects. Because of this concern with individual and group psychology, the New Arcadia’s pagan equivalent of the ordo salutis dwells particularly on the predestined lover’s outward and inward “effectuall calling”—separated by Perkins as “effectuall preaching & hearing” and “the mollifying of the heart”—which produce a personal conviction of conversion, or “FAITH,” only in conjunction with one another.\textsuperscript{66}

A variation on predestination, one of the cornerstones of Calvinist doctrine, fits quite comfortably into Arcadia’s pagan culture in the form of divinely-inspired prophecy.

\textsuperscript{65} For an English salvation “narrative” that predates Sidney, see Anne Lok’s sonnet sequence A Meditation of a Penitent Sinner, which distinguishes sharply between the believer’s concern with the external demands of law and scripture and her impression of internal receipt of God’s grace, which is secondary in chronology but primary in importance.

\textsuperscript{66} William Perkins, A golden chaine, or The description of theologie containing the order of the causes of saluation and damnation, according to Gods word. A viewe whereof is to be seene in the table annexed. Written in Latine, and translated by R.H. Hereunto is adjoined the order which M. Theodore Beza vsed in comforting afflicted consciences (London, 1597).
The entire narrative is founded upon the Oracle that obliquely foretells the main plot of the narrative and its protagonists’ love and marriage; moreover, other prophecies and signs pertain more directly to the heroes’ election by Love to a life of romance. When Musidorus and Pyrocles are still in their infancy, or yet unborn, prophets and portents reveal that they are marked for both “Heroicall vertue” and, significantly, erotic passion:

For what fortune onely southsayers foretold of Musidorus, that all men might see prognosticated in Pyrocles; both Heavens & Earth giving tokens of the comming forth of an Heroicall vertue […] onely love was threatned, and promised to him, and so to his cousin, as both the tempest and haven of their best yeares.67

The princes are taught virtue as children, but their excellence was already ordained from their birth, along with their heroic vocation. Also predestined are their erotic awakening and the full course of their romance’s plot. Much as Perkins’ Calvinist elect are irrevocably called to Christ but must therefore confront psychological anguish and other “enemies of life eternall” before attaining “glorie,” Sidney’s heroes will be inevitably drawn to love, whose rigors constitute both a “threat” and a “promise,” since love determines both the “tempest” of their trials and the “haven” of those trials’ peaceful end.68

The New Arcadia is quite emphatic about the next stages of Love’s ordo, recounting them elaborately and repeatedly. The four young protagonists each receive some outward calling—experiencing an attraction to stories of love, witnessing the testimony of a lover, or both—before they receive their inward calling or “mollifying of the heart” and undergo an overwhelming interior desire to devote themselves to Love and to their beloved. Pyrocles, the first to fall in love, is moved by a number of external signs

68 See Perkins (Fig. 1).
Fig. 1.
of love’s power before feeling its full force within himself. Before arriving in Arcadia, he is loved by the real Zelmane, who disguises herself as a boy and dies in his service, and whose name and appearance he later adopts in turn to woo Philoclea. Amazed by her constancy, Pyrocles confesses to Philoclea “that if my starres had not wholly reserved me for you, there els perhaps I might have loved”; “somthing there was” in the dying Zelmane, he adds, “which (when I saw a picture of yours) brought againe her figure into my remembrance, and made my harte as apt to receive the wounde, as the power of your beauty with unresistable force to pearce” (299). As in the Calvinist ordo, external testimony or “effectuall […] hearing” renders the elect susceptible to the internal “mollifying of the heart,” but the two steps must be distinct; true conversion is wrought only by the private efficacy of the divine. Once in Arcadia, Pyrocles hears the story of Argalus and Parthenia, witnesses their joyful reunion and marriage, and is so affected by their love and her beauty that “a chaunge [is] growen” in him: he slips into a contemplative melancholy, mysterious to his friends but termed by Sidney’s narrator as “an inclination to love”; again, receptivity precedes authentic personal conversion (54, emphasis mine). Finally, Pyrocles explains to Musidorus that upon seeing Philoclea’s image and hearing “of her unworthy fortune,”

> when with pittie once my harte was made tender […] it receaved quickly a cruell impression of that wonderful passion which to be definde is impossible, because no wordes reach to the strange nature of it: they onely know it, which inwardly feele it, it is called love.

(85)

This predestined moment in which his heart is mollified or “made tender” marks a permanent change in him: like Astrophil, and comparable to the Calvinist convert who
undergoes the “mortification” of his unregenerate self before his “vivification” and “new obedience” to Christ, Pyrocles welcomes the “overthrowe of all [his] libertie” and yields himself entirely to the new power that has claimed him (84).69 Always one of Love’s elect by predestination, he can now “inwardly feele” the sign of his election.

However, the private affect that triumphs at the conclusion of Pyrocles’ account raises critical questions and gestures to the crux of Sidney’s remarkable comparison of erotic passion to divine election. When Pyrocles informs Musidorus of the profound interior alteration he has experienced, celebrating love as the true path to virtue, he has altered outwardly as well and is now dressed as the Amazon Zelmane, the better to win Philoclea without arousing her parents’ suspicion. Musidorus responds skeptically to Pyrocles’ attempt at erotic evangelism, disturbed both by his friend’s feminization and by his concomitant interest in sexual, rather than martial, conquest. Giving voice to the concerns of later critics who argue that Sidney’s chief aim in the New Arcadia is to condemn the ungodliness of romance, Musidorus berates Pyrocles for abandoning his manly virtue in pursuit of lust. Pyrocles at first appeals both to the Platonic philosophy of love and to a version of the next step in the Calvinist ordo: justification, or the “imputation of righteousnes” from Christ to the converted believer.70 His adoration of Philoclea, he claims—“the love it self”—will in time direct him to “greater matters” by fostering within him “the excellency of the thing loved” (81). Musidorus remains unconvinced by Pyrocles’ gesture toward his love’s teleological trajectory, sardonically

69 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
demanding, “The beginning being so excellent, I would gladly know the end” (81). 71 His
challenge does not dampen Pyrocles’ neoplatonic zeal:

Enjoying, answered Pyrocles, with a great sigh. O (said Musidorus) now set ye fourth the
basenes of it: since if it ende in enjoying, it shewes all the rest was nothing. Ye mistake
me (answered Pyrocles) I spake of the end to which it is directed; which end ends not, no
sooner then the life.

(81)

Without denying his sexual interest in Philoclea, Pyrocles insists that his aim of
“Enjoying” is destined for a higher spiritual “end,” but is soon forced to admit that he
cannot convince Musidorus of the moral teleology of his erotic passion. He abandons his
rational philosophical argument for love’s progressive nature and turns instead to a
devout profession of faith in love’s transformative power, acknowledging that “no
wordes reach to the strange nature of it: they only know it, which inwardly feele it” (85).

By couching his affective experience in these terms, Pyrocles turns his discursive break
with his friend to his advantage: his alteration in belief, behavior, and even appearance
stems from the conversion experience which has made him one of Love’s chosen
followers. The exclusivity and interiority of his newfound love of Love prove—to him, if
not to anyone else—that rather than falling from grace, he has only just now attained it.
This appeal to romantic and religious subjectivity stymies Musidorus’ argumentative
position despite, and because of, its indifference to logic; Pyrocles’ claim to an inward
calling that justifies his radical devotion is unfalsifiable.

Regardless of whether Pyrocles’ conviction is indeed divine (as he professes) or
delusional or blasphemous (as many readers of Arcadia have argued), it proves potent

71 For objections from critics that echo those of Musidorus, see Weiner, 60-76, and Kinney, “On the
Margins of Romance,” 150.
enough to generate a small community of similar belief. Ironically, Pyrocles’ testimony about his “effectuall calling” to Love does function as “effectuall preaching” that serves as Musidorus’ outward calling, shortly to be followed by an inward. Musidorus’ reluctant consent to help Pyrocles/Zelmane woo Philoclea results in his first sight of her sister Pamela, and he is “presently striken” with his own profound interior change (115). When Zelmane teases him for his change of heart, he acknowledges his conversion in explicitly religious terms: “I recant, I recant (cryed Musidorus,) and withal falling downe prostrate” he utters a prayer for forgiveness that might be addressed to the inexorable deity of Calvinism as well as to the “spirit of Love”: “have compassion of me, and let thy glory be as great in pardoning them that be submitted to thee, as in conquering those that were rebellious” (114). The repentant lover then strives to describe his revelation, but like his friend, finds it too be too personal and profound for words: “But what meane I to speake of the causes of my love, which is as impossible to describe, as to measure the backside of heaven? Let this word suffice, I love” (115). Moreover, he suddenly finds himself possessed with the exact same faith that he recently derided in Pyrocles:

O heaven and earth (said Musidorus) to what a passe are our mindes brought, that from the right line of vertue, are wryed to these crooked shifts? But o Love, it is thou that doost it: thou changest name upon name; thou disguisest our bodies, and disfigurest our mindes. But in deed thou hast reason, for though the ways be foule, the journeys end is most faire and honourable.

(117)

Musidorus, having now “inwardly felt” the transfiguring force of Love, immediately joins Pyrocles as a devotee of its mysteries; as a result, he also shares Pyrocles’ certainty that Love imposes a teleological narrative structure on the lover’s “journey,” no matter how “crooked” it may appear along the way. As a member of Love’s chosen fellowship,
he becomes convinced that he can now perceive the “greater matters” and the “end” that he once mocked. Even if new ranks of detractors can (and do) object that Musidorus’ semi-religious ecstasy has drawn him away “from the right line of vertue,” his subjective conviction of his election, and of the predestined romance plot associated with it, constantly protects and renews itself.

The sisters Pamela and Philoclea, ordained by the Oracle to return the princes’ love, share similar experiences of conversion that are generated by the princes’ zeal, as Musidorus’ was by Pyrocles’. The reserved Pamela recounts her outward and inward callings in the least detail, but tells Philoclea how she first listens with pleasure to Musidorus’ true accounts of love’s power in others, then feels herself overcome by the force she once thought herself staid enough to resist. For the elect of Sidney’s pagan romance, Love’s “unresistable force” echoes the Calvinist doctrine of irresistible grace: the predestined lovers’ defiance or doubt must be temporary, since their “mollifying of the heart” and their conversion are narratively assured. Sidney’s interest in the transformative but frightening potential of Love’s “unresistable force”/irresistible grace is most evident in Philoclea’s rigorous psychological experience: while the other three protagonists attempt to describe their conversions to others with limited success, hers is the only one we witness from the heroine’s private perspective. Its Calvinist overtones are graver than Musidorus’ potentially comic display of recantation, featuring the temporary anguish that, according to the ordo salutis, often accompanies the conversion of the elect: in Perkins’ terms, these trials include “doubting of election,” “despaire,” and
“concupiscence of the flesh.” The outward sign that attracts Philoclea is Zelmane’s visible attraction for her, which Philoclea innocently imitates, “thinking the knots of friendship ought to bee mutuall […] til at the last (poore soule, ere she were aware) she accepted […] not only the signe, but the passion signified” (170). Finding herself, as she believes, attracted to another woman, Philoclea falls into a despairing conviction of her own depravity typical of Protestant conversion stories. Although she prays to the “great hidden deities, which have their working in the ebbing & flowing of our estates,” she presumes herself forsaken by them: “No, no, you cannot helpe me: Sinne must be the mother, and shame the daughter of my affection” (174). Yet as we know, the oracle has already directed Philoclea’s “estate” to this unexpected love, and at last, her hope and faith in Love’s miraculous power conquer her despair and doubt:

Alas then, ô Love, why doost thou in thy beautifull sampler sette such a worke for my Desire to take out, which is as much impossible? And yet alas, why doo I thus condemn my Fortune, before I heare what she can say for her selfe? What doo I, sillie wench, knowe what Love hath prepared for me? […] Away then all vaine examinations of why and how. Thou lovest me, excellent Zelmane, and I love thee […] I am wholly given over unto thee.

(174-175)

Despite Philoclea’s continued assumption that Zelmane is female, and that their union is therefore both impossible and anathema, her surrender to Love and to the allure of its subjectivity endows her with the conviction that her faith, and ultimately her desire for Zelmane, will be justified by their ends. Her status as one of Love’s elect trumps all obstacles to her devotion, and she joins her sister and the princes in erotic fellowship.

Philoclea seems to be right that “Love hath prepared” an unexpected plot twist that will vindicate her attraction to Zelmane, since the lesbian Amazon turns out to have

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72 See Perkins (Fig. 1).
been the heterosexual male Pyrocles all along. Indeed, the four central lovers are all correct that the *New Arcadia*’s “great hidden deities” (of which the authorial Sidney is the greatest) have predestined their passion and directed it to the sanctioned end of marriage. However, the parallels that Sidney constructs between erotic passion and Calvinist conversion do not intrinsically validate his lovers’ romantic subjectivity. Their conviction that “though the wayes be foule, the journeys end is most faire and honourable” is troubled by events such as Musidorus’ eventual attempt to assault Pamela, and even more so by other characters whose desires are equally fierce but whose ends are unclear. The princesses’ parents, Basilius and Gynecia, both become smitten with Pyrocles/Zelmane as well; their ardor leads the king into foolish fawning, the queen into ugly resentment of her daughter, and both spouses into adulterous passion that cannot conclude in marriage to the beloved. The *Old Arcadia* ends with Basilius and Gynecia relieved of their delusions and reconciled to one another, but the unfinished *New Arcadia* offers few insights into Sidney’s intentions for them. The ambiguously tragic Amphialus, a character Sidney added in his revision, is still more problematic: he shares the princes’ commitment to chivalric virtue and Pyrocles’ adoration of Philoclea, but his obsession with her inspires him to kidnap her, to commit treason against her father, and finally to attempt suicide—a desperate last resort which, if successful, offers conclusive proof of one’s reprobation and damnation. But Amphialus fails to die, and when Sidney’s revised narrative breaks off unfinished, his fate remains unknown.73

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73 For McCoy and others, these problems in the *New Arcadia* constitute “a pattern of ambivalence and evasion” due to Sidney’s inability to reconcile his own beliefs and inclinations (216). Without discounting this reading, I want to suggest that Sidney may also have a productive interest in narrative ambivalence and evasive subjectivity.
The Calvinist narrative chain cannot tell us whether Basilius, Gynecia, or Amphialus participate in the trajectory of Love’s elect or whether they are excluded from it, though it may further illuminate Sidney’s preoccupation with the subjectivity of the believer. The path of the reprobate, depicted in a stark black line on the right side of Perkins’ diagram, stands as a terrifying counterpart to that of the elect. Some of those whom God has predestined for damnation, as Perkins shows, are granted “no calling,” but others may receive “a calling not effectuall” and even experience a temporary “yeielding to Gods calling”: their tantalizing “Tast[e]” of divine mercy—featuring “a general Illumination,” “penitence,” “temporarie faith,” and “zeale”—mirrors the experiences of the elect in nearly every way but is doomed to end in “relapse,” “fulnes of sinne,” and “damnation.” How, then, can Amphialus’ zeal be definitively established as different from Pyrocles’, and why is Philoclea’s bout with despair and doubt distinct from the “vnbeleeuing heart” of the reprobate? The answer, as the protagonists all insist, lies at “the journeys end”: the narratives of God and Love are anchored at both ends by predestination and by a glorious telos, and teleology in the New Arcadia is notoriously elusive (117). Much as Perkins’ Golden Chaine may have offered cold comfort to Protestants anxiously analyzing their own psychological states, the romantic subjectivity of Sidney’s lovers cannot tell us much about its own spiritual validity.

74 McCoy discusses Sidney’s vexed obsession with individual autonomy in the political sphere; his interest in religious and psychological subjectivity may be related, but Sidney seems to have found the latter fruitful rather than confounding.
75 See Perkins (Fig. 1).
76 Sonnet 2 of Astrophil and Stella again condenses the problem. Like the lovers of the New Arcadia, Astrophil “call[s] it praise to suffer” Love’s “tyranny” after his calling “by degrees.” His final rhyme, however, while conventional enough in Petrarchan terms, is more disturbing in Protestant ones: the entire sonnet sequence, he suggests, is designed “To make myself believe that all is well, / While with a feeling skill I paint my hell” (Herman, ed., 129).
Fortunately, the *New Arcadia*’s fascination with devout subjectivity and recursive self-justification seems designed to demonstrate not that the lovers are right about their own righteousness, but that their convictions are unprovable, undisprovable, and therefore tremendously powerful. The individual heroes rely on their faith that they are Love’s elect, and that they are therefore predestined for happiness and glory, in order to enhance their sense of sacred identity, to explain their radical behavior to themselves and others, and—significantly—to appreciate similar subjectivity at work in fellow believers. When Pyrocles exults that “They onely know it, which inwardly feele it,” he simultaneously sets himself apart from the still-unregenerate Musidorus and imagines a soon-to-be-realized plural network of converts who “inwardly feele” as he does. The Calvinist resonance of Sidney’s erotic narrative bolsters the conscience of individuals and fosters a community *between* individuals who mutually recognize the outward form and the inward affect of romance. The *New Arcadia*’s self-identified elect community strengthens its sense of identity, and its sense of heroic purpose, as it grows in size and thrives on telling and re-telling the tales of amorous romance that inspire and delight each of its members by reiterating their own ecstatic experiences.

The *New Arcadia* partly distinguishes its protagonists by the conventions of “decorum” that were staples of Sidney’s classical and medieval sources: the heroes of romance typically combine high birth, extreme physical beauty, and moral virtue, and Sidney’s four central lovers (despite their sins and errors) do not significantly depart from this tradition. Most important, however, and without qualification, Sidney’s rigorously

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77 The *New Arcadia* treats the convention as something of a comic cliché: the shrewish shepherdess Miso is said to have “onely one good point […] that she observes decorum, having a froward mind in a wretched body” (21), while the prince Musidorus, like countless romance heroes before him, possesses a unique birthmark that proves his identity and rank at a critical moment: “a redde spotte, bearing figure […] of a Lyons pawe” (163).
self-conscious romance sets the royal lovers’ community apart from the unregenerate world by endowing them with an acute sensitivity not just to Love, but also to the genre of Love that they inhabit: romance itself, with its distinctive values and structural patterns. The affinity for romance that the New Arcadia’s protagonists share is not entirely *sui generis*, as we learn from Musidorus within one of his embedded stories told to his beloved Pamela. He prefaces his tale of his and Pyrocles’ pre-Arcadian adventures with an account of their birth and upbringing. Their education accords with the didactic philosophy of Sidney’s *Defense of Poesy* in that the young princes are taught their duties as future rulers through heroic narratives: their “delight of tales” as children is “converted to the knowledge of all the stories of worthy Princes, both to move them to do nobly, & teach them how to do nobly; the beautie of vertue being set before there eyes, & that taught them with far more diligent care, then Grammatical rules” (190). Musidorus and Pyrocles’ own valiant exploits, in which they vanquish tyrants, defend ladies, and survive shipwrecks before their arrival in Arcadia, commence when “they would needs fall to the practice of these vertues, which they before learned” in the heroic histories and romances of their childhood (191). Moreover, as Musidorus notes, the princes’ decision to imitate the wanderings and upright deeds of epic romance heroes is entirely conscious:

> they determined in unknowne order to see more of the world, & to imploy those gifts esteemed rare in them, to the good of mankinde; and therefore would themselves […] goe privately to seeke exercises of their vertue; thinking it not so worthy, to be brought to heroycall effects by fortune, or necessitie (like *Ulysses* and *Aeneas*) as by ones owne choice, and working.

(206)

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*According to the *Defense of Poesy*, “Right Poets” are those who “do merely make to imitate, and imitate both to delight and teach, and delight to move men to take that goodness in hand which, without delight, they would fly as from a stranger, and teach to make them know that goodness whereunto they are moved. Which being the noblest scope to which ever any learning was directed” (Herman, ed., 67-8).*
In their view, they can surpass the worthiness of a fictional model by actively choosing to live within the genre that Ulysses and Aeneas were merely written into. Pyrocles and Musidorus may be the heroes of Sidney’s literary romance by chance (or by Sidney’s authorial predestination), but within the imaginary world of the *New Arcadia*, they become the heroes of their own lived romance by choice; their conscious affinity for the genre becomes a guiding principle and a cornerstone of their subjectivity.

The princes continue to take profound pleasure in the heroic narratives of others even after they have reached adulthood and willingly embarked on their own. When Kalander tells Musidorus the love story of Argalus and Parthenia—a true account in the context of the *New Arcadia*, but otherwise a conventional romance in every way, complete with love trials, quests, and finally a joyful reunion— remarking that “the strangenes of it, made me think it would not be unplesant unto you,” Musidorus “thanked him greatly for it, being even passionately delighted with hearing so straunge an accide nt of a knight so famous over the world, as Argalus, with whome he had himselfe a long desire to meet: so had fame poured a noble emulation in him, towards him” (37-38). Musidorus shares this enthusiasm for true stories that resemble the “strange accidents” of romance with his friend and fellow protagonist: he later tells Pyrocles “word by word what Kalander had told him touching the strange storie (with al the particularities belonging) of Arcadia, which did in many sortes so delight Pyrocles to heare; that he would needs have much of it againe repeated” (51).

The heroines of the *New Arcadia*, destined to marry their counterparts the princes, are similarly marked by their ability to appreciate and interpret romance narratives. When Musidorus (disguised as Dorus the shepherd) attempts to communicate his love to Pamela by
pretending to woo the vulgar shepherdess Mopsa with true tales of the princes’ “chivalries,” Pamela listens with pleasure (and with increasing attraction to his “effectuall preaching”) while Mopsa, bored by the aristocratic genre and unresponsive to its religious undertones, snores her way through the stories (213).79,80 And when Philoclea finally discovers the identity of her suitor, she rejoices not just in his past adventures, but in the evidence his presence provides of their teleological structure: “Therefore, deere Pyrocles (for what can mine eares be so sweetly fed with as to heare you of you) be liberall unto me of those things which have made you indeede pretious to the worlde, and now doubt not to tell of your perils; for since I have you here out of them, even the remembraunce of them is plesaunt” (261). For Philoclea, the enjoyment of romance is contingent upon the perception of its end; “perils” become “plesaunt” to contemplate when their happy outcome is a foregone conclusion. The elite denizens of Arcadia who serve as half-parodic, half-earnest types for the elect Protestants of England share an appreciation and understanding for the generic form that most resembles Sidney’s Calvinist religious narrative, in which God’s chosen people—a community of potential heroes and heroines—suffer the trials of history and the enmity of the ungodly in anticipation of their ultimate reunion with God and their inheritance of a heavenly kingdom.

**Romance as Shibboleth: Community, Exclusion, and Resistance**

Musidorus, Pamela, Pyrocles, and Philoclea are all linked—as protagonists, as members of Arcadia’s elite and of Love’s elect, and to each other—by their mutual affinity

79 Mopsa’s boredom with Musidorus’ stories is a notable difference between the New Arcadia and the Old, in which her naïve obsession with romance makes her enthralled by them. By the time he revised the Arcadia, Sidney had increased his interest in distinguishing between approaches and attitudes to romance.

80 Mary Ellen Lamb discusses the ability to appreciate and interpret romance as a sign of class distinction in the New Arcadia (“Exhibiting Class,” 56-8.)
for romance and by the many generically conventional stories they tell one another. However, the *New Arcadia* also adds one other intra-textual episode about amorous adventure, related by a character outside the royal and narrative elite, that contrasts with and comments on the romances of the young heroes. Near the middle of Sidney’s text, Pamela, Philoclea, and Pyrocles/Zelmane are spending their day in chivalric storytelling when they are interrupted by a clumsy fairy tale about a princess and her enchanted lover told by Mopsa, the common shepherdess who snoozes through Musidorus’ narrative courtship. Clare Kinney, rightly noting that Mopsa’s story highlights the intensity of Sidney’s meta-generic awareness in his revised *Arcadia*, has argued that Sidney interpolated it in order to illuminate and criticize the heroes’ own flighty obsession with romance.\(^1\) I wish to propose instead that Mopsa’s absurd episode is designed not to make us reject the heroes’ equally foolish proclivities, but to explore why they, as Love’s self-proclaimed elect, reject her and her romance as unregenerate and incorrect. The *New Arcadia*’s romantic subjectivity has power to do more than foster elect community; for better or for worse, it also encourages exclusion of—and, sometimes, radical resistance to—those who do not, cannot, or will not participate in that community’s Calvinist-inflected concept of right romance.

Mopsa begins her story with an ironically “decorous” gracelessness of body and of performance that anticipates the gracelessness of her narrative’s structure: “and so being her time to speake (wiping her mouth, as there was good cause) she thus tumbled into her matter” (241). Sidney’s creation of Mopsa’s bad romance is so replete with sardonic genre-play that her great “matter” bears quoting in full:

\(^{1}\) Kinney, “On the Margins of Romance.”
In time past (sayd she) there was a King, the mightiest man in all his country, that had by
his wife, the fairest daughter that ever did eate pappe. Now this King did keepe a great
house, that every body might come and take their meat freely. So one day, as his daughter
was sitting in her window, playing upon a harpe, as sweete as any Rose; and combing her
head with a combe all of precious stones, there came in a Knight into the court, upon a
goodly horse, one haire of gold, & the other of silver; and so the Knight casting up his
eyes to the window, did fall into such love with her, that he grew not worth the bread he
eate; till many a sorry day going over his head, with Dayly Diligence and Grisly Grones,
he wan her affection, so that they agreed to run away together. And so in May, when all
true hartes rejoice, they stale out of the Castel, without staying so much as for their
breakfast. Now forsooth, as they went together, often all to kissing one another, the
Knight told her, he was brought up among the water Nymphes, who had so bewitched
him, that if he were ever askt his name, he must presently vanish away: and therefore
charged her upon his blessing, that she never aske him what he was, nor whether he
would. And so a great while she kept his commandement; til once, passing through a
cruell wilderness, as darke as pitch; her mouth so watred, that she could not choose but
aske him the question. And then, he making the greevousest com plaints that would have
melted a tree to have heard them, vanisht quite away: & she lay down, casting forth as
pitifully cries as any shrich-owle. But having laien so, (wat by the raine, and burnt by the
Sun) five dayes, & five nights, she gat up and went over many a high hil, & many a deepe
river; till she came to an Aunts house of hers; and came, & cried to her for helpe: and she
for pittie gave her a Nut, and bid her never open her Nut, til she was come to the
extremest misery that ever tongue could speake of. And so she went, & she went, & never
rested the evening, where she went in the morning; til she came to a second Aunt; and she
gave her another Nut.

Here Philoclea interrupts Mopsa’s tale, presumably dismayed by the appearance of the
second Aunt with her second magical Nut—“Now good Mopsa […] I pray thee at my
request keepe this tale, till my marriage day, & I promise thee that the best gowne I weare
that day shalbe thine”—and Zelmane requests that the princesses resume the aristocratic
(and intratextually true) romance of Plangus and Erona (242). Eager for a new dress and a
larger audience, Mopsa permits her romance to be excluded from the afternoon’s
program, and the New Arcadia returns to its wonted high style.

On a superficial level, Mopsa’s story is ridiculous in the same way as Chaucer’s
Squire’s Tale and his Tale of Sir Thopas, both of which are also mercifully interrupted: it
is crammed so full of romance tropes and conventions—nonpareiled beauties, unknown
knights, magical prohibitions, rash promises, meandering quests—that it ceases to be normative genre and becomes parody instead. Yet as Kinney and Mary Ellen Lamb have remarked, Sidney’s New Arcadia shares many of the same features: Pyrocles and Musidorus indulge in hyperbolic celebrations of their beloved ladies’ beauty, conceal their identities during battles and tournaments, and wander through any number of loosely-correlated adventures before arriving in Arcadia and relating the stories of these very exploits to the princesses. Moreover, distinction based on the various narratives’ truth-values proves largely unhelpful: Mopsa’s story may be a fantasy, but the “true” stories told by the protagonists take part in that fantasy’s cosmetic traditions and tropes, and in any case, Sidney acknowledges that his own text is the product of its author’s “fancy” as well (3). How, then, should we distinguish between Mopsa’s bad romance and the aristocratic characters’ narratives, or even the romance of the New Arcadia itself?

Kinney and Lamb’s approach contends that we should not see much difference between them. According to Kinney, we are meant first to laugh at Mopsa’s digression from the high style of the New Arcadia, and then to realize that all of the romance in Sidney’s text shares the same unhealthy idolatry of Love and the same interminable structure. Lamb has similarly argued that Mopsa’s lack of narrative skill seems at first to confirm her inferior class position, but ultimately undercuts class distinction by reminding us of the ways in which Sidney’s aristocratic characters—and even his readers—indulge in directionless eroticism. Both readings transpose Andrew Weiner’s argument about the Old Arcadia—that Sidney condemns the values of romance as out of step with the values

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82 See Kinney, ibid., and Lamb, “Exhibiting Class.”
83 Lamb, ibid., 60-2.
of his own English Protestantism, and that the text is therefore didactic largely by negative example—onto the revised *New*: Sidney’s heroes and heroines, they suggest, cannot have much in common with godly Protestants if they delight in romance and venerate Love.

A rare recent scholar who has pursued the opposite approach to Mopsa’s tale by assuming its fundamental distinction from the romance of the rest of the *New Arcadia* is Tiffany Werth, who has noted one element in it that is conspicuously absent from the narrative of Sidney and the meta-narratives of his other characters: magic.84 In Werth’s argument, as in mine, Mopsa’s mistakes do indeed allow Sidney to imagine how Protestant romance might distinguish itself from unregenerate forms of the genre: she suggests that Sidney and his Elizabethan readers would have associated the “fabulous devices” present in Mopsa’s and many other romances with Catholic ceremony, mystification, and deception. Sidney can thus use Mopsa’s clumsy effort to distinguish the genre’s “seductive qualities” from its virtuous potential, exemplified by the demystified heroic style of the nobles’ stories and of the *New Arcadia* itself.85 Werth’s emphasis on magic as the motif that separates unregenerate romance from Sidney’s Protestant reformation of the genre offers an important corrective to the common critical perspective that Sidney employs romance chiefly to undermine it; however, another aspect of Mopsa’s abortive tale may be even more central to Sidney’s project. His interest in the possibility of a godly romance for the elect goes well beyond the motif of magic to the heart of the genre’s narrative structure.

85 Ibid., 35.
While Mopsa’s story is bursting at the seams with readily recognizable tropes and traditions, it lacks what Sidney’s heroes regard as romance’s most important features: a sense of order and the promise of an ending, which must be evident to the romance’s storyteller and to its audience even if they are not apparent to its characters. Patricia Parker has famously defined romance as inherently “inescapable,” but as we have seen, the New Arcadia’s protagonists become deeply invested in a “faire and honourable” end to the “true” story of their own journey, devoutly convinced of its direction by providence. As Philoclea explains when she asks Pyrocles to tell her of his past dangers, lengthy and even seemingly aimless wandering is a staple of providential romance’s narrative pattern—but only when that wandering is linked to an inevitable, if remote, destination. (Philoclea’s emotionally fraught conversion may make her particularly inclined to take this view.) Mopsa, on the other hand, is so delighted by the cosmetic distractions of the genre—the pretty lovers, their material fineries, their amorous dalliances, their emotional excesses—that she loses sight of its teleology, content to roam indefinitely across the romance landscape from aunt to aunt and nut to nut. Sidney highlights the endlessly repetitive pattern of Mopsa’s tale by having Mopsa sprinkle her storytelling with one emphatic and so after another: she has no eye toward an ending, since her pleasure in (non-) narrative rests solely in the next and so. While we might presume an eventual conclusion in which the princess recovers her enchanted lover and they live happily ever after, what matters to Sidney (and to the impatient Philoclea) is that Mopsa shows no interest in guiding her audience to that end. Magic and meandering, for her, have displaced providence and purpose; no matter how many hills and rivers the
princess traverses, Mopsa will never be granted membership in the heroes’ elect community because her superstitious, unregenerate story is going nowhere.

Of course, such aimless indulgence in frivolity is precisely the error of which Pyrocles and Musidorus stand accused, by Kinney and Lamb and by other characters in the New Arcadia. As we have seen, the princes and their lovers come to stand firm in their devout belief that their erotic romance has a sacred moral end, and as before, they cannot be refuted only because their conviction is self-reflexive and because Sidney’s death left their romance incomplete, but the matter of their rightness or reliability beyond the textual boundaries of Sidney’s romance is secondary to the power that their conviction grants them within it. The lovers’ sense of right romance becomes a shibboleth that ultimately does much more than exclude ignorant commoners; it grants their community the insubstantial yet indestructible authority to resist the absolutism and impiety of a tyrant who closely resembles the enemies of Sidney’s Protestant England. In the primary narrative added to the New Arcadia, the protagonists are tormented at length by Cecropia, who aims to marry her son Amphialus to one of the princesses and so secure Basilius’ kingdom for herself. Cecropia’s ties to popery, to Satanism, and to a host of despised Catholic monarchs have been enumerated by a number of scholars, most notably Barbara Brumbaugh, and her reprobation seems obvious enough in her treason against Basilius and her abduction and torment of his daughters. However, given the cultural

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86 Kinney argues that the princes, after becoming “follower[s] of Cupid,” indulge in “projected narrative trajectories” that are “strikingly equivocal”—what, for example, is that question-begging ‘end’ of Musidorus; what are Pyrocles’ ‘greater matters’?” (“On the Margins of Romance,” 150).

87 Brumbaugh has made an extensive study of Cecropia’s allegorical relationship to the Catholic church, arguing that Sidney lards her with attributes and iconography associated with popery and with the Whore of Babylon (including material pomp and ceremony, pride, and perversion of scripture) and that he ultimately
link between Catholicism and romance that Werth suggests made Sidney careful with the genre, it is especially remarkable that Cecropia demonstrates her “fulnes of sin” through her utter rejection of romance. While the community of Love’s elect opposes itself to anti-romance in the sense of Mopsa’s parody or misuse, it also resists anti-romance in the sense of Cecropia’s scorn and hatred for the genre.

Cecropia’s anti-romantic doctrine—that love is merely the sophist’s name for lust, that all self-proclaimed lovers are hence either liars or fools, and that the “greater matters” and “ends” that they invoke are illusory excuses for inaction and impotence—may sound moralistic, or even superficially puritanical, but it proves to be a cornerstone of her Catholic-inflected tyranny and the focus of her victims’ resistance. Cecropia consistently refuses to acknowledge the possible existence of divine Love, derides affect in favor of action, and renounces belief in a providential structure to the narrative she inhabits. In opposition to her evil, the protagonists assume virtues that are explicitly Protestant, though in so doing, they never turn from their enthusiasm for romance or their conviction that they have been divinely chosen. Cecropia stands as Sidney’s epitome of both the cynical anti-romantic and the reprobate anti-Protestant. Her villainy thus illustrates, more strongly than the flawed virtue of the heroes, Sidney’s investment in the

potential for harmony between reformed romance and reformed religion. There may well be something threateningly non-rational in the lovers’ zeal for Love and in their faith that they inhabit a romantic narrative, but Sidney suggests in the Cecropia episode that their dangerously subversive subjectivity may be used to threaten God’s enemies.

Cecropia makes war on Basilius and kidnaps his daughters, along with Pyrocles/Zelmane, for the sake of her son, the noble but conflicted Amphialus, who is the next heir to the Arcadian throne after the princesses and is sick with unrequited love for Philoclea. Yet immediately after the abduction, Cecropia begins attempting to quash her son’s romantic impulse, viewing his love as an emasculating weakness and an obstacle to his political and sexual ambitions. When Amphialus laments that his chivalry and courtesy forbid him to keep Philoclea prisoner, but that his desire forbids him to release her, his mother scoffs at the “Prety intricat follies” that “this childish passion of love” has wrought in him, and advises him instead to despise the princess as a political enemy, “For Hate often begetteth victory; Love commonly is the instrument of subjection” (365-366). Cecropia understands just enough about the romantic concept of courtly love to know that it demands the “subjection” of the lover to the beloved, and therefore dismisses it as antithetical to self-advancement. Amphialus (like the princes before him) tries to clarify his chivalric code by distinguishing base lust from virtuous “true-love”: “lust may well be a tyrant, but true-love where it is indeed, it is a servant […] Did ever mans eye looke thorough love upon the majesty of virtue, shining through beauty, but that he became (as it wel became him) a captive? & is it the stile of a captive to write, Our will and pleasure?” Because her absolutist authority disdains servitude, Cecropia denies that any
such thing as “true-love” exists: “Tush, tush sonne (said Cecropia) if you say you love, but withall you feare” (451-2). Her wickedness is doubly confirmed as she demonstrates that “true-love” is not simply an idea opposed to her pragmatism, but one beyond her credence. The unqualified equation of the zeal of Love with the passion of lust here appears not as obligatory Calvinist doctrine, but as a deviant heresy linked to Catholicism and tyranny.

As an infidel to the faith in divine Love that Pyrocles, Musidorus, and even the troubled Amphialus all profess, Cecropia proceeds to reject the humility toward women that is conventional of wooing in courtly romance. Despite being a woman who luxuriates in her own power, she advises her son to cease thinking of his beloved lady as his mistress, “For indeede (sonne, I confesse unto you) in our very creation we [women] are servants: and who prayseth his servaunts shall never be well obeyed” (453). Crucially, Cecropia here situates herself on the biblical side of a potential dispute between the gender politics of scripture and those of romance, only to contort both scripture and romance to her own ends. Her claim that women were created as the servants of men is part of her effort to convince Amphialus to stop courting Philoclea and rape her instead, since “No, is no negative in a womans mouth” and “the fault” of her stubbornness is “his owne, who had marred the yong Girle by seeking to have that by praier, which he should have taken by authoritie” (451). Cecropia’s disdain of “true-love” leads her to tempt women to sexual license as well. Having abandoned hope of persuading Philoclea to yield her virginity to Amphialus, she turns to her sister instead; when Pamela unsurprisingly also refuses to allow herself to be “defiled,” Cecropia
counsels her, “O sweet youth […] how untimely subject it is to devotion? No, no sweet neece, let us old folks think of such precise considerations, do you enjoy the heaven of your age, whereof you are sure” (404-405). In protesting that Pamela’s “devotion” to heavenly Love and to Musidorus makes her overly “precise,” Cecropia suggests an active link between romance and zealous Protestantism: since the adjective “precise” was current in Sidney’s day as a mildly derogatory equivalent of the similarly disparaging “Puritan,” Cecropia essentially complains that Pamela is simultaneously too romantic and too puritanical.  

We soon discover that Cecropia’s lack of credence in divine Love is of a piece with her broader atheism. After advising Pamela to discard her chastity (but for the sake of pragmatism and pleasure, not love), she attempts to persuade Pamela that any belief in divinity or its laws is the response of “foolish folks” to chance phenomena beyond their comprehension (406). As Kenneth Myrick first pointed out, Sidney models Cecropia’s philosophy on Lucretius’ *De Rerum Natura*, with its emphasis on atomistic contingency over divine intention: the “alterations” of nature “be but upon particular accidents, the universalitie being always one […] Man, who while by the pregnancie of his imag[ination] he strives to things supernaturall, meane-while he looseth his own naturall felicitie” (406).  

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88 Davis suggests that this temptation of the sisters away from temperance and toward hedonism links Cecropia, almost in an allegorical fashion, with “Pride, the worship of the self, which is fatal to love, for it uses love only for self-aggrandizement” (74).

89 Myrick, 265. Cecropia here resembles the classical philosophers in the *Defense of Poesy* “who, shaking off superstition, brought in atheism” and thus erred more than the pagan poets who wrote of “divine providence” in the absence of “the light of Christ” (Herman, ed., 106). Sidney apparently finds no inconsistency in associating Cecropia with both illusionistic popery and atheistic philosophy; both, to him, are the false religions of the hypocrite and the reprobate.
“vulgar” as evidence that she ought to perfect her goodness by renouncing the imaginary props that ostensibly uphold it, since (in her view) the only truly enlightened are those whose virtue is self-generated and self-sustaining, while the only truly unregenerate are the blindly theistic masses:90

But in you (Neece) whose excellencie is such, as it neede not to be helde up by the staffe of vulgar opinions, I would not you should love Vertue servillie, for feare of I know nor what, which you see not […] Be wise, and that wisedome shalbe a God unto thee; be contented, and that is thy heaven: for els to thinke that those powers (if there be any such) above, are moved either by the eloquence of our prayers, or in a chafe by the folly of our actions; caries asmuch reason as if flies should think, that men take great care which of them hums sweetest, and which of them flies nimblest. (406-407)

In resistance to Cecropia’s atheistical, absolutist, and anti-romantic pressures, Pamela and the other captive protagonists attain the height of their heroism, which begins to take on an increasingly Protestant cast while remaining grounded in pagan faithfulness to Love. Aflame with “virtuous anger,” Pamela breaks in at Cecropia’s disavowal of providential oversight, railing against her atheism in general, but particularly at her rejection of the divinely-ordained teleology that grants the lovers their sense of heroic identity and community:

I will not here call all your senses to witness, which can heare, nor see nothing, which yeeldes not most evident evidence of the unspeakeablenesse of [God’s] Wisedome: each thing being directed to an ende, and an ende of preservation

90 Cecropia’s denial that divine law sets the only standard for human behavior may bring to mind the desire of Milton’s Satan to establish his own independent foundation for evil and good (as well as for his own existence)—an connection that Davis has also observed (74.) Brumbaugh points out the origin of Cecropia’s name in the legendary Cecrops, first king of Athens, who claimed to be autochthonous rather than created by the gods, and notes that Cecrops was therefore used by Protestant contemporaries of Sidney as a symbol for the boastful pride of the False Church; Brumbaugh adds that “Like John Milton’s Sin and like Edmund Spenser’s Errour, one of whose many associations is with the Roman Church […] the classical King Cecrops’s lower body is shaped like a serpent” (“Cecropia and the Church of Antichrist,” 24-25). Jeny also sees Cecropia’s temptation of Pamela here as evidence of her “Satanic” nature: “She is not only the enemy of the good characters, but also their tempter, and the nature of her temptation is not sexual, but intellectual; she tries to awaken pride, the original sin” (163).
 [...] then must nothing, no not the estate of flies (which you with so unsaverie skorne did jest at) be unknowne unto him. (409-410, emphasis mine)

While Pamela, unlike the other major lovers, never dwells upon the “end” of romantic love per se, she demonstrates here that she too has a powerful investment in a sacred teleological narrative that Cecropia refuses to share.\(^9\) Pamela concludes by turning Cecropia’s perversion of elect exceptionalism to its properly Calvinist end, proclaiming that her corrupt doctrine proves her reprobate status:

\[
\text{since [God] is just to exercise his might, and mightie to performe his justice, assure thy selfe, most wicked woman (that hast so plaguily a corrupted minde, as thou canst not keepe thy sickenesse to thy selfe, but must most wickedly infect others) assure thy selfe, I say, (for what I say dependes of everlasting and unremooveable causes) that the time will come, when thou shalt see his wisedome in the manifesting thy ougly shamelesnesse, and shalt onely perceive him to have bene a Creator in thy destruction. (410)}
\]

Pamela suggests that Cecropia, like the reprobate soul in Calvinist theology, is intrinsically incapable of genuine spiritual “illumination”; for her, “Gods glorie” will be manifest only through “the declaration of Gods iustice” in his power to punish the wicked with “death eternall.”\(^9\) Immediately thereafter, Sidney’s narrator, who generally manages his concern with romantic subjectivity by declining to insert his own moral judgments into the New Arcadia, steps in to concur: “But Cecropia, like a Batte (which though it have eyes to discerne that there is a Sunne, yet hath so evill eyes, that it cannot delight in the Sunne) found a trueth, but could not love it” and “went away repining, but not repenting” (411). No longer merely ignorant of moral truth, Cecropia comes to hate the

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\(^9\) Connell also links Pamela’s argument against atheism to Sidney’s ideal of providential poetry (143).

\(^9\) See Perkins (Fig. 1).
truth that Pamela reveals to her, thereby exhibiting the reprobate’s “hardening of the heart” and confirming her unregenerate status in opposition to the elect heroine.  

Even Pamela’s entirely passive resistance to Cecropia in the unified name of Love and godliness has the effect of exposing the tyrant’s truncated capacity for moral enlightenment. Spying on Pamela at prayer, Cecropia finds herself trapped between doing evil and embracing good:

Lastly, all [Pamela’s] senses being rather tokens then instruments of her inwarde motions, altogether had so straunge a working power, that even the harde-harted wickednesse of Cecropia, if it founde not a love of that goodness, yet it felt an abashment at that goodness; & if she had not a kindly remorse, yet had she an yrksome accusation of her own naughtiness, so that she was put from the biases of her fore-intended lesson.  

(383-384)

As others have noted, the princesses in particular come to resemble the heroines of Protestant martyrology through such passive resistance, and by “conquering their [enemies’] doing with [their] suffering”: Philoclea demonstrates “sweet lowliness” in her constancy and quiet patience, while Pamela models “noble height” in her piety and righteous disdain (473, 469). Moreover, both sisters exemplify a potentially radical Protestant reliance on the freedom and integrity of the individual conscience in resistance

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93 Cecropia’s refusal to be moved by Pamela’s providential testimony echoes Sidney’s discussion of “the abominable tyrant Alexander Pheraus” in the Defense of Poesy, whose corrupt nature flees from the didacticism of true poetry: “he that was not ashamed to make matters for tragedies, yet could not resist the sweet violence of a tragedy. And if it wrought no further good in him, it was that he in despite of himself withdrew himself from harkening to that which might mollify his hardened heart” (Herman, ed., 90).

94 Cecropia’s “abashment” and moral paralysis foreshadow the brief moment in Milton’s Paradise Lost in which Satan, observing Eve from a distance, is so struck by her beauty and innocence that he “abstracted stood / From his own evil, and for the time remaind / Stupidly good, of enmitie disarm’d” (IX.463-65).

95 Davis argues that while the princesses embody classical virtues such as humility, the virtue that they “display most clearly in their trials” is not merely stoicism, but “one from which humility and many other purifying virtues flow: it is Christian patience, which works out of their belief in God’s providential order” (75); Lawry suggests that thanks to the sisters’ saintliness, “Heroic chivalry itself, which at first appears to be essential to the New Arcadia, gradually gives way to an almost Miltonic ‘new heroism’ of patience” (155.) Hackett has also suggested in Women and Romance Fiction that Pamela and Philoclea embody Sidney’s ideal of Protestant patience.
to Cecropia’s tyranny. Cecropia is confident that her skill at political manipulation will allow her to corrupt Philoclea, “not doubting the ease conquest of an unexpert virgin, who had already with subtiltie and impudencie begun to undermine a monarchy” (376). However, the “unexpert virgin” refuses to marry a man who “useth [her] like a slave,” declaring “libertie” to be “more dear than life itself” (471, 368). As we have seen, Cecropia has no better luck with Pamela, who preaches “with so faire a majestie of unconquered virtue, that captivitie might seeme to have authoritie over tyrannie” (411). Pamela in particular insists upon the inviolability of the believer’s integral self, urging Cecropia,

doo what thou wilt, and canst upon me: for I know thy power is not unlimited. Thou maist well wracke this sillie bodie, but me thou canst never overthrowe. For my part, I will not doo thee the pleasure to desire death of thee: but assure thy self, both my life and death, shall triumph with honour, laying shame upon thy detestable tyranny.

(472-473)

As the princes liberated nations from tyrants during their public chivalric adventures, the princesses together take a private stand for individual liberty as they encounter their own romance trials. And as with the heroes, the heroines’ elect condition—which suddenly seems less like a pagan parody of Calvinist doctrine and more like the real thing—ensures their victory, arming them with the martyr’s conviction that “how soever they wrong me, they cannot over-master God” (382). Cecropia’s tyrannical attempts to “bring [their] minde[s] into servitude” are therefore doomed to fail: “if Philoclea with sweete and humble dealing did avoid their assaults, [Pamela] with the Majestie of Vertue did beate them of” (384).

96 In English Prose Fiction, Salzman sees the princesses’ “passive, stoical heroism” as mere “resistance to Cecropia” and as evidence of the New Arcadia’s problematic relationship with active heroism (58). I would argue that Sidney treats this sort of religious and political resistance as one of the highest forms of heroism, and that he regards Pamela and Philoclea’s patient sufferance as a romance exploit equal to the princes’ active combat with tyrants.
Yet even as Sidney’s heroines increasingly speak and act like Protestant martyrs against Cecropia and her reprobate regime, they never feel called to turn away from romance. On the contrary, the narrator asserts that “to all [their trials] Vertue, and Love resisted, strengthned one by the other, when each found it selfe over-vehemently assaulted” (470). Philoclea refuses to be impure, to be servile, and to be untrue to Pyrocles, while Pamela’s unconquerable mind “softned in her, when with open wings [her thoughts] flew to Musidorus […] Then would she fortifie her resolution, with bethinking the worste, taking the counsel of vertue, and comfort of love.” The sisters’ romantic subjectivity, and their related commitment to others that share it, make it difficult to separate their virtuous fidelity to their suitors, and to Love as a principle, from the sanctification of God’s elect. Blair Worden has found that in the Old Arcadia, love is a vehicle through which naturally free minds enter into “voluntary servitude” and surrender their self-possession, but in the New Arcadia’s Cecropia episode, romantic love becomes the means by which the protagonists refuse to surrender their sense of heroic identity and spiritual integrity to an absolutist infidel who demands their submission. The tentative relationship that Sidney envisions between romance, the progressive narrative of the elect, and the impregnability of godly subjectivity against the tyranny of the reprobate is radically strengthened by Cecropia’s efforts to disrupt all three elements.

While Mopsa’s unregenerate form of anti-romance reads as parody, Cecropia’s reprobate form of anti-romance is associated with a genre of its own; despite her renunciation of romance, she too relates to her role in the New Arcadia through a literary

97 Worden, 348.
hermeneutic. Rather than perceiving herself as a heroine within a romance ordained by a
divine power, she imagines that she stands outside of a tragedy orchestrated by herself,
despising any dependency on a preexisting narrative arc or a superior creator. As she
commences her scheme to depose Basilius and corrupt his daughters, she boasts to her
son Amphialus that “though many times Fortune failed me, yet did I never faile my self”
and thus sets about authoring her own story in defiance of Fortune, the only other
authority she ever acknowledges (365). Cecropia couches her threats in the language of
tragic theater, warning the unyielding Philoclea “that now she was to come to the last
parte of the pla
y,” and she carries them out with a flair for dramatic spectacle (475). In
her “Tragedie,” as the narrator terms it, “the curtaynes were withdrawn from before the
windowes of Zelmane, and of Philoclea,” and Cecropia presents them with the illusion of
Pamela’s execution on a raised stage on the castle hall, later to feign Philoclea’s
beheading in a similar fashion (476). Of course, these illusions are all the substance of the
“Tragedie” that Cecropia authors. She proves incapable of altering the predestined plot of
the protagonists’ romance, which continues along its course despite her disruptions and
disbelief, and when she meets her own demise by falling, “ere she were aware,” from her
castle wall, her own spectacular tragedy is entirely out of her control (492).

The end of her “play,” however, does not exorcise the tragic mode from the New
Arcadia: Cecropia’s death is closely followed by Amphialus’ despair, his failed attempt
at suicide, and the sudden midsentence termination of Sidney’s revision, with the heroes’
ends left unresolved. Katherine Duncan-Jones has suggested that the New Arcadia’s
“account of the long and unproductive siege of Cecropia’s fortress, culminating in the
bumbled suicide of Amphialus, is as dark a vision of stagnation and defeat as even the waterlogged Netherlands could offer,” and that Sidney may have believed that he himself was “in the final act of a tragedy,” soon to die at Zutphen without realizing his own heroic telos of a pan-European Protestant community. Duncan-Jones may be succumbing to the temptation of reading through history’s rear-view mirror, but the entirety of the New Arcadia has been alert to the fact that the validity of romance depends upon “the end to which it is directed,” and that this “end” may “[end] not” in a timely or expected fashion (81). For Sidney, Spenser, and many seventeenth-century writers that followed them, tragedy is both the antithesis of romance and a constant presence that shadows it; the genre toward which the narrative tends is a subjective matter for those internal to the plot. Yet Sidney seems to have regarded this romantic subjectivity not, or not only, as a foolish fantasy. If the unregenerate or the reprobate were capable of narrative delusion, the community of the elect was capable of real narrative vision, and of resistance to the false coercive plots of the ungodly. The question of whether one had correctly identified one’s own spiritual and narrative status could be left only to faith, to the unfolding of history, and to remote eschatological time.

II. “Submit thy wayes unto his will”: The Weight of Romance and the Gendering of Narrative Vision in Edmund Spenser’s The Faerie Queene

In Sidney’s New Arcadia, the specter of tragedy is often eclipsed by the protagonists’ ardent, even ecstatic conviction of their membership in an elect, protected fellowship. The subjective experience of romance is often far otherwise for the heroes of Spenser’s Faerie

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98 Duncan-Jones, 288. McCoy likewise performs a psychological and biographical reading of the New Arcadia’s “problems of closure” (26).
Queene, for whom the genre generally offers not validation by a like-minded community, but confusion and isolation within the sparsely-populated landscape of Faerie Land. Still, we find much more consensus among contemporary scholars that Spenser made a good-faith effort to reform romance for the English Protestant cause than we do concerning Sidney’s relationship with religion and genre. While numerous critics have discussed the elements of Protestant doctrine that ground the epic poem, however, studies of The Faerie Queene regularly suggest that Spenser’s project to reconcile romance to his religion ended in failure, or at best only in limited success. Such arguments tend to cite the ineradicability of evil in the text, or Spenser’s inability to draw the errant paths of his characters (and that of his entire massive text) to a final conclusion. Harry Berger detects “a faint echo of hopelessness” in the impossibility of redemption for the minor characters who persist in ignorant error, such as Grill at the conclusion of Book II;\(^99\) John King suggests that Redcrosse’s yielding to Duessa’s seduction “intensifies a sense of the moral failure of [erotic] romance” as a genre;\(^100\) Andrew King terms The Faerie Queene a “[movement] away from romance” in that the genre and Spenser’s Protestant eschatology continually foil one another;\(^101\) and David Mikics argues that the many vicissitudes of Spenser’s plot “[get] out of hand in a way that adulterates and frustrates moral point,” and that romance plot, with its “easier delights,” “looks inadequate to the providential didactic meaning that Spenser attaches to it.”\(^102\)

I hope to show that the persistent sense of melancholy in Books I and III of *The Faerie Queene* stems not from Spenser’s failure to reform romance into a compatibility with Protestantism that satisfied him, but rather from his success. Unlike Sidney, Spenser portrays the romance of the elect as a sobering weight rather than an erotic or communal pleasure. The heroes of Books I and III fall in love and engage in chivalric exploits, as those of the *New Arcadia* do, and their adventures are ostensibly in accordance with a providential plan rather than in opposition to it, but this uneasy accord between human and divine narrative produces a conscious burden that the protagonists must assume.¹⁰³ Spenser’s Protestant reformation of the genre offered seventeenth-century writers a model not of irresistible ravishment by the “[easy] delights” of romance, but of willing submission to its hardships. Further, Spenser left his successors two distinct archetypes of elect perspective on narrative, divided according to gender, which many later writers would feel compelled either to reiterate or to resist: while the Redcrosse Knight is brought to a mountaintop and shown a vision of the distant New Jerusalem before he resumes his quest, the heroism of the lady knight Britomart—despite her own chivalric prowess—is constituted chiefly through her potential for motherhood, and she is told an incomplete narrative of her offspring’s future by the prophet Merlin. The sections that follow consider the third and first books of *The Faerie Queene* in reverse narrative order, the better to reflect, first, Britomart’s position near the beginning of her heroic narrative when she hears Merlin’s prophecy versus Redcrosse’s position near the end of his when

he receives his sight of the New Jerusalem; and second, my proposition that her narrative vision as a woman is less complete than his. While these sections are divided by book and by the gender of their heroes, both share a focus on Spenser’s Protestant nationalist sense of the weight of romance.

Britomart at the Root of Romance: The “Hard Begin” of Elect Heroism

Book III of *The Faerie Queene* begins the story of Britomart, the female knight of chastity, and of her quest to find her future husband, Artegaill, the knight of justice. While entirely conventional to romance, the excruciating psychosomatic intensity of Britomart’s love for Artegaill is also symptomatic of the pain that participation in the genre will cause Britomart both before and after their union. After seeing his image in a magic mirror, the virgin lover suddenly feels herself “Sad, solemne, sowre, and full of fancies fraile / […] yet wist she neither how, nor why” (III.ii.27); she later describes her anguish as an “ulcer” that “growth daily more and more” (III.ii.39). Spenser’s treatment of Britomart’s surrender to love may recall Sidney’s in several respects. First, Britomart’s nurse Glauce reassures her that her love is blameless as long as it “fixed is / On one, that worthy may perhaps appeare” and is suited to her “race and royall seed” (III.ii.42, 33). Like Sidney, Spenser insists that those who are socially and spiritually refined should (and do) only love those who are likewise; deviation from the love of the elite for the elite, or the elect for the elect, is generally an indicator of “filthy lust, contrarie unto kind” and is thus distinguishable from true love (III.ii.40). Second, as in the *New

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Arcadia, the potential godliness of true love is further demonstrated not by its capacity to be controlled by the lover’s rational will—which, after all, is depraved—but by the irrepressible zeal of its devotion. Glauce sets three tests to determine whether her charge’s love is “true,” and determines that it cannot be exorcised by magic, subordinated by rational effort, or even removed by prayer: the narrator reminds us that “love, that is in gentle brest begonne, / No idle charmes so lightly may remove,” and that Britomart retains “no power / Nor guidance of her selfe,” since she and her desire are now vehicles for divine will (III.ii.51, 49). Finally, as Sidney’s Pyrocles avows, love must find an “end” in “enjoying,” “which end ends not.” Britomart sets out in quest of her future husband, and learns from the prophetic powers of Merlin that she and Arthegall are destined to produce “Most famous fruits of matrimoniall bowre”: a line of the chosen heroes of Britain, which stretches beyond the horizon of the future (III.iii.3). Here, however, the similarities between Spenser’s erotic romance and Sidney’s run up against limits: while Sidney’s heroes find pleasure and solidarity in their love of Love and of one another, Britomart’s quest for Arthegall both begins and ends in comparatively solitary sorrow.

Sidney and Spenser find Protestant applications for both love’s powerful origin and its telos, but while Sidney is particularly concerned with love’s psychological inception as a seriocomic pagan type of Calvinist grace, Spenser’s account of Britomart’s erotic awakening is particularly invested in its ultimate reproductive result. Britomart’s transgressive status as a lady knight on a quest for a husband is therefore inextricably linked with her normative role as a wife and mother. In Book III, the tradition of amorous
romance finds justification in its religious and nationalist purpose: God has ordained virtuous love and childbearing to sustain his historical narrative and to reveal the glory of its conclusion—particularly with regard to the newly Protestant English state as his elect nation. Spenser’s narrator describes Merlin’s prophecy as the teleological story of “My glorious soveraines goodly auncestrie,” and as the prophecy recounts Britain’s historical past, it also gestures toward both the reign of Elizabeth and—more problematically—to the chosen state’s eschatological future.

With his mind ever on love’s patriotic and providential purpose, Merlin urges Britomart not to be dismayed by the “hard begin” of erotic desire “that meets [her] in the dore” and affirms that her passion for Artegall is indeed predestined and commended by God (III.iii.21):

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It was not, Britomart, thy wandring eye,
Glauncing unwares in charmed looking glas,
But the streight course of heavenly destiny,
Led with eternall providence, that has
Guided thy glaunce, to bring his will to pas:
Ne is thy fate, ne is thy fortune ill,
To love the prowest knight, that ever was.
Therefore submit thy wayes unto his will,
And do by all dew meanes thy destiny fulfill.
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(III.iii.24)

Merlin suggests that secular romance tropes like magically-imbued objects and love at first sight are of value insofar as they are instruments of “heavenly destiny” and “eternall providence” working out its will. According to Spenser’s reformed erotic tradition, Britomart’s quest for her beloved is grounded and justified not by her own desire, but by God’s: the romance heroine becomes an agent of sacred history, and is called to yield to the fulfillment of her providential purpose. Spenser’s integration of secular and sacred
romance occurs even at the level of his syntax: with his characteristic ambiguity, he notes that Britomart must “submit [her] wayes unto his will,” where “his” may refer to “eternall providence,” to the oft-personified power of love itself, or to Artesall, “the prowest knight, that ever was.” As a godly believer, a romance knight, and a chaste wife-to-be, Britomart owes her duty and devotion to all three.

The “hard begin” of Britomart’s love, Merlin tells her, ultimately forecasts both British and divine triumph,

For so must all things excellent begin,
And eke enrooted deepe must be that Tree,
Whose big embodied braunches shall not lin,
Till they to heavens hight forth stretched bee.
For from thy wombe a famous Progenie
Shall spring, out of the auncient Trojan blood,
Which shall revive the sleeping memorie
Of those same antique Peres, the heavens brood,
Which Greeke and Asian rivers stained with their blood.

Renowned kings, and sacred Emperours,
Thy fruitfull Ofspring, shall from thee descend;
Brave Captaines, and most mighty warriours,
That shall their conquests through all lands extend,
And their decayed kingdoms shall amend:
The feeble Britons, broken with long warre,
They shall upreare, and mightily defend
Against their forrein foe, that comes from farre,
Till universall peace compound all civill jarre.

(III.iii.22-23)

Merlin’s prophecy positions Britomart “deepe” at the root of the “Tree” of her “Progenie”; like the tree’s branches, Britomart’s heroic destiny is necessarily “embodied,” narratively and physically “big” with the long line of champions that will proceed “from [her] wombe.” Merlin promises temporal fame and historical victory to Britomart and her descendents—the “auncient Trojan blood,” born and beloved of the classical gods, will “revive” to conquer Europe, rescue the downtrodden Britons, and
institute a *pax Britannica*—but his nationalist prophecy is also suggestive of eschatological history and irenic apocalypse. Britomart’s progeny is “the heavens brood” in a Protestant sense as well as a pagan one; her maternal “Tree” of God’s elect heroes will grow “to heavens hight,” and their righteous victories over “their forrein foe” will one day “extend” God’s elect nation “through all lands,” resulting in “universall peace” and the end of history itself. The providential plan of sacred time is thus founded on Britomart’s private erotic destiny and her reproductive body, by divine predestination. The will of providence, however, is beginning to look suspiciously like straightforward English nationalism, and this patriotic glibness raises questions about what might happen if the human-led state should fail to submit to the guidance of God.

Indeed, Merlin’s revelation of Britomart’s providential role leads Glauce to question the role of human agency in Britomart’s nascent quest to find Artegall: “what needs her to toyle,” she demands, “sith fates can make / Way for themselves, their purpose to partake?” (III.iii.25). The prophet’s response attempts to effect a union between divine will and mortal action: “Indeed the fates are firme, / And may not shrinck, though all the world do shake: / Yet ought mens good endevours them confirme, / And guide the heavenly causes to their constant terme” (III.iii.25). Providence must by

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105 Andrew King suggests that “Glause’s question could be revised to assume the reader’s perspective: why bother reading this work, since the generic signals at the most basic representative level tell us that it is a romance, shaped toward moral victory and sustaining throughout a sense of providence? However […] that end never happens. Glauce’s question […] is simplistic because it fails to recognize how Spenser’s work struggles to attain the values and meaning of romance—how *The Faerie Queene* is, at its deepest level, in the process of becoming romance, and equally in danger of failing to become that world” (147-8). This link between Glauce and the reader here seems quite correct, but I differ with King on the subject of why Glauce’s question misses the point. It is impossible that God’s providence could fail, whether in the realm of *The Faerie Queene* or in Spenser’s devoutly Protestant world; Glauce’s question is “simplistic” not because it does not recognize the “danger” of the failure of romance, but because it equates the inevitable with the straightforward and easy. Paradoxically, failure is impossible, and yet the very nature of Spenser’s romance is that the attainment of the inevitable is *almost* prohibitively painful and difficult.
Calvinist definition be infallible, but the righteous “ought” to act in order to “confirme” it; their direction of “heavenly causes” to their destined end is a sign that they have been chosen for that very task. The purpose of heroic adventure in Spenser’s reformed romance, then, is not to create a new narrative, but to represent and enact one’s alignment with a preordained narrative and with the God that originally created it—more or less. Spenser does not always seem to hew to the most strictly deterministic form of Calvinism: Merlin later tells Britomart that her son will end his days in peace “if” he can achieve victory over his enemies, and the question of individual agency reopens, together with the potential for temporal failure (III.iii.30). While Spenser never undermines the power of providence, the necessity of human action to the divine romance remains a paradox.

Likewise, Merlin’s initial, neatly summarized revelation of the future is only the simplest version of the whole story of Britomart’s obligation and its outcome. As he elaborates on the progress of Elizabeth I’s “goodly auncestrie,” further implications of Britomart’s destined duty emerge. The newly-married heroine will journey from fairyland to Britain, her husband’s “native soyle,” to fight the “forrein Paynims” that have usurped the land, but both the chivalric and erotic components of her private romance have fixed limits:

Long time ye both in armes shall beare great sway,
Till thy wombes burden thee from them do call,
And his last fate him from thee take away,
Too rathe cut off by practice criminall
Of secret foes, that him shall make in mischiefe fall.

With thee yet shall he leave for memory
Of his late puissance, his Image dead,
That living him in all activity
To thee shall represent.

(III.iii.28-29)
Before Britomart has even begun her extraordinary adventure as a “mayd Martiall,” Merlin informs her that her martial heroism will be cut short by the all-too-ordinary pangs of motherhood and yielded to her son; before she has even met her beloved husband-to-be, she learns of his untimely and violent death. Although Mikics finds that “Britomart’s desire […] remains disjointed from any public moral purpose,”¹⁰⁶ and Andrew Fichter has suggested that “Britomart’s concerns are personal rather than civic, and thus she substitutes a romance obsession for heroic obligation, an image of a lover for one of the city,” Merlin’s prophecy strips Britomart of the option to dwell solely within the realm of amorous or chivalric romance.¹⁰⁷ For the sake of Artegaill’s “Image dead,” their progeny’s future nation, and its sacred destiny, Britomart must begin her quest already aware of its privately unhappy ending and of the constraints on her martial glory. Notably, Spenser seems to regard Britomart’s predestined return to female norms as a godly requirement, but also as a sympathetic personal hardship for the heroine. A role in the Protestant romance demands sacrifice for providence and patriotism before it promises reward—even, and especially, for the narrative’s elect protagonists. After the knight’s stories of love and combat have ended, the larger romance continues, now spurred forward not just by action, but by submission.

As Merlin’s prophecy continues, it appears as a densely compressed romance in itself, with like action and submission required of each of its heroes as the centuries pass. The descendants of Britomart and Artegaill experience so many trials, triumphs, and

¹⁰⁶ Mikics, 112.
defeats that their narrative progress often disappears beneath a veneer of historical contingency, and even tragedy. Britomart’s grandson Vortipore is destined to succeed his predecessors “In kingdome, but not in felicity,” losing what his father gained to “froward fortune”; his own son will then “Avenge his fathers losse” and reclaim victory from their enemies, but only until *his* descendants falter (III.iii.31):

> Then shall Cadwallin dye, and then the raine
> Of Britons eke with him attonce shall dye;
> Ne shall the good Cadwallader with paine,
> Or power, be hable it to remedy,
> When the full time prefixt by destiny,
> Shalbe expird of Britons regiment.
> (III.iii.40)

However, Merlin indicates that ill fortune is not a vicissitude of history, but yet another instrument of divine will: “For th’heavens have decreed, to displace / The Britons, for their sinnes dew punishment, / And to the Saxons over-give their government” (III.iii.41). Cadwallader too must submit his secular heroism to the sacred romance and refrain from going into battle to redeem his people, “by vision staid from his intent” (III.iii.41). Like the scriptural Hebrews, the Britons are doomed to lose the rewards of their success because of their forgetfulness of its source.

Spenser’s biblical typology and Merlin’s visionary power together produce a moment of temporal and generic confusion, with the prophet grieving for the romantic Britons’ tragic decline as though it has already occurred: “O who shall helpe me to lament, and mourne / The royall seed, the antique Trojan blood, Whose Empire lenger here, then ever any stood” (III.iii.42). Hearing Merlin foretell “woe, and woe, and everlasting woe” to her progeny, “Late King, now captive, late Lord, now forlorn, / The
worlds reproch, the cruell victors scorne,” Britomart is confounded by this apparently tragic conclusion to her romance and its weighty reproductive purpose (III.iii.42):

The Damzell was full deepe empassioned,
Both for his griefe, and for her peoples sake,
Whose future woes so plaine he fashioned,
And sighing sore, at length him thus bespake;
Ah but will heavens fury never slake,
Nor vengeaunce huge relent it selfe at last?
Will not long misery late mercy make,
But shall their name for ever be defast,
And quite from of the earth their memory be rast?

(III.iii.43)

Merlin quickly cuts their mutual mourning short and assures her that despite appearances, her narrative is not a tragedy, and that the elect nation of her descendants will rise again:

Nay but the terme (said he) is limited,
That in this thraldome Britons shall abide,
And the just revolution measured,
That they as Straungers shalbe notifide.
For twise foure hundreth yeares shalbe supplide,
Ere they to former rule restor’d shalbee,
And their importune fates all satisfide:
Yet during this their most obscuritee,
Their beames shall oft breake forth, that men them faire may see.

(III.iii.44)

The “expiration” of the Britons’ “full time” proves to be a false ending, a mistaking of romance for tragedy based on subjective perspective and temporal misjudgment. In further resemblance to the Israelites, the Britons await a predestined “revolution,” despite the long duration of their “thraldome.” In the meantime, the elect nation will continue to produce heroes who manifest the glory of God and of his chosen people. Finally, after eight hundred years, the “goodly auncestrie” of Elizabeth I is complete: “when the term is full accomplishid,” the Tudor family will arise like “a sparke of fire” from “where it lurked in exile” and regain the throne of England: “So shall the Briton bloud their crowne
againe reclame” (III.iii.48). Merlin’s vision of the Tudor dynasty, culminating in the glorious reign of Elizabeth, again conjures the imagery of irenic apocalypse:

Thenceforth eternall union shall be made
Betweene the nations different afore,
And sacred Peace shall lovingly perswade
The warlike minds, to learne her goodly lore,
And civile armes to exercise no more:
Then shall a royall virgin raine, which shall
Stretch her white rod over the Belgieke shore,
And the great Castle smite so sore with all,
That it shall make him shake, and shortly learne to fall.

(III.iii.49)

For a moment, this providential triumph appears to conclude Merlin’s prophecy and the long, turbulent romance of Britomart and her descendants. The Tudors unite nations and establish concord, and Elizabeth allies with the Protestant Low Countries (“the Belgieke shore”) and overcomes the menace of Catholic Spain (“the great Castle”). Spenser’s own age, in which England has emerged as a newly Protestant and newly powerful nation, seems to be the natural telos of Britomart’s sacred narrative: all her sacrifices, and all the trials, victories, and defeats of her “royall seed,” have led to this moment.

“But yet the end is not,” pronounces Merlin suddenly, and these are his final words (III.iii.50). Immediately upon indicating that more of the story is left to be told, he falls silent, “As overcomen of the spirites powre, / Or other ghastly spectacle dismayd, / That secretly he saw, yet note discoure” (III.iii.50). Britomart and Glaucce are unsettled and bewildered by his visionary trance, but at length it subsides, and the women depart to begin their adventure without inquiring further into Merlin’s silence. If he can indeed see more, Britomart’s auditory access to his vision has been cut off. One “ending” of her romance after another has proved to be an illusion, and the true end remains hidden. Of course,
Spenser is not Merlin, and cannot reveal the future of England beyond Elizabeth’s reign, but the gravity of the prophet’s silence imports more than simple lack of knowledge. Despite the final flourishing of the English nation and the Protestant religion after many centuries, history continues, and the divine romance is incomplete. Elizabeth, just recently celebrated in Merlin’s prophecy as “the hope of Protestantism,” now finds herself in the position of her imaginary ancestor, and of each of Britomart’s successors in turn: she must enact, and “submit [her] wayes” to, her own role in the narrative, whatever that might be. Glauce’s query again applies: must she do anything in particular to advance the sacred story? But Elizabeth’s failure to follow Britomart’s procreative example casts an ominous shadow over the unanswerable question: her refusal to relinquish her role as a “mayd Martiall” in favor of the motherhood that will sustain the chosen nation threatens to overlay romance with tragedy once more. Andrew King notes that “At issue here is an imaginative reception of Elizabeth that sees her unfitness to sustain a romance-epic narrative of ongoing perfection. She truly is […] a dead end for the quest,” while Sean Kane observes that “just when the moral ideal is pressed close to real circumstance it opens up a gap for reflection on the disparity between a nation’s political behavior and its dream

108 A similar moment occurs in Book II, when Arthur, reading from a book of prophecy, is forced to break off before he learns his own future:

After him Uther, which Pendragon hight,
Succeeding There abruptly it did end,
Without full point, or other Cesure right,
As if the rest some wicked hand did rend,
Or th’Author selfe could not at least attend
To finish it.

(II.x.68)

Likewise, Guyon stops reading the history of Fairie Land once he reaches the reign of Gloriana, but the narrator reminds us that the book “Ne yet has ended: for it was a great / And ample volume” (II.x.70).


110 King, 148.
of a fair and lasting peace.”

The divine plot jars with the personal and political actions that Elizabeth has already taken, and Spenser and his readers must contend with the knowledge that, so soon after England’s return to Protestantism, the path to providential triumph is once again as invisible as it is inevitable. Even now, at a triumphant peak in the action, the next steps for “heavens brood” are more obscure than ever.

Britomart thus embarks on her erotic quest having learned only that her personal trajectory is one of mixed joy, sorrow, sacrifice, and consolation; that her descendants’ destinies are equally variable; and that the ultimate end belongs to a providential authority that has set a hard limit to what she may know. Britomart lies “enrooted” deep beneath the “Tree” of her progeny’s future; she must be told about the “braunches” she cannot see, and the limbs that grow “to heavens hight” stretch beyond the reach even of prophetic human eyes. Merlin’s vague and imperfect promise about the glorious “end” of Britomart’s love affair does not suffuse her with ecstatic zeal, as it does for Sidney’s heroes, but with a sense of resignation. Likening herself to a “feeble bark [...] tossed long” on a “Huge sea of sorrow,” she can only pray for a break in the tempest, “The which may bring my ship, ere it be rent, / Unto the gladsome port of her intent” (III.iv.8, 10). In the midst of her “privy grief,” she takes comfort not in anticipation of chivalric success or erotic fulfillment, but in an “intent” much further off, finding

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Through hope of those, which Merlin had her told
Should of her name and nation be chiefe,
And fetch their being from the sacred mould
Of her immortal wombe, to be in heaven enrold.
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Britomart may assume extraordinary freedoms in stealing away from her father’s castle and venturing into the romance landscape disguised as a man, but her story’s “hard begin” does not look much like an autonomous escape into the world of chivalric romance. Rather, Britomart is told that she must shoulder the maternal burdens of her gender and the narrative weight of the genre—a weight that Merlin and Spenser ultimately place on Elizabeth (despite the tragic threat behind her childless old age), and on all of her people who regard themselves as elect Britons with a duty to their nation and its religion. To be one of God’s chosen is to be assigned a hero’s role in the divine romance, but it is also to “submit [one’s] wayes” to an unutterably long narrative that does not end with the defeat of an enemy, the consummation of a marriage, or even the birth of an heir. These generic conventions may recur again and again, and they are always cause for celebration, “But yet the end is not.”

Redcrosse on the Mountaintop: The End(s) of Romance

Near the conclusion of Book I, the knight of holiness is likewise granted prophetic perspective on the providential shape of his Protestant heroic narrative. His real vision, while more extensive and more revelatory than Britomart’s auditory promise, nevertheless proves similarly subject to the burdens and the tragic accompaniments of Spenser’s romance. Guided to the summit of a high mountain by the hermit Contemplation, the hitherto unnamed Redcrosse Knight first learns his true identity, as all unknown heroes of romance eventually must. Unsurprisingly, he is of royal blood (and therefore, as generic convention dictates, naturally inclined toward the heroism he has already demonstrated):
For well I wote, thou springst from ancient race
Of Saxon kings, that haue with mightie hand
And many bloudie battailes fought in place
High reard their royall throne in Britane land,
And vanquisht them, vnable to withstand:
From thence a Faerie thee vnweeting ref,
There as thou slepest in tender swadling band,
And her base Elfin brood there for thee left.
Such men do Chaungelings call, so chaungd by Faeries theft.

Thence she thee brought into this Faerie lond,
And in an heaped furrow did thee hyde,
Where thee a Ploughman all vnweeting fond,
As he his toylesome teme that way did guyde,
And brought thee vp in ploughmans state to byde,
Whereof Georgos he thee gaue to name;
Till prickt with courage, and thy forces pryde,
To Faery court thou cam'st to seeke for fame,
And proue thy puissaunt armes, as seems thee best became.

(I.x.65-66)

Moreover, like Britomart’s destined spouse Arsegall, he is “sprong out from English race, / How ever now accompted Elfins sonne” (I.x.60). In other words, he too belongs to the elect nation that, like him, has undergone purification to a state of holiness. (Notably, his ancestry is not Briton like Arsegall’s, but Saxon; as in Merlin’s prophecy, historical enmities vanish in anticipation of Tudor peace and Protestant unity.) Stolen into Fairy Land, he is adopted by a ploughman (whom many scholars have linked to Langland’s Piers Plowman, another recipient of sacred revelation through a mountaintop vision) and given a name: Georgos, after the earth in which he lay. Now risen to a higher state, the “man of earth” is destined to be exalted as “thine owne nations frend / And Patrone: thou Saint George shalt called bee, / Saint George of mery England, the signe of victoree” (I.x.61). The story of Redcrosse’s mysterious identity, like that of Britomart and Arsegall’s love, thus culminates in a sanctified nationalistic telos.112

112 Donald Cheney remarks that “Spenser’s distinctions between Faery and Briton are infrequent” and so finds it “surprising to hear the hermit Contemplation speaking of ‘base Elfin brood’ (I.x.65), and to learn that Redcross
Second, the narrative’s chivalric and patriotic end merges with its Calvinist one as Redcrosse’s elect condition is explicitly revealed to him. At the top of the mountain, Contemplation shows him, still “far off” from where they stand, “A little path, that was both steepe and long, / Which to a goodly Citie led his view,” and identifies it as the eternal dwelling place of God’s elect (I.x.55):

Faire knight (quoth he) Hierusalem that is,
The new Hierusalem, that God has built
For those to dwell in, that are chosen his,
His chosen people purg’d from sinfull guilt,
With pretious bloud, which cruelly was spilt
On cursed tree, of that vnsotted lam,
That for the sinnes of all the world was kilt:
Now are they Saints all in that Citie sam,
More deare vnto their God, then younglings to their dam.
(I.x.57)

When Redcrosse admires the distant Jerusalem as the most beautiful city he has ever seen (fairer than Gloriana’s city of Cleopolis, its worldly type, and by implication far surpassing Elizabeth’s kingdom), Contemplation promises him that he, too, is destined to dwell there. After the accomplishment of his earthly adventures, he is called to

seeke this path, that I to thee presage,
Which after all to heauen shall thee send;

and cannot complete his quest until he is revealed to be a Briton subject to the Christian dispensation” (Spenser’s Image of Nature: Wild Man and Shepherd in “The Faerie Queene” [New Haven, CT: Yale U P, 1966], 9-10.) The relationship between Gloriana’s theologically hybrid Fairy Land and Elizabeth’s Protestant England is indeed unstable, but in this instance, Redcrosse’s inborn English (actually Saxon) identity is directly linked to his predestined, explicitly Calvinist election. However, his elite national status and elect spiritual condition ties him back once more to the romance world of Fairy Land, the narrative landscape against which even the English heroes must enact their providential roles before attaining the full glory of the “Christian dispensation.”

Andrew King remarks on Spenser’s elision of elitism and election by noting that “What Calvin says about salvation could just as easily be said about knightly or kingly identity through birth: it ‘is freely offered to some while others are barred from access to it’ […] Just as one must be born a knight, so one must be born as one of God’s Elect to be saved; both systems emphasize an identity given or inherited from the ‘father,’ with God being the father in the second case” (151).

While Mallette suggests that “Contemplation’s vision” and his praise of Cleopolis and Gloriana have “close affinities with apocalyptic discourse proclaiming international triumphs for Protestant England, presided over by its monarch,” the major thrust of the vision, as with the end of Merlin’s prophecy, makes Elizabeth and her realm a necessary yet insufficient component of Protestantism’s providential plot (46).
Then peaceably thy painefull pilgrimage
To yonder same Hierusalem do bend,
Where is for thee ordaind a blessed end:
For thou amongst those Saints, whom thou doest see,
Shalt be a Saint [...] 
(I.x.61)

To Redcrosse’s fear that he cannot deserve this final reward—“Unworthy wretch (quoth he) of so great grace, / How dare I thinke such glory to attaine?”—Contemplation issues the reminder that desert plays no part in the Calvinist romance of salvation, in which the trials of all the elect point to the same end, regardless of merit: “These that have it attaind, were in like case / (Quoth he) as wretched, and liv’d in like paine” (I.x.62).

Yet these two great revelations are accompanied by a third, one that reiterates the “paine” of the narrative instead of relieving it. Contemplation informs Redcrosse that his election to romantic heroism is ultimately a calling that transcends such heroism and requires him to abandon it. Like Britomart, he must follow the conventional patterns of romance narrative only insofar as their purpose accords with God’s, and as before, the divine romance outlasts the mortal one. Redcrosse’s “service” to the Fairy Queen is “worthy,” as is his “aide” of “a virgin desolate fordone,” but even the highest chivalric acts have no merit in themselves, and the hero must be prepared to forsake them for the higher end that they represent (I.x.60):

But when thou famous victorie hast wonne,
And high amongst all knights hast hong thy shield,
Thenceforth the suit of earthly conquest shonne,
And wash thy hands from guilt of bloody field:
For bloud can nought but sin, & wars but sorrowes yield.
(I.x.61)

When Contemplation devalues (and even condemns) the material trappings of romance, Redcrosse experiences shock and dismay at the prospect of abandoning the outward
substance of his career or the hard-won fruits of his courtship: “But deeds of armes must I at last be faine, / And Ladies love to leave so dearely bought?” (I.x.62). Contemplation replies that romance’s external conventions are useless once the narrative has attained its ends—that is, both its purpose and its truly final conclusion. In Jerusalem, the symbolism of the genre’s martial and amorous tropes dissipates into the truths they signify, and the signs alone become meaningless: “What need of armes, where peace doth ay remaine, / (Said he) and battailes none are to be fought? / As for loose loves they’are vaine, and vanish into nought” (I.x.62). The love of ladies and the love of glory are no more than types of the love of God and of his will, as well as potential distractions from it; they may first be redeemed, but are finally supplanted, by their antitype.

We might expect this commandment that Redcrosse give up his worldly heroism to be his final lesson from Contemplation, and even to constitute Spenser’s supposed acknowledgment that his poem must “move away from romance.” But Redcrosse’s sacrifice is not his last or his heaviest burden, and it is not Spenser’s ultimate position on his problematic genre. Upon hearing this latest revelation, the young knight who was so eager for the adventure of romance at *The Faerie Queene*’s beginning becomes just as zealous to set it aside. If the holiness of his adventures is indeed inferior to the holiness of their conclusion, the Knight of Holiness is suddenly desperate to have his story over already, and to dispense forever with the “deeds of armes” and “Ladies love” that he had clung to only a few lines earlier:

O let me not (quoth he) then turne againe
Backe to the world, whose joyes so fruitlesse are;
But let me here for aye in peace remaine,
Or streight way on that last long voyage fare,
That nothing may my present hope empare.
(I.x.63)

But Contemplation admonishes his latest display of over-hasty virtue with an authority that also echoes the indeterminacy of Merlin’s final pronouncement: “That may not be” (I.x.63). Redcrosse’s obligation to his role in the divine romance does not end simply because the hero has received a vision of its ending: “ne maist thou yit / Forgo that royall maides bequeathed care, / Who did her cause into thy hand commit, / Till from her cursed foe thou have her freely quit” (I.x.63). As a sign of his election (and of his masculine freedom from the burden of maternity), Redcrosse has been granted not just a prophecy, but a personal sight of the entire narrative from a sacred height, where a perfect interpretation of the story, and an unobscured perspective on its true purpose and its true ending, are visible to him. However, this extraordinary vision of the ends of romance takes place above and apart from the ongoing narrative below, and having seen it, Redcrosse must re-descend into his unfinished story. Regardless of his longing to dispense with romance, his “present hope” must again be “empare[d]” by doubt and by the threat of tragic turns within the still-progressing plot.

Immediately after de-valuing worldly romance as an insubstantial veneer over its immutable, eternal telos, Contemplation re-values worldly romance as a form of

115 Despite his elect condition, Redcrosse’s impatience to abandon his romance course may signify the “total depravity” that Calvinism ascribes to all humanity, even those predestined for redemption. Mikics suggests that “Red Crosse’s quick conversion to the ‘joyous rest and endlesse blis’ (1.10.52) that Contemplation offers bears a suspicious resemblance to his surrender to the ‘eternall rest / And happie ease’ held out by Despair in Canto 9 (st. 40). Red Crosse remains oriented toward passive security, ‘the man that would not live’ (1.10.27) in the face of both Contemplation and Despair” (59).
Redcrosse’s greatest trial is to return to romance after he has seen its end and has ceased to desire it, enacting conventional human heroism for God’s glory rather than his own. The knight of holiness has a duty to perform his earthly heroic role—protecting Una, fighting the Dragon, restoring the usurped kingdom of Eden—because these actions symbolize his alignment with divine order and help bring it to pass. His allegorical defense of the True Church, combat with Satan, and restoration of Paradise to its human inhabitants all clearly reflect Christ’s progress, although Saint George of England is not Christ, but his elect imitator. Similarly, even Christ’s heroism on earth mirrors his final triumph at the end of time without removing the need for it, and vice versa. Despite their hierarchical relationship, neither worldly romance nor its eschatological counterpart precludes the other. Spenser’s answer to the question of whether human action is necessary to advance the divine narrative remains complex, but he insists upon the paradox that the same conventional plot that is “vaine” and “nought” for the elect in Jerusalem is essential for the elect still on the path to that heavenly end.

Put another way, Redcrosse’s mountaintop revelation of the ends of his genre endows him with the perception that he is a character in an allegorical romance, though its ultimate author is God, not Spenser. As such, he must reenter his narrative armed with an external understanding of its shape and outcome; he cannot cease to be a character until his story progresses to its final conclusion. Redcrosse assents to Contemplation’s order

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116 Andrew King observes that “Only when the hero has withdrawn an aspiration toward romance, as traditionally conceived in terms of knightly prowess and self-sufficiency, can the hero then begin to move toward a condition of moral stability that truly is romance in its deepest, Edenic sense” (150).

117 As Kane points out, The Faerie Queene’s chivalric “frame of militant faith” is never “dismissed […]” Thus the legend offers the believer no simple choice between conscious purpose and unconscious wisdom in the working out of a pious life […] the contradictions of holiness can only be resolved in a timeless vision of the New Jerusalem, and a temporal view of the work to be done in defeating its accuser” (48-9.)
and pledges, with God’s “grace,” to “Abet that virgins cause disconsolate,” but he exhibits a new sense of dissatisfaction with his knightly adventures, eager “shortly” to “returne unto this place, / To walke this way in Pilgrims poore estate” (I.x.64).

While Britomart is only told that she is chosen and must choose to believe it and to wait for her promised progeny, despite the tragedies she knows will befall them, Redcrosse has visual confirmation of his election and of the eschatological unreality of tragedy for God’s elect. Nevertheless, the hierarchical gap between the two heroes’ gendered perspective quickly begins to shrink (though not to close) once Redcrosse redescends into the lower landscape of romance. His new teleological vision is barely sustainable in tandem with his everyday sight:

This said, adowne he looked to the ground,  
To have returnd, but dazed were his eyne,  
Through passing brightnesse, which did quite confound  
His feeble sence, and too exceeding shyne.  
So darke are earthly things compard to things diuine.  
(I.x.67)

Dazzled by the heavenly ends he has glimpsed, Redcrosse must struggle to reacclimate himself to his earthly purpose. When at last “himselfe he gan to find,” he returns down

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118 Mikics rightly interprets Redcrosse’s impaired eyesight as a sign that “Though a future saint, [he] remains a ‘feeble,’ deficient mortal; he cannot properly comprehend a religious truth so incommensurable with his humble worldly status”; however, he argues further that “The double image suggested by these lines persists: the poetic world cannot reconcile the earthly and the heavenly, romance and its Christian message” (60). I propose instead that the paradoxical reconciliation of earthly and heavenly romance is precisely what Contemplation insists upon, and what Redcrosse must see in order to grasp, however briefly, the full extent of his purpose. The outward vision on the mountaintop cannot remain forever before Redcrosse’s eyes after his re-descent into earthly narrative, but his subsequent submission to that narrative’s demands suggests that some form of the teleological revelation persists to guide him from within. As Pauline Parker (another of the many commenters on The Faerie Queene’s negotiation between achievement and deferral) asserts, “faerie land is not only the outer world, itself destined to perish, which is the scene of human adventure; it also stands for the inner world which man, the microcosm, carries about in his own soul, and within which the exterior actions have their only permanent effect. In this inner world too, there can be no standing still, until the tree falls as it will lie” (The Allegory of the Faerie Queene [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960], 65).
the mountain “to Una, who him joyd to see, / And after litle rest, gan him desire, / Of her adventure mindful for to bee” (I.x.68). Their romance renews, and Book I of The Faerie Queene approaches its climax in Redcrosse’s three-day-long battle with the Dragon.

The last two cantos of Book I continue to reiterate Compassion’s and Merlin’s prophetic warnings that temporal endings are illusions, both for better and for worse. Redcrosse’s combat with the Dragon appears to end twice, both times in grim defeat, before the knight triumphs on the third day. Overcome with joy, the restored king of Eden makes Redcrosse “heire apparaunt” of his kingdom and grants him Una’s hand: “Therefore since now to thee perteines the same, / By dew desert of noble chevalree, / Both daughter and eke kingdome, lo I yield to thee” (I.xii.20). After all, according to generic convention, a throne and a loving marriage reward the hero after his trials, and Una’s father assumes that these trials are indeed finally past: “But since now safe ye seised have the shore, / And well arrived are, (high God be blest) / Let us devise of ease and everlasting rest” (I.xii.17). But Redcrosse has seen “everlasting rest,” and knows that it is not to be found here. Even his worldly adventures are not yet over, as he still owes his allegiance to Gloriana before he can return to Eden and marry Una:

Ah dearest Lord, said then that doughty knight,
Of ease or rest I may not yet devise;
For by the faith, which I to arms have plight,
I bounden am straigh after this emprize,
As that your daughter can ye well advize,
Backe to returne to that great Faerie Queene,
And her to serve six yeares in warlike wize,
Gainst that proud Paynim king, that works her teene:
Therefore I ought crave pardon, till I there have beene.
(I.xii.18)
In his allegorical defeat of Satan and liberation of Truth, Redcrosse appears to have accomplished the highest ends imaginable for Protestant heroism, but he must repeat similar symbolic acts again and again. His “faith [...] to armes” and to virtuous ladies stands for his duty to God—until, finally, it does not, when the providential end of allegorical romance causes all mere symbols to “vanish into nought.” In the meantime, its chosen heroes encounter the usual trials and the usual triumphs; Spenser’s narrator informs us that Redcrosse’s betrothal to Una is celebrated with “The usuall joyes at knitting of loves band” (I.xii.40). “But yet the end is not”:

Yet swimming in that sea of blisfull joy,
He nought forgot, how he whilome had sworne,
In case he could that monstrous beast destroy,
Unto his Faerie Queene back to returne:
The which he shortly did, and Una left to mourn. 119
(I.xii.41)

Ultimately more like Britomart than unlike her, Redcrosse subordinates his desire to the chivalric advancement of his nation, and must subordinate both callings to divine will. 120

Over the course of his narrative, “The Patron of true Holiness” discovers that true holiness is neither conventional romance heroism nor the ascetic abdication of the same. Rather, the elect hero is called to an ongoing, often painful submission to the ends of

119 As John Watkins puts it, “Spenser both envisions and defers an imminent exaltation of time into eternity. The moment Redcrosse’s victory over the Dragon seems to usher in the church’s apocalyptic marriage to the Lamb, the marriage rites turn out to be just a betrothal” (“‘And yet the end was not’: Apocalyptic Deferral and Spenser’s Literary Afterlife,” in Patrick Cheney and Lauren Silberman, eds., Worldmaking Spenser: Explorations in the Early Modern Age [Louisville: U P of Kentucky, 2000], 157).
120 Mikics argues that “romance energy, as the pure willful movement of plot, escapes providential closure when Red Crosse, at the end of Book 1, once again departs in search of chivalric excitement […] yet again the victim of the short attention span encouraged by a hyperactive questing mentality” (62). Yet Redcrosse’s departure from Eden and Una seems much more melancholy than “hyperactive,” and the choice to continue questing is not Redcrosse’s own will. Far from “escap[ing] providential closure,” he cannot escape from providential narrative prematurely.
romance: to the genre’s real and allegorical providential purpose, and to its ever-remote but ever-certain erasure.

The narrator of *The Faerie Queene* often addresses his audience as though he himself were another of his elect heroes, speaking at one remove from their story but with the same guiding sense of the conventional tropes and narrative patterns of romance. He too is laden with a sense of narrative duty—to his readers, to his own Queen Gloriana, and to the God whose providential will for Protestant England he hopes to illustrate.\(^{121}\) Notably, his rhetorical postures align him more with Britomart than with Redcrosse: like her, he compares himself and his poem more than once to a “feeble bark” whose “wearie course” is beset by “stormie surges” as it struggles to avoid going “astray” (I.xii.1, VI.xii.1). At times, he expresses faith in the providential direction of his venture—even in the final completed book of his unfinished epic, the ship “Still winneth way, ne hath her compasse lost” (VI.xii.1)—but in the “unperfite” final canto of the *Faerie Queene*’s fragmentary continuation, he grieves for the tragedies of the temporal world and for his own lack of Redcrosse’s elevated vision. His contemplation of mutability, the narrator explains, has made him “loath this state of life so tickle […] // Whose flowering pride, so fading and so fickle, / Short Time shall soon cut down with his consuming sickle” (“Mutabilitie,” viii.1). This is conventional imagery not for a romance of Providence, but for the tragedy of Fortune: struggling to produce his impossibly long poem, disappointed by his disfavor with Elizabeth, and near the end of his life, Spenser (like Sidney)

\(^{121}\) As John Arthos remarks, the poet and “[his] own uncertainties” are as much the subject of *The Faerie Queene* as the trajectories of the heroes; Spenser, “keeping himself ever before us, in the image of […] the questing knight,” turns to romance in an effort to “lead his own thought and hope to eternity and satisfaction” (*On The Poetry of Spenser and the Form of Romances* [Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1970], 65-6).
represents tragedy as always encroaching on the borders of romance. His Protestant narrative, however, weighs this anxious concept against a re-vision of romance not just as a mode that is threatened by tragedy, but also as a mode that involves and subsumes tragedy. Negotiating between the experience of contingency and the faith that at the end of time “all shall rest eternally / With him that is the God of Sabbaoth hight,” the Faerie Queene’s last line prays for the vision granted to Redcrosse but withheld from the marginalized, implicitly feminized poet, who stands not on a prophetic peak but struggles somewhere within the branches of history: “O that great Sabaoth God, graunt me that Sabaoths sight” (“Mutabilitie,” viii.2). Together, Spenser’s sense of Protestant romance’s weight—a generic burden eased to uneven extents by gendered perspectives on the narrative’s structure—and Sidney’s conception of Protestant romance’s insubstantial yet mighty subjectivity would stand as powerful models for seventeenth-century writers to adopt, and to adapt, as England’s civil conflicts plunged the nation into another tempest.
Chapter Two

“Heroical” Histories:
Writing Lives into National Romance, 1648-1670

We have seen how Sidney’s *New Arcadia* envisions romance as the source of a heroic subjectivity that mimics Calvinist believers’ conviction of election, and hence as a generic shibboleth that draws adherents together into an exclusive, potentially subversive community. In this chapter, we examine how this model informs four remarkable works of heroic historiography composed or consumed by royalists and republicans during and after the civil wars. Despite their ideological diversity, all these works share Sidney’s fascination with romance’s capacity to locate individuals and communities within a heroic providential narrative, to empower them to exclude and resist the unregenerate or the unenlightened, and to distinguish their own understanding of right romance from outsiders’ or opponents’ perversions of the genre. With this paradigm in mind, it should become no surprise that romance emerged as a battleground between royalists and republicans or Puritans in the years of the Civil War and beyond. During these tempestuous decades in which the balance of power, and control over the telling of the story of England, shifted from the royalists to the republicans and back again, both sides mocked or condemned their enemies’ manipulation of romance while openly or tacitly appropriating it in order to mark their community and leaders as the true heroes of the national narrative.

Through Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*, however, we have seen that nationalistic romance offered its subjects not only confidence and power, but also a frame that demanded, and
assigned meaning to, uncertainty and pain. The length and weight of the genre’s many trials may be eased by the gift of a prophetic perspective on the story’s promised end, but not all narrative visions are created equal: some heroes are permitted to see the full arc of the plot they inhabit, while others are merely required to believe in it. In the middle of the seventeenth century, due to the English romance’s long form and the problem of multiple conflicting subjectivities, we encounter many examples of writers struggling with the generic tension between providential romance and tragic or contingent human history. Notably, this generic tension is also at times gendered tension, arising from Spenser’s gendered archetypes of disparate romantic perspectives: men are normatively endowed with some form of narrative vision that is denied to their female counterparts, who remain grounded in the worldly concerns of their family’s legacy. The four historiographical texts in this chapter are likewise united by this awareness that romance is fraught with, and perhaps uniquely equipped to manage, problems of variable personal and historical perspective.

We begin with two texts that deal directly with the complex midcentury reception of Sidney and Spenser as writers and political conscripts. First, the 1648 royalist pamphlet “The Faerie Leveller” extols Charles I as the living antitype of Spenser’s Knight of Justice, casting Spenser as a prophet who forecasted Cromwell’s unlikely defeat and reclaiming him from his Puritan devotees by insisting that readers loyal to the king have exclusive possession of the key to his providential allegory. Next, the 1652 first printing of Fulke Greville’s Life of the Renowned Sir Philip Sidney wrestles with the discrepancy between Sidney’s romantic heroism and his tragic death while allowing its Interregnum audience to entertain subjective readings of Elizabeth’s courtier as either a nostalgic royalist or a godly
proto-republican visionary. A second pair of works, the royalist Margaret Cavendish’s and the republican Lucy Hutchinson’s biographies of their war-hero husbands, stand as ideological opposites but share a keen sense of the generic and gendered tension between the men’s lofty romantic vision and their wives’ rooted reliance on materiality and maternity. Both John Hutchinson and William Cavendish define their exceptional romantic heroism not just through their wartime chivalry, but also through their affective experiences of love for God and the King; meanwhile, the women who write their lives must struggle to ensure that the men’s heroic subjectivity does not utterly exclude their wives, as well as their enemies, from the glorious ends of their personal and national narratives.

I. Spenser as Royalist Prophet: The “Prince of Justice” and his Followers in 1648’s “The Faerie Leveller”

In July of 1648, with the civil war going badly for the royalists, the royalist newsbook *Mercurius Elencticus* advertised the publication of an anonymous pamphlet. Titled “The Faerie Leveller: or, King Charles his Leveller descried and deciphered in Queen Elizabeths dayes,” the pamphlet purported to offer “a lively representation of our times” through a fragment of Book 5 of Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*.¹²² In this

excerpt, Artegall, the Knight of Justice, and his squire Talus humiliate and defeat a giant who has seduced many disciples by pledging that he will “suppresse” the rule of tyrants, “And Lordings curbe that Commons over-aw: / And all the wealth of rich-men to the poore will draw.” The pamphleteer proposes that Spenser’s epic romance foresaw the “subverters of well-settled States [...] lately risen up and now raigneing amongst us”: these Levellers “were discryed long agoe in Queene Elizabeths dayes, and then graphically described by the Prince of English Poets Edmund Spenser, whose verses then propheticall are now become historicall in our dayes” (3). Adding that Spenser’s Faerie Queene “is altogether Allegorical, and needes a little explanation,” he offers his audience a “key of the work” that “[applies] all to these times”: Artegall, described as “Prince of justice” (rather than knight), is identified as Charles I, and “Talus his Executioner with his yron flayle” as “The Kings forces, or Gregory” the hangman of London (4). The “Gyant Leveller” is “Col. Oliver Cromwell, L. G. of the Sts. Army”; as both John King and Clark Hulse point out, the pamphleteer disregards the ideological disparity between Cromwell and the most radical reformers who fought under him, equating Cromwell’s aims with the Levellers’ mission to restore the realm “to equallity” (6).

King notes that “Spenser’s moralism and Protestant zeal made him a favorite of seventeenth-century Puritans,” but that his support for Elizabeth and his moderate social politics offered the royalists an opportunity to extol him as one of their own. “The Faerie Leveller” asserts their right to the romance of The Faerie Queene by assigning

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123 Anonymous, The Faerie Leveller: or, King Charles his Leveller descried and decipherd in Queene Elizabeths dayes. By her Poet Laureat Edmond Spenser, in his unparaleld Poeme, entituled, The Faerie Queene. A lively representation of our times (London, 1648), 7. All subsequent references to the pamphlet will be from this edition and will be cited parenthetically by page number.

124 King, “A 1648 Royalist Reading,” 298.
Spenser a surprising new national identity not as a Puritan forerunner but as a royalist prophet. King Charles I, too, is reimagined as the hero of England’s historical romance: following in the footsteps of Spenser’s nationalistic knights, yet also at times straying from them, the Prince of Justice is endowed with a distinctive set of royalist heroic virtues and depicted as an exemplum of the “compleat Gentleman,” worthy of popular veneration and emulation (4). Moreover, the pamphleteer is concerned with undermining the Puritans’ claim not just to Spenser, but to other instruments of literary ideology. Anagrams, typology, and biblical exegesis, the tools of radical preachers and prophets, take on royalist meaning in “The Faerie Leveller”; conscience and individual judgment, the subversive bywords of religious and political reformers, are repositioned to side with the king; and providential romance itself, which for Spenser and his Puritan admirers (like Milton) promised eschatological triumph for the godly, is here a narrative form that foretells worldly victory over Cromwell for the embattled Charles. Notably, while the author settles on Spenser as his prophetic vehicle, the succinct propagandistic pamphlet disregards Spenser’s sense of national romance’s temporal length and emotional weight, predicting that the King’s increasingly unlikely victory would come easily and soon. Instead, the author’s approach to the genre owes much to Sidney’s model of exclusive community and opposition through subjectivity: using The Faerie Queene as its textual shibboleth, the pamphlet mocks the errors of the self-proclaimed “godly,” reconstitutes an enlightened community of royalist readers who exclusively possess the right “key” to Spenser’s romance, and calls upon those loyal to the heroic Charles to resist the rebels by hewing to their own interior conviction of godliness and providential favor.
The title page of “The Faerie Leveller” immediately signals that the pamphlet’s relationship to the Puritan opposition is simultaneously derisive and appropriative. A sardonically punning note indicates that the pamphlet was “Printed just levell anens the Saints Army: in the yeare of their Saintships ungodly Revelling for a godly Levelling. 1648.” This mockery of “their Saintships’” false zealously is accompanied by an anagram that endows wordplay with cosmic significance, as Puritan preachers and Fifth Monarchist prophets were wont to do, and the pamphleteer thus inaugurates his semi-parodic reinvention of his enemies’ literary tactics: “Parliaments Army” is rearranged on the next line to become “Paritie mar’s al men.” While careful inspection reveals that the anagram is inexact, the pamphlet’s first foray into providential wordplay appears both witty and apt. Another anagram, however, is conspicuously less felicitous: after identifying the “Gyant Leveller” as “Col. Oliver Cromwell, L. G. of the Sts. Army,” the pamphleteer notes the portentous sign that “the Letters of [Cromwell’s] name fall into this Anagram. / Oliver Cromewell. Com’ our vil’ Leveller” (4). This second attempt stretches and strains the arrangement of the letters to the point of absurdity: even with an extra “e” inserted into the middle of Cromwell’s name, there are clearly too few vowels to make up the sinister invocation that follows; “w,” “v” and “u” must all be treated as interchangeable; and amidst all the obvious clumsiness, a less noticeable additional “l” slips in. “Com’ our vil’ Leveller” therefore looks less like a genuine attempt at providential anagrammatics and more like an intentionally risible imitation of “their Saintships”

125 Harrison Meserole explains that the seventeenth-century spate of Puritan anagrammatics “had as its basis the Puritan belief that nothing in this world, including nomenclature, was haphazard. God had […] intended that a person’s name, if carefully examined, could reveal aspects of his character. To a people constantly engaged in self-examination, all latent indications of God’s attitude […] assumed high importance” (American Poetry of the Seventeenth Century [University Park: Pennsylvania State U P, 1985], xxx).
predilection for (sometimes strained) verbal and numerical mysticism, a parodic exposure of their arrogant presumption of elect access to divine code.

Yet the pamphlet’s stylistic imitations are more than straightforwardly parodic. For instance, its repeated invocations of scripture echo the Puritans’ zeal, but they also reclaim scriptural piety for the royalist cause. The pamphleteer introduces biblical typology to “The Faerie Leveller” when he exhorts the reader to accept Spenser’s “resplendent Jewell” and to “sliht it not, because it is not the publishers owne invention” (3). He compares his scavenged text to a marvel of natural recycling found in the book of Judges: “here is meat out of the Eater, sweet hony to be found in the carkasse of a slaine Lyon; do thou but with Jonathan taste of it, and thou shalt have thy sight cleared in some remarkable matters, which before thou didst not discerne, or observe” (3).126 “The Faerie Leveller” brings new life and fresh significance to an old poem while promising both literary and religious enlightenment to its readers.127 The villainous Cromwell’s fate is likewise both typologically fixed by the word of God and poetically anticipated by the verse of Thomas Sternhold, a sixteenth-century courtier favored by Henry VIII:

So I dismisse him with that of the Traytor Judas, Act I. 25. who by transgression fell, that he might go to his owne place. And his complices with Thomas Sternehold, version of the 10 v. of the 3. Psalme.

Destroy their false conspiracies, that they may come to naught:
Subvert them in their heapes of sinne, that have rebellion wrought. (4)

126 The Jonathan cited by the pamphleteer is probably the Levite priest of Judges 18:30, who went on to become the priest of Samson’s Danite tribe. The reference to this rather obscure figure may be meant both to reinforce the author’s credibility as a student of scripture and to suggest that the proper “priestly” authority can guide the audience through Spenser’s riddling romance. (I am grateful to Christopher Martin for this identification and suggestion.)

127 Nicosia has pointed out that the typology employed throughout “The Faerie Leveller” is not only biblical, but also literary and semi-secular: Spenser’s fictional Artegall becomes a prophetic type of Charles I, who (in theory) subsequently fulfills the Legend of Justice in real historical time.
Predictions of divine vengeance, the author demonstrates, are not only the province of anti-royalists; the community of those loyal to the king is entitled to its own biblical and poetic hermeneutics. Moreover, his display of exegetical ability helps mark him as an enlightened follower of the similarly authoritative Prince of Justice, as we will see.

“The Faerie Leveller” moves on from its appropriation of scripture and of providential wordplay to its reinvention of The Faerie Queene itself—which, like the introductory anagrams, requires some manipulation of the source material in order to bolster its claim to royalist exclusivity. The pamphleteer claims that he has taken this prophetic fragment about the Prince of Justice and the Faerie Leveller from the “first Booke” of Spenser’s epic romance, which “containes the Legend of Justice, the most universall vertue” (4). Of course, Justice is the subject of the fifth book, and Spenser never indicates that this virtue has any primacy above others. But the undoubtedly conscious fudging of the books’ order, and the citation of justice as the “most universall” heroic attribute, lend the episode of Artegall and the Giant a prominence that it does not have in the original poem. Further, these emendations avoid any mention of the virtue of holiness—a paramount concern for Spenser as a Protestant poet in Elizabethan England, but a considerably more controversial value amidst the religious strife of the 1640s—and bypass Book 1’s many Calvinist overtones. The pamphleteer’s changes even undertake to reshape the romantic identity of the King: the young Charles I liked to represent himself as Saint George, as in Rubens’ portrait of his union with Henrietta Maria over the corpse of
the slain dragon, but against the backdrop of 1648, he becomes a different knight, associated less with martial (and marital) zeal and more with order and diplomacy.128

“The Faerie Leveller” is at least as anxious to reimagine Charles as the hero of England’s national romance as it is to vilify the titular Cromwell or prophesy an unlikely outcome for the war. Again, the pamphleteer takes liberties with his presentation of the original text to his readers in order to perfect the literary typology through which Artegall merges with Charles to become the charismatic head of the “real” godly community. He both incorporates the story that precedes the encounter with the Giant in Book 5, Canto 2—in which Artegall and Talus defeat the oppressive tax-collector Pollente and his daugher Munera, a figure for corruption and bribery—and leaves its full text out of his excerpt, attempting to extract heroic value from the original episode while jettisoning the troubling specifics that might be less suitable for Charles as Prince of Justice. Pollente and Munera are both listed in the “key of the work” that precedes the excerpt: he, “an oppressing Saracen,” is meant to symbolize “The prevalent over awing Faction in the two houses,” while she, “his assistant,” represents “The intolerable Tax-raisers, the Countrey Committees Sequestrators and Excize-men” who “must first be apprehended and brought to justice, ere [Cromwell’s] army be quelled” (4).129 The episode that contains them,

128 It is worth noting that this reassignment of a heroic identity for Charles is consistent with Spenser’s original method, in which a number of different characters all serve as figures for Elizabeth: “In [Gloriana] I meane glory in my generall intention, but in my particular I conceive the most excellent and glorious person of our soveraine the Queene [...] And yet in some places els, I doe otherwise shadow her” (16). For an extended study of portrayals of Charles I in the visual and verbal arts, see Thomas Corns (ed.), *The Royal Image: Representations of Charles I*. For example, Ann Baynes Coiro notes in her contribution to the volume, “A Ball of Strife’: Caroline Poetry and Royal Marriage,” that Charles constantly wore the red cross of St. George with a portrait of his wife on the reverse, regarding it “in part, as an emblem of his romantic marriage” (43).

129 Hulse points out that “At the same time that it paints the antiroyalist forces all with one brush, the pamphlet seeks to divide them. Of the various ad hoc administrative arrangements made by the Long
however, is distilled first into a short summary—“Arthegall the Champion of Justice, with the assistance of Talus his Groome betokening execution of Law, having overcome all illegall arbitrary oppressive power; under the person of Pollente, a barbarous Saracen, strengthened by his Daughter Munera importing bribes and taxes: He proceeds to suppress the Gyant Ring leader to the faction of Levellers” (4)—and then into a new quatrain, composed by the pamphleteer, which gives the impression that the episode with the Giant begins a new canto: “Arthegall with his Groome Talus / having Pollente quel’d: / And drown’d his Daughter Munera, / they on their journey wel’d” (5).

This double act of inclusion and omission serves two ends. First, it allows for the tidy introduction of Artegall/Charles as an equitable peacemaker who subdues faction and forbids fiscal oppression, despite the fact that the pamphlet’s prophetic interpretation of the allegory is imperfect: in Spenser’s text, Pollente is the tax-raiser, while Munera stands for corruption within government, an evil less clearly restricted to Parliamentarian rule.130 Second, it imagines a heroic adventure for the Prince of Justice from which he emerges morally untarnished as a leader. Spenser, whose melancholy approach to romance distinguishes him from the pamphleteer claiming him, often questions his heroes’ successful embodiment of their respective virtues, as he does with Arthegall in 5.2. The knight first shrinks from his mission out of “pitty” for the elegant Munera’s “goodly hew,” but then permits Talus to exact a brutal and merciless punishment (5.2.25):

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130 As Hulse argues, the political dimension of Spenserian allegory is often aggressively unstable; a royalist propagandist may employ it easily enough, but is likely to encounter problems of his own.
Yet for no pitty would he change the course
of Justice, which in Talus hand did lye;
Who rudely hayld her forth without remorse,
Still holding up her suppliant hands on hye,
And kneeling at his feet submissively.
But he her suppliant hands, those hands of gold,
And eke her feete, those feete of silver trye,
Which sought unrighteousnesse, and justice sold,
Chopt off, and nayld on high, that all might them behold.

(5.2.26)

Having mutilated the “suppliant” woman, Talus throws her, still “In vaine loud crying,” from her wall and drowns her in the river below; he then proceeds to raze her castle and destroy her wealth, “The spoile of peoples evill gotten good,” rather than restoring it to the oppressed population (5.2.27). Spenser’s original poem, then, highlights Artegałl’s tendencies toward both misguided compassion and extreme retribution in the form of the implacable Talus, who regularly handles the ugliest elements of his master’s vocation. The pamphleteer’s decision to include the episode only as a vague summary thus permits Artegałl/Charles to appear against the “Gyant Leveller” unsullied by the disturbing residue of his successful conquest of institutionalized oppression.

As their encounter unfolds, the pamphleteer continues to engineer a specific set of heroic attributes for the Prince of Justice that represent him as a community leader preferable to the Giant. The Artegałl of “The Faerie Leveller” must be sincerely devout, fair, and compassionate in order to expose and overcome his Cromwellian foe’s false pretense to these virtues. Both the original poem and the 1648 excerpt juxtapose the Giant’s impious reading of scripture with Artegałl’s superior exegesis. While the Giant interprets Isaiah 40:4 to license his project of sociopolitical upheaval—“Therefore will I throw downe those mountaines high, / And make them levell with the lowly plaine” (7)—
Artegall presents a corrective reading of the same passage as a testimony only to the power of God as divine monarch:

All in the power of their great maker lye:  
All Creatures must obey the voice of the most high [....]

The hills do not the lowly Dales disdain.  
The Dales do not the lofty hills envy.  
He maketh Kings to sit in Sovereignty.  
He maketh Subjects to their power obey.  

This contrast between the Leveller’s radical, self-serving exegesis and the hero’s conservative emendation recalls the pamphleteer’s efforts to undermine the biblical and rhetorical methods of the “Saints” in his introductory material: the pamphleteer casts himself as a faithful imitator of the Prince, and the Puritans’ usual tools change shape to support royalist values. None may “shunne” God’s “Soveraigne power,” Artegall warns, least of all the Leveller who acknowledges no supremacy but his own and only pretends to piety and spiritual enlightenment: “In vaine therefore dost thou now take in hand, / To call to count, or waigh his workes anew, / Whose counsells depth thou canst not understand” (8). Charles as Prince of Justice thus lays claim to both truer devotion and a better grasp on scripture than the hypocritical rebels who oppose him; the earthly Prince speaks best for the King of Heaven.

Finally, “The Faerie Leveller” takes advantage of a rather weak moment for Spenser’s Artegall in order to shape its readers’ final impression of Charles’ heroic persona. Once Talus has slain the Giant, the peasants rise up in anger against Artegall:

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131 Hulse notes that since Artegall and the Giant share a drive toward justice, Artegall is “Unable to dispute his logic” and “must instead challenge [his] ability to make empirical observations at all, and hence his right to construct from them historical schemata and abstract principles [...]. The inadequacy of empiricism is redressed by an appeal to first principles, and only then can the empirical data be understood” (339).
Which Lawlesse multitude him comming to
In warlike wise, when Arthegaill did view,
He much was troubled, ne wist what to doe,
For loath he was his noble hands t’embrew,
In the base blood of such a Rascal crew,
And otherwise if that he should retire,
He fear’d lest they with shame would him pursue:
Therefore he Talus to them sent t’enquire
The cause of their array, and truce for to desire.

In *The Faerie Queene*, this stanza further reveals the potential deficiencies in Artegaill’s character: faced with exercising justice upon offenders weaker than himself, he is stymied, and as usual, he sends Talus to protect his reputation and to handle the difficult work. The pamphleteer, rather than eliding this problem as he does with the similarly uncomfortable episode with Munera, allows its significance to shift, transforming the Caroline Artegaill into a significantly different heroic character than Spenser’s original Knight of Justice. As a “Prince” and not a knight, the Artegaill of “The Faerie Leveller” need not contend with the demands of a martial code. His “troubled” mind suggests love for his misguided subjects, rather than anxiety over an unexpected conflict; his concern with keeping his “noble hands” clean from “the base blood of such a Rascal crew” comes across as regal remoteness instead of snobbery or diffidence; and his delegation of Talus to preserve order, prevent “shame,” and seek a “truce” looks more like peaceful, pragmatic diplomacy than a shirking of duty. By the time the “Raskall Rout” has fled from Talus’ wrath, another vexed occasion for Spenser’s Artegaill has become an ennobling, kingly one for Charles’ neo-Spenserian persona (11). The monarch as a romantic hero emerges as pious instead of sanctimonious, decorously proud rather than arrogant, and just and courageous yet equitable, merciful, and benevolent. The assistance
of Talus, far from calling his heroism into question, refines and shapes it: with necessary violence securely in the hands of the allegorical army or hangman, he is free to be well-spoken, courtly, and wisely paternal, not warlike, rash, or punitive.

Having both parodied and repossessed Puritan tactics, and having turned Arctegall’s heroism and fallibility alike to Charles’ advantage, “The Faerie Leveller” employs its most critical strategy to move readers to unite behind the royalist cause and its champion: it makes Spenser’s romance an invitation to join an exclusive enlightened community. Perhaps in light of his anagrammatic maxim that “Paritie mar’s al men,” the pamphleteer makes no secret of the disparity between himself and the intended audience of “The Faerie Leveller.” He has “revised, and newly published” Spenser’s prophetic poetry, he claims in his preface, “for the undeceiving of simple people, too apt to be induced into an high conceipt and overweening opinion of such Deceivers, and too ready to be seduced by their specious pretences of reducing all to a just equality” (3). Assuming that his “simple” audience is unfamiliar with The Faerie Queene, he explains that Spenser’s original “drift and intention” in his allegorical romance “is to set forth a compleat Gentleman, accomplisht with all vertues adorning a truly noble Person” (4).132 King suggests that the pamphleteer attempts to influence common readers by “tak[ing] Spenser’s purpose [...] as an argument in favor of royalty and the gentry.”133 However, despite his favorability toward traditional social hierarchy, the author of “The Faerie Leveller” does more than merely reinforce it: he subtly offers his readers the opportunity

132 King reminds us that while Spenser remained popular in certain reading circles, The Faerie Queene had not been reprinted since 1617, and would not be again until 1679 (“A 1648 Royalist Reading,” 298).
133 Ibid., 301.
to elevate their own status above that of “simple people.” While the preface adopts a condescending tone, the poem itself adjusts the pamphlet’s approach, as we read that the levelling Giant is “admired much of Fooles, Women, and Boyes” and that “the vulgar did about him flocke, / And cluster thick unto his leafings vaine: / (Like foolish Flies about a hony crocke) / In hope by him great benefit to gaine” (5, 6). Although the readers are assumed at first to be “simple” themselves, as they read on they are tacitly encouraged not to count themselves among these gullible, emasculated masses, and to follow the “sweet hony” of Spenser’s prophetic wisdom in its resistance to the Leveller’s duplicitous “crocke.” In so doing, they are urged to read—and thus to behave—as “Gentle[men]” or “noble Person[s]” who can distinguish and therefore imitate true heroic virtue, as the pamphleteer has already done in his exegetical exercise. Modifying Sidney’s vision of an elect subjectivity that enables members of a heroic fellowship to discern between right romance and misappropriations of the genre, the pamphleteer implies a semi-secular opportunity for his audience’s elevation in their possession of the “key” to Spenser’s text. Siding with and imitating the Prince of Justice can make even a poor subject more princely; while his economic status may be fixed, he may influence his cultural status within an exclusive group of enlightened royalist readers. Through Spenser’s narrative, “The Faerie Leveller” reorients Sidney’s notion that certain lovers of romance may locate themselves within an elect Calvinist community: the recognition and appreciation of Spenser’s prophecy becomes a marker of membership within an elite royalist community.

While the pamphleteer’s preface indicates that “a little explanation” is necessary to grasp the spiritual and moral import of The Faerie Queene, by the time “The Faerie
Leveller” concludes, it has offered its audience a portion of the richest legacy of Sidneian romance: the subjectivity to judge correctly between the Giant’s heroism and Artegall’s. Artegall acknowledges that the truth of the matter may not be externally apparent, and he champions enlightened discernment rather than blind obedience: “But in the minde the doome of right must be, / And so likewise of words the which be spoken, / The Eare must be the Ballance to decree, / And judge whether with truth or falsehood they agree” (10). The reader’s preference for either the Giant or Artegall, and thence his choice of a political and cultural side in the Civil War, must ultimately be a matter for the private mind. As in the New Arcadia, this final royalist appeal to radical Protestant ideals—the superior subjectivity of the elect, and the supremacy of the individual conscience—abounds with both power and risk. Sidney suggests that those who identify as elect can locate themselves within the real-life romance of providence, and the pamphleteer comparably assumes that all “noble” minds will naturally be drawn to the king’s cause and to faith in its success. However, individual subjectivity remains troublesome, as Sidney had been aware: one may mistake one’s own status and so develop a perverted sense of heroism, and one may side just as easily with the Giant and his disciples as with Artegall and Talus. Milton’s Eikonoklastes, published the following year (after Spenser’s supposed prophecy of royalist triumph had collapsed), reveals the other side of the tenet that every subject’s mind is his own and demonstrates that Spenser’s romance was exclusive to no faction: “If there were a man of iron, such as Talus, by our Poet Spencer, is fain’d to be the page of Justice, who with his iron flaile could” reform Parliament and purge it of corrupt members, “and expeditiously, without those deceitfull formes and
circumstances of Law, worse than ceremonies in Religion; I say God send it don, whether by one Talus, or by a thousand.“134 According to the judgment of Milton and others like him, even Talus and the Giant’s mass of followers might join forces, with overwhelming results.

II. Sidney as Republican Saint: Reading Fulke Greville’s Life of the Renowned Sir Philip Sidney in 1652

While The Faerie Leveller stands as a striking royalist appropriation of a sixteenth-century romance writer who is more often associated with Milton’s Puritan poetics, Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke’s Life of the Renowned Sir Philip Sidney reminds us that Sidney, whose courtly style of chivalric and pastoral prose was imitated by many seventeenth-century royalists, was at least as slippery as Spenser. Romantic subjectivity proved to be just as crucial to seventeenth-century curators of his heroic memory as it had been to the fictional heroes of his New Arcadia. The few readers who still attempt Greville’s Life of Sidney regularly remark on the text’s generic difficulty and its singular approach to life writing.135 This strangeness likely derives from the fact that Greville originally wrote the Life between 1610 and 1614 not as a biography but as the dedication of a volume of tragedies to his late friend. The book is not a chronological memoir so much as a loosely ordered chronicle of Sidney’s most important adventures and a treatise

134 Merritt Hughes, ed., The Complete Prose Works of John Milton: Volume III, 1648-1649 (New Haven: Yale U P, 1962), 390. Unless otherwise noted, all other references to Milton’s prose is from this edition (abbreviated CPW or cited parenthetically by line number). Given that allusions to Book 5 of The Faerie Queene are extremely rare throughout the seventeenth century, Milton’s striking reference to Talus a year after the publication of “The Faerie Leveller” may perhaps suggest that he was aware of the pamphlet.

on his Protestant politics. Greville claims that he wrote the piece as a personal exercise, “to keep company with [Sidney], even after death” and “to entertaine, and instruct [him] selfe.” Entertainment and instruction do indeed appear to motivate the Life’s string of narratives about Sidney’s knightly prowess interspersed with political commentary, but Greville anticipates a wider audience than himself, adding that he “esteem[s] [Sidney’s] actions, words, and conversation, the daintiest treasure my mind [...] can at this day impart with our posteritie” (134). He never published the work, however, probably deeming it unwise to wax nostalgic for the diplomatic Elizabeth I and her independent-minded courtier while employed by James I’s divine right regime.

In 1652, after Greville’s death, the Life of Sidney was printed, and thus made available to the reading public, for the first time. Only a few years earlier, England had executed Charles I and become a republican state dominated by Puritan leadership; the “posteritie” reading the Life were doing so under wildly different circumstances than Greville could have imagined. Accordingly, the Life’s new larger audience was free to view Greville’s portrait of Sidney through their own visions of themselves. Rightly calling our attention to the political significance of the text’s actual publication date, Peter Herman points out that although Greville celebrated Elizabeth and (especially) Sidney as opponents of absolute monarchy, the Life was finally printed by a publisher who predominately favored royalist writing, and proposes that by 1652,

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136 Sir Fulke Greville, The Life of the Renowned Sr Philip Sidney. With the true Interest of England as it then stood in relation to all Forrain Princes: And particularly for suppressing the power of Spain Stated by Him. His principall Actions, Counsels, Designes, and Death. Together with a short Account of the Maximes and Policies used by Queen Elizabeth in her Government (London, 1652), 134, 247. All future references to this text occur parenthetically by page number.
a book idealizing a popular earlier monarch and one of her glittering courtiers would likely be interpreted as a defense of England’s monarchy in general and the late Charles in particular. The implied contrast would not be with a monarch attempting to impose absolutism, but with a Parliament trying to rule without a king[].

This interpretation certainly highlights how readers’ historical perspective and individual subjectivity had the power to “[alter] the reception of a text” and of a celebrated national figure. However, Herman’s claim that “in 1652, the ‘horizons’ circumscribing this text had, in effect, moved 180 degrees” underestimates what he himself calls “the fluidity of reputation in the seventeenth century.” In all likelihood, the Seiles father and son who printed the Life of Sidney (and who had published anti-royalist as well as royalist material) hoped for their latest book to appeal to a wide market: readers across the political spectrum in 1652 could position the evils of absolutism wherever they pleased and could embrace the gallant Sidney as a nostalgic emblem of romantic royalism/royalist romance or a prophetic figure of romantic republicanism/republican romance.

If we accept Herman’s reading of a potentially royalist Sidney, we ought also to consider how Sidney’s sixteenth-century Protestantism and anti-absolutism might simultaneously emerge in the seventeenth century as Puritanism and anti-monarchism. An anti-royalist public could cast its gaze backward into history through the Life to imagine Sidney as a proto-Puritan and a proto-republican, the saintly herald of the new godly state who sacrificed himself in the name of a future triumph that he would not

137 Peter C. Herman, “‘Bastard Children of Tyranny’: The Ancient Constitution and Fulke Greville’s A Dedication to Sir Philip Sidney,” Renaissance Quarterly 55 (2002), 969-1004, 998.
138 Ibid., 998-9.
139 It may be telling that the frontispiece of the Life identifies its author as “a Servant to” Elizabeth, who had retained moderate popularity across factions, without mention of Greville’s official relationship to James I. Although Herman proposes that nostalgia for Elizabeth could translate into nostalgia for Charles I, this description of Greville nonetheless elides the Stuart dynasty after their crushing loss of political power.
survive to see. At the same time that this subjectivity recasts Sidney as the hero of a new providential romance and as a head of its surviving elect community, his death for the Protestant cause creates new problems for the genre of Greville’s work. While “The Faerie Leveller” reimagined Spenser through a Sidneian approach to romance without regard for the tragic possibility that soon became reality for Charles I, the Life of Sidney required readers in 1652 to contend with a melancholy Spenserian view of history as genre: Greville depicts his friend’s romantic heroism and providentialism as beset by contingency and tragedy. Given the subjectivity of narrative vision, Sidney’s outlook is unlike that of Greville, which is in turn distinct from the perspectives of multiple midcentury communities.

Readers of any ideology who might have been looking for a hero needed little imagination to see Sidney as a real-life knight seemingly sprung from fictional romance. The Sidney of the Life resembles the idealized heroes of chivalric literature, including Sidney’s own Pyrocles and Musidorus, by uniting all manly virtues and pursuits within himself. Greville compares him to Hercules (41) and to Aeneas (90) and remembers him as “a true modell of Worth; A man fit for [...] what Action soever is greatest, and hardest amongst men: Withall, such a lover of Mankind, and Goodnesse, that whosoever had any reall parts, in him found comfort, participation, and protection to the uttermost of his power; like Zephyrus he giving life where he blew” (38). Critically, Sidney’s excellence

140 For studies that explore the living Sidney’s participation in sixteenth-century discourses of republicanism, see Martin Raitere, Faire Bitts, and Blair Worden, The Sound of Virtue. David Norbrook touches on Sidney’s republican legacy in the seventeenth century in Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics, 1627-1660 (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1999), 72.
141 Hager has argued in “The Exemplary Mirage” that the Life of Sidney “is a version of a genre conventionalized by Foxe’s Acts and Monuments, the Protestant saint’s life” (3).
142 Further references to “Sidney” in this section usually refer to the stylized person that Greville represents as a quasi-literary figure in the Life.
and gentility are most recognizable to those who are of “reall parts” themselves. As in the *New Arcadia*, romantic heroism is not indiscriminately appreciable by all observers; it is a concept nurtured within a particular community of similar minds and shared values. The French Protestant King Henry of Navarre identifies both himself and Sidney as pillars of this community when, because of his attunement to Sidney’s indefinable magnanimity, he welcomes him as a friend and peer despite his inferior birth: “he found out this Master-spirit among us, and used him like an equall in nature, and so fit for friendship with a King” (36). Greville may have intended this evidence of Sidney’s inborn nobility to resonate with a small coterie of aristocratic readers, but in 1652, the audience that could witness and appreciate Sidney’s worth, thereby locating themselves within a morally sophisticated class or community, was now much larger.

While Sidney’s romantic heroism lends him broad appeal, the precise nature and end of that heroism arguably has a more republican than royalist cast. Greville’s praise of Sidney’s knighthood considers not just his individual excellence, but his magnetic power to draw an admiring community of excellence into coherence around him. The *Life* is ever-alert to his position of leadership within an emulous society in which the highest honor is to be first among equals. His skill in arms is evident not so much in his martial prowess as in its resonance throughout his compatriots: “Souldiers honoured him, and were so honoured by him, as no man thought he marched under the true Banner of Mars, that had not obtained Sir Philip Sidney’s approbation” (39). His communitarian charisma extends beyond the battlefield: Sidney is such “a generall Mecaenas of Learning” that “there was not a cunning Painter, a skilfull Engenier, an excellent Musician, or any other
Artificer of extraordinary fame, that made not himself known to this famous Spirit, and found him his true friend without hire; and the common *Rende-vous* of Worth in his time” (39). This role as “the common *Rende-vous* of Worth,” the pillar of a fellowship formed by the gifted and honorable, is worth more than any of Sidney’s individual accomplishments. Textually resurrected in 1652, Sidney could be celebrated afresh in the Interregnum, too, as the hero of an ostensibly egalitarian community of worthies.

Under Sidney’s heroic influence, those of “reall parts” are moved to enrich their own virtues—a result, Greville claims, that Sidney desired and sought. Greville cuts short one passage in praise of Sidney’s artistic ability with a declaration of his true authorial purpose:

> his end was not writing, even while he wrote; [...] but [...] to make himself, and others, not in words or opinion, but in life, and action, good and great.

In which Architectonical art he was such a Master, with *so commending, and yet equall waies* amongst men, that whersoever he went, he was beloved, and obeyed: yea into what Action soever he came last at the first, he became first at the last: the whole managing of the business, *not by usurpation, or violence, but (as it were) by right*, and acknowledgment, falling into his hands, *as into a naturall Center.*

(21, emphases mine)

In this remarkable passage, the “Architectonical Master” Sidney acts as a poet (in his own terms, a “maker”) not chiefly of words but of men.¹⁴³ Both his writing and his “life, and action” work toward the “end” of romance as Sidney himself presents it in the *New Arcadia* and the *Defense of Poesy*: to inspire an audience to prove their “reall parts” by making themselves “good and great” in the real world beyond that of the story.¹⁴⁴

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¹⁴³ In the *Defense of Poesy*, Sidney defines the poet’s role as “not only to make a Cyrus [...] but to bestow a Cyrus upon the world to make many Cyrous, if they will learn aright why and how that maker made him” (Herman, ed., 65).

¹⁴⁴ Joseph Candido notes that “What is most curious about Greville’s statement here is that it does not characterize Sidney’s behavior as a simple renunciation of art for life; rather it emphasizes the importance of both elements in a new and distinctly mimetic form of artistic expression” (“Fulke Greville’s Biography of Sir Philip Sidney and the ‘Architectonic’ Tudor Life,” *South Central Review* 2.1 [1985], 3-12, 5).
Critically for the republican reading public of the *Life*, the system by which Sidney both inspires and surpasses his fellows is founded entirely upon merit. He becomes “first” among those he regards as “equall” to himself “not by usurpation, or violence” but “by right” (of virtue rather than birth) and by “acknowledgment” of others.\(^\text{145}\) Despite the fact that both men were dedicated to the monarchies they served, Greville allows his 1652 audience to imagine Sidney as the founding father and head of a utopian meritocracy.

At least as important for Puritan readers is the fact that Sidney’s civic merit is excelled only by his reformist piety. “Above all,” Greville notes, “he made the Religion he professed, the firm Basis of his life”; his “true-heartednesse to the Reformed Religion” directs his politics and, all too often, throws obstacles in the way of his success in his own time (41-2). For Sidney, devout Protestantism is essential for “Peace, Safetie, and Freedome,” and “to temporize with the Enemies of our Faith” is “false-heartednesse to God and man” which “would in the end find itself forsaken of both” (42). While Sidney sees service to “the Reformed Religion” as coterminous with service to England as God’s elect nation, his Protestant zeal often inspires his resistance to worldly authorities. Although Greville praises Sidney for “his chief ends being not Friends, Wife, Children, or himself; but above all things the honour of his Maker, and service of his Prince, or Country,” these three ideals—pure nationalism, service to one’s monarch, and the honor of God—are not always aligned in the *Life* (47). Puritan readers could hardly miss the theme that godliness, along with the sense of heroic subjectivity that it imparts to Sidney, dominates the courtier’s other concerns should any conflict emerge between them.

\(^{145}\) A reader with royalist sympathies, of course, could attach a different significance to Sidney’s innate leadership “by right.”
Greville insists upon Sidney’s devotion to Elizabeth I; nevertheless, he takes pleasure in recounting the knight’s bold self-assertions before the queen in the name of spiritual egalitarianism and Protestant purity. While Herman argues that the *Life of Sidney* idealizes Elizabeth at the expense of James, Greville’s Elizabeth is idealized only to the (limited) extent that her beliefs and policies comport with Sidney’s. In every case where some disparity between the queen and Sidney arises and the audience is obliged to favor one or the other, Greville strongly guides their sympathies toward his friend. After Sidney makes plans to duel with an insulting nobleman and Elizabeth urges him to defer to the earl’s superior rank, he politely agrees not to pursue the quarrel, but first reminds her that “that place [of nobility] was never intended for privilege to wrong: witness her self, who how Soveraign soever she were by Throne, Birth, Education, and Nature; yet was she content to cast her own affections into the same moulds her Subjects did, and govern all her rights by their laws” (80). The hero thus proposes that monarchs are not above their subjects’ laws—a daring idea when the *Life* was first composed under James I, as Herman points out, but a foundational tenet of the English republic in 1652. Sidney’s sensibilities prompt him to act even in politically risky situations: in his opposition to Elizabeth’s proposed marriage to the Duc d’Anjou, he refuses to debase his Protestant faith “to catch the Queens humor” (53). Fearing that a French Catholic marriage will result in “a precipitate absoluteness” of Monarchy, he does not hide from Elizabeth that in the practice of this Marriage, he foresaw, and prophesied, that the very first breach of Gods ordinance, in matching herself with a Prince of a diverse faith, would infallibly carry with it some piece of the rending destiny, which Solomon, and those other Princes justly felt, for having ventured to weigh the immortall wisdom in even scales, with mortall conveniency or inconveniency. (63-4)
In warning against the marriage as a blot on both Elizabeth’s authority and her elect condition, Sidney links the horrors of absolute monarchy, religious pollution, and divine vengeance as three heads of one monstrous idea; if his unwillingness to “biace Gods immortall truth to the fantasies of mortall Princes” made him a Protestant hero in Greville’s lifetime, it could only intensify his glory under the Puritan republic (60).

While Sidney’s claim to godly foresight bolsters his heroic status at the head of an elect community, the Life’s representation of him as a prophet makes the text vulnerable to the same generic tensions that arise in the Faerie Queene’s moments of prophetic vision. The passivity of other Protestants who exceed Sidney in rank but cannot match his zeal (Elizabeth included) frustrates his lifelong ambition to establish “a general league in Religion” amongst Protestant Europe to resist the “Tyrannie” of Catholicism (51-2). After his death, Greville describes his friend as “Sir Philip, our unbelieved Cassandra,” at once celebrating and lamenting Sidney as a visionary whose wisdom and warnings went unheeded during his lifetime (129). Greville conjures up an image of Sidney occupying a perspective on Christian narrative much like that of Spenser’s Merlin or Redcrosse, “lift[ing] up his active spirit into an universall prospect of time, States, and things [...]

The placing of his thoughts upon which high pinnacle, layd the present Map of the Christian world underneath him” (90-91). From his mental “pinnacle,” Sidney glimpses nations’ romantic roles within sacred history: “as in a dream,” he witnesses “that creeping Monarchie of Rome” menacing Europe, and Catholic Spain “mixing the

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146 Greville’s imagery here also invokes Jesus’ mountaintop vision of the kingdoms of the world and his being set by Satan on the “pinnacle” of the Temple, subjects that Milton would later take up in Paradise Regained (see Chapter 3).
temporall, and spiritual sword, to their crafty conquering ends” (94, 97). Sidney is confident that knowledge of Catholic monarchs as “no anointed deputies of God, but rather lively Images of the dark Prince, that sole author of dis-creation, and disorder, who ever ruines his ends with over-building” ensures knowledge of their final fate: “the vengeance of God must necessarily” fall on papal tyranny, and God will aid the cause of his champions (130). Unlike the hesitant Protestant rulers who lack his martial spirit and his narrative vision, Sidney trusts that “though this justice of the Almighty be many times slow, & therefore neglected here on earth,” the community of the elect is destined to triumph, while the reprobate are always already doomed (131).

Greville weighs Sidney’s faith in the providential romance of history and in his own elect perspective against an awareness that divine justice is “slow” and “neglected”; like the visions of Merlin and Redcrosse, Sidney’s elevated prospect reveals the narrative form of history but cannot bring that narrative to its conclusion. Long before the final victory of the godly, Sidney himself is destined to die at Zutphen, and Greville labels the moment of his passing the “last scene of this Tragedy” (159). Sidney sacrifices himself for the future he foresees—a tragic conclusion to pave the way for a romantic one. Puritans reading in the hindsight of 1652 might imagine that the end for which Sidney fought was still at hand, or had even come to pass in the form of a militant godly republic (which had finally dispensed with a monarch who was, at best, a lukewarm leader of God’s chosen nation or, at worst, one of Satan’s tyrannical children). Greville himself,  

147 Martin argues that “Conditioned by his own cautious pragmatism, Greville cannot bring himself to condone the personal drives which lay behind Sidney’s fatal vulnerability” (26). The author’s struggle between the his/her desire to endow his/her fallen subject with literary splendor and his/her pragmatic regret for the subject’s self-caused fall is also a central feature of Margaret Cavendish’s and Lucy Hutchinson’s respective memoirs of their husbands.
though, can muster little of such confidence from his less lofty vantage point early in the seventeenth century, and a 1652 audience would have had to contend with the tension between Sidneian romance and Grevillian tragedy ripples throughout the text.

We must keep in mind that Greville originally conceived the *Life* not as a memoir but as the preface to a collection of tragedies. As such, it concludes with an anxious discussion of his and his friend’s separate artistic visions and approaches to genre. While Sidney was famous for his romance, Greville had become known for his tragic drama. Greville explains that he intends his productions to illustrate the corruption of power: “to trace out the high waies of ambitious Governours, and to shew in the practice, that the more audacity, advantage, and good suuccesse such Soveraignties have, the more they hasten to their owne desolation and ruine” (243). He further indicates a strong preference for tragedy over romance. Historical drama, he suggests, is “fitter to hold the attention of the Reader, than [...] the strangeness, or perplexedness of witty Fictions; in which the affections, or imagination, may perchance find exercise, and entertainment, but the memory and judgement no enriching at all” (244). In this criticism of “witty Fictions” as emotionally engaging yet intellectually and morally vapid, Greville accords with the judgments of many of his contemporaries who denounced romance, but not with the opinion of Sidney, who spoke up for heroic fiction’s Protestant value in the *Defense of Poesy* and by writing *Arcadia*. Keenly aware that he and his friend traveled different artistic paths, Greville follows his personal rejection of romance with a strange, difficult passage that offers effusive yet halting enthusiasm for *Arcadia* and its author:

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148 For a more extensive discussion of this topic, see Wilkes, “‘Left... to Play the Ill Poet in My Own Part.’”
And my Noble Friend had that dexterity, even with the dashes of his pen to make the *Arcadian* Antiques beautifie the Margents of his works; yet the honour which (I beare him record) he never affected, I leave unto him, with this addition, that his end in them was not vanishing pleasure alone, but morall Images, and Examples, (as directing thredts) to guide every man through the confusing *Labyrinth* of his own desires, and life: So that howsoever I liked them not too well (even in that unperfected shape they were) to condescend that such delicate (though inferior) Pictures of himselfe, should be suppressed; yet I do wish that work may be the last in this kind, presuming no man that followes can ever reach, much lesse go beyond that excellent intended patterne of his.  

(244-5)

Greville vacillates between defending his own decision to write history as tragedy instead of romance and defending Sidney’s decision to write romance instead of a more serious genre. He proposes that his friend was a far greater poet than himself, whose “creeping Genius” was forced to be “more fixed upon the Images of Life, than the Images of Wit” (245)—but he adds that if Sidney was more suited to writing romance because his imagination and inspiration were of a higher order than Greville’s, he was unique in possessing such a gift. Sidney may have had the “dexterity” to fill *Arcadia* with “morall Images, and Examples” for a noble and godly life, yet Greville hopes that no other writer will attempt to imitate his example and be doomed to failure. Greville’s overwrought prose and parenthetical digressions here indicate a dizzying ambivalence toward Sidney’s endeavor: *Arcadia* is literally marginalized, consigned to “beautifie the Margents” of Sidney’s works; Greville claims that Sidney ought to be famous for his “morall” romance but that “he never affected” such renown; he half-defends *Arcadia* by noting that its end is not only vanishing pleasure, adding that Sidney’s fiction is too excellent to “be suppressed” after his death, although it is unfinished and “inferior” to the full extent of his personal greatness; finally, he concludes by “wish[ing] that work may be the last in this kind.” Sidney alone was capable of writing a godly romance and of living according
to the example he portrayed.\textsuperscript{149} His “tragic” demise, Greville anticipates, marks the fall of England’s last romantic hero, the death of romance as a viable English genre, and quite possibly the permanent decline of the Protestant state.

The question of England’s future looms large throughout Greville’s \textit{Life}: what will happen now, after Sidney’s valiant death, to the nation and the chivalric Protestant community which, in life, he drew together, defended, and upheld? Early in the \textit{Life}, Greville extols Sidney as a beacon guiding his nation in his footsteps: “Did not his country [...] take knowledge of him as a Light, or leading Star to every degree within her?” (7). This “leading Star” fades into a less hopeful image when Greville laments the loss of his friend’s wisdom in the midst of England’s early seventeenth-century challenges: “he would have found, or made a way through all the traverses, even of the most weak and irregular times. But it pleased God in this decrepit age of the world, not to restore the image of her ancient vigour in him, otherwise than as in a lightning before death” (43). Sidney’s life here appears as a marvel rather than an example, an ephemeral “lightning” instead of an enduring “Light”; in his life, as in his fiction, he has shown the world a fleeting “image” of heroic virtue, but God has now deprived the sinful world of his perfection, and Sidney’s capacity to inspire greatness in others may have become diminished, not enhanced, by his death. This communal loss, Greville claims, is his own greatest grief: “Neither am I (for my part) so much in love with this life, nor believe so little in a better to come, as to complain of God for taking him [...] yet for the sincere

\textsuperscript{149} Greville’s anxiety about how to represent the \textit{New Arcadia}, and how to praise Sidney’s use of a genre Greville does not endorse, may relate to his self-consciousness of simplifying Sidney’s life into hagiography rather than biography. See Hager, “Exemplary Mirage.”
affection I bear to my Prince, and Country, my prayer to God is, that this Worth, and Way may not fatally be buried with him” (43). The *Life* cannot seem to keep from suggesting, though, that English honor, glory, and piety may indeed have died along with the man who epitomized them. Sidney’s vision of a united Protestant Europe never won the full support of the Elizabethan regime, and his subsequent Heroicall design of invading, and possessing America, how exactly soever projected [...] by Sir Philip, did yet prove impossible to be well acted by any other mans spirit [...] how sufficient soever his associate were in all parts of navigation; whereby the success of this journey fell out to be rather fortunate in wealth, than honor.

(90)

In Sidney’s absence, his “Heroicall” and godly influence wanes; other Englishmen (including Sir Francis Drake) lack Sidney’s prevailing sense of “honor” to motivate their enterprises, and the “ancient vigour” of virtue fades before the modern allure of profit.

In the early seventeenth century, Greville read the romance of the dead as the tragedy of the living. While royalist readers in 1652 might have felt strong affinity for his nostalgic melancholia, a Puritan republican audience would have had much less cause to identify with Greville’s sense of Sidney’s romantic sensibilities as decayed or impotent and might even have disregarded the *Life of Sidney’s* tragic themes. Readers of the *Life* who identified themselves with the community of the godly were free to rethink the genre of history once more, and to see Sidney not as the last vestige of a bygone age of chivalry but as the first knight of the new republic, a hero whose providential romance lived on and offered posthumous validation to his lofty prophetic vision. As the *Life* draws to a close, Greville advises critics of his tragedies to look on that Stage wherein himself is an Actor, even the state he lives in, and for every part he may perchance find a Player, and for every Line [...] an instance of
life, beyond the Authors intention, or application, the vices of former Ages being so like to these of this Age, as it will be easie to find out some affinity, or resemblance between them, which whosoever readeth with this apprehension, will not perchance thinke the Scenes too large[.]

(246-7)

The Life’s midcentury factions would have seen multiple ways to “find out some affinity, or resemblance” between their own age and Sidneian romance, and republican readers might have had an especially easy time of it. If Sidney’s prophetic perspective could be argued to have found fruition in Interregnum England, then perhaps the example of his life was not, after all, “too large” to be followed. The generic anxieties that dogged Greville might not have troubled republican readers in 1652, who could flatter themselves that they, as Sidney’s emulous community of spiritual and ideological followers, had continued or even perfected his heroic work. But those anxieties were certainly keenly felt by the royalists after 1649, whose royal romance had taken a sharply tragic turn, and they would return with a vengeance for republicans after 1660, when England’s political narrative reversed its course once again.

III. “No other Will, but Your Majesties Pleasure”: Masculine Erotics, Feminine Pragmatics, and Fin Amour in Margaret Cavendish’s Life of William Cavendish

William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle, was still alive in 1667 when his wife Margaret published her biographical account of his wartime heroism in service to the Stuart royal family—an impropriety that scandalized the likes of Samuel Pepys. Nevertheless, The Life of the Thrice Noble, High and Puissant Prince William

150 A version of this section appears as “Historical Romance and Fin Amour in Margaret Cavendish’s Life of William Cavendish” in English Studies 92.7 (November 2011), 756-70. I am grateful to many members of the International Margaret Cavendish Society for their warm support and scholarly assistance when this reading was still in its infancy as a conference paper.
Cavendishe (hereafter the *Life of William*) is a narrative written to memorialize his tragic “Sufferings, Losses, and ill-Fortunes” as much as to boast of his “Loyal, Heroick and Prudent Actions.”\(^{151}\) Although Pepys found more fantasy than fact in his reading of the *Life* and in his general opinion of its author, calling her husband “an ass to suffer her to write what she writes to him, and of him” and famously pronouncing her “a mad, conceited, ridiculous woman” whose “whole story […] is a romance, and all she does is romantic,” Cavendish prefaced the *Life of William* with an explicit refusal to allow the literary conventions of romance to interfere with her true account of her husband’s “Heroical” role in the “Tragedy” of the royalists’ defeat and their monarch’s death (c1v).\(^{152}\) Despite (and because of) the widespread impression, in the seventeenth century as well as now, that “romance was very often construed as a vehicle of royalist ideology,” Cavendish takes pains to associate the fusion of historiography and heroic fiction with Puritan republicanism.\(^{153}\) Her family’s opponents, she insists, are the party guilty of “telling Romansical Falshoods for Historical Truths” and writing “in a mystical and allegorical style […] with but few sprinklings of Truth […] out of Policy to amuse and deceive the People” (c2r, d1r). She accuses Parliamentarian sympathizers of composing histories in name only that “contain nothing but Falshoods and Chimeraes” and of

\(^{151}\) Margaret Cavendish, *The Life of the Thrice Noble, High and Puissant Prince William Cavendishe* (London, 1667), c2r. All subsequent references to this text are from this edition and will be cited parenthetically by folio page number. I refer to Margaret Cavendish as “Cavendish” when discussing her as the author of *The Life*, but as “Margaret” when she appears as a participant (or character) within it. I refer to William Cavendish, who is very much a literary character in his own biography, as “William.”

\(^{152}\) Samuel Pepys, *Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. John A. Smith (London: Macmillan, 1905), 484, 630. Alexandra Bennett points out that Pepys’ diary indicates that he was at least entertained enough by her “ridiculous History” to stay up all night reading it. See “Fantastic Realism: Margaret Cavendish and the Possibilities of Drama,” in *Authorial Conquests: Essays on Genre in the Writings of Margaret Cavendish*, ed. Line Cottegnies and Nancy Weitz (London: Associated University Presses, 2003), 179-94, 194.

fictionalizing their commanders by “comparing some of them to Moses, and some others to all the great and most famous Heroes, both Greeks and Romans” (d1r). Republicans are mere devotees of Fortune, which “is such an Idol of the World, and is so like the golden Calf worshipped by the Israelites, that those Arch-Rebels never wanted Astrologers to foretell them good success in all their Enterprises, nor Poets to sing their Praises […] nay, which is worse, nor Historians neither, to record their Valour in fighting, and Wisdom in Governing” (d1r). Having tarnished the marriage of literary entertainment and historiography as the manipulative tool of her enemies, Cavendish vows to shun the manner of writers whose literary style and emphasis on the “mystical Designs” of history render their accounts “but pleasant Romances” (b2v). The “romantic” conceit Pepys perceived in the Life, however, is entirely intentional on Cavendish’s part: even as she rejects romance as an appropriate genre for life writing, her case for William’s royalist heroism is grounded entirely in romantic convention.

154 Cavendish’s dismissal of exaggerated historiography may be tongue-in-cheek even in her preface: only a paragraph after her denunciation of the republicans’ likening their heroes to the “most famous […] Greeks and Romans,” she compares her husband to “another Scipio” (d1v).
155 In addition to turning anti-royalist rhetoric against romance on its head, Cavendish here subverts the Puritan commonplace of comparing the community of the godly to the nation of Israel. The “Arch-Rebels” are allowed to resemble the Israelites, but only as idolaters, liars, and hypocrites; that is, as the un-godly.
156 Emma Rees acknowledges that Cavendish’s attitude to romance is “apparently inconsistent” but proposes that her “strategic appropriation” of it “may function as a generic double-bluff. That is, if she professes a distaste for romance, she might distance herself from courtly culture and so not be associated with the suspicions which would inevitably fall on publications by the close-knit members of Henrietta Maria’s coterie.” See Margaret Cavendish: Gender, Genre, Exile (Manchester: Manchester U P, 2003), 89, 44.
157 While we are accustomed to thinking of Margaret Cavendish as a writer of romances, her husband also enjoyed the genre, and his relationship to it was political as well as personal. In addition to collaborating with his wife on a number of her plays and fictions, the Earl of Newcastle was once mocked by the Parliamentarian Lord Fairfax, whom he had challenged to wage a more heroic form of warfare, as a man whose notions of honourable conduct on the battlefield “follow[ed] the rules of Amadis de Gaule, or the Knight of the Sun, which the language of [his] declaration seems to affect in offering pitched battles” (see Charles Firth, ed., The Life of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle [London: Routledge, 1907], xii-xiii). Fairfax declined to gratify his opponent by “affecting” romance conventions as a military commander, and Cavendish’s affinity for amorous and chivalric literature thus became an object of ridicule for his enemies.
The *Life of William Cavendish* can scarcely help merging romance and history in its incorporation of such elements as the usurpation of a kingdom, the trials of a long exile, and the ultimate restoration of the rightful ruler, a basic romantic pattern that William, in the *Life*, implicitly trusts will translate into historical reality. Cavendish also describes William’s chivalric conduct, such as his rescue of Queen Henrietta Maria after her deliverance from a tempest at sea. But most importantly, the biography takes its dominant theme from a romantic tradition dating back to the Middle Ages, *fin amour*: an extremity of erotic devotion characterized by the lover’s limitless willingness to suffer for the sake of an often remote and indifferent beloved.\(^{158}\) Although the *fin amour* tradition is of French origin, as are the continental romances that Victoria Kahn and others have identified as Cavendish’s sources,\(^{159}\) the concept soon spread into English literature through such authors as Thomas Malory and thrived throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, featuring prominently in romances including Sidney’s *Arcadia* and Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*.\(^{160}\) In the *New Arcadia*, we have seen how the private intensity of erotic devotion can imbue a hero or heroine with a powerful sensation of exceptionalism and public purpose, and Cavendish employs *fin amour* to the same end in the *Life of William*; however, the love plot within her “heroical” history does not chiefly

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\(^{158}\) The concept of *fin amour* is broadly equivalent to that of “courtly love,” although the latter term is the invention of literary critics, while the former actually appears in a number of foundational texts.

\(^{159}\) See Kahn, *Wayward Contracts*, 180.

\(^{160}\) We might note that within the framework of *fin amour*, William is a more perfect lover than any character Spenser or Sidney can produce; Sidney’s male lovers are particularly susceptible to self-centered lust. But in Lady Mary Wroth’s 1621 *Urania*, written as a companion romance to Sidney’s *Arcadia* and featuring a female protagonist, the profoundly interiorized experience of suffering for love take on a higher value than any potential reward for one’s patience that one might receive from an external source.
concern her relationship with her husband. Instead, the text’s focal participants in the fin amour tradition are her husband and King Charles II, with William in the role of the long-suffering lover and the King as the beloved “master” (as Cavendish often terms him).

Kahn has briefly remarked upon this dynamic in her discussion of the “romance of contract” in Cavendish’s work, noting that the Life represents William as an “unrequited” lover of the King, “uncontaminated by considerations of personal self-interest”; she argues persuasively that his ideal of unconditional devotion contrasts sharply with the contractual paradigm of love and governance that Cavendish envisions in her prose romances. While Kahn’s reading is concerned with these prose fictions and their departure from William’s principle of passionate obedience (among other constructs), I propose that a closer study of the romance already present within the Life of William reveals Cavendish simultaneously resisting and engaging productively with William’s non-contractual homoerotic model, using the generic trope of fin amour to

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161 Indeed, Cavendish is so far from crafting a romance out of her own marriage that her very short account of their courtship approaches coldness in its emphasis on William’s markedly temperate affection and starkly practical reasons for desiring Margaret’s hand:

My Lord being arrived at Paris [...] immediately went to tender his humble duty to Her Majesty [...] where it was my Fortune to see him the first time [...] and after he had stay’d there some time, he was pleased to take some particular notice of me, and express more then an ordinary affection for me; insomuch that he resolved to chuse me for his Second Wife; for he having but two Sons, purposed to marry me, a young Woman, that might prove fruitful to him, and encrease his Posterity by a Masculine Off-spring [...] but God (it seems) had ordered it otherwise, and frustrated his Designs, by making me barren, which yet did never lessen his Love and Affection for me.

(P2r)

Cavendish’s chronicle of the same courtship in her autobiographical A True Relation of My Birth, Breeding, and Life is somewhat warmer: “though I did dread Marriage, and shunn’d Mens companies, as much as I could, yet I could not, nor had the power to refuse him, by reason my Affections were fix’d on him, and he was the onely Person I ever was in love with.” Even in A True Relation, however, she renounces marital eroticism, adding that “it was not Amorous Love, I never was infected therewith, it is a Disease, or a Passion, or both [...] but my Love was honest and honourable, being placed upon Merit.” See Sylvia Bowerbank and Sara Mendelson, eds., Paper Bodies (Ontario: Broadview Press, 2000), 47. For a discussion of Cavendish’s engagement with romance in her autobiography, see Lara Dodds, “Margaret Cavendish’s Domestic Experiment,” in Dowd and Eckerle, eds., 151-68.

162 Kahn, Wayward Contracts, 194, 342n.
negotiate both a heroic subject position for her husband and a platform for her own pragmatic royalism. Although the spectrum of romance also offers Cavendish the model of feudal love between men (as in Greville’s *Life of Sidney*),\(^{163}\) she finds greater use for the mode of romantic devotion that is founded upon unconditional humility rather than mutual duty, since William’s heroism depends not upon reciprocity from Charles, but upon his disinterested renunciation of a reciprocal contract between monarch and subject. As “master,” the King holds infinite affective and material power over his servant, yet also takes on the less dignified role of the fickle mistress in the *Life*, while William’s abjection elevates him to the height of royalist integrity and moral potency; importantly for Cavendish, he has many rivals for the King’s good graces but no equal in devotion.\(^{164}\) The *Life* is thus concerned not with elect or elite community, but with exceptional individualism: William’s is a romance for one, in which even his wife does not share. In representing her husband as a singular lover whose “Sufferings” have more than merited his master’s requital, Cavendish partly endorses William’s model of romance, positioning herself as his dutiful wife in order to authenticate his heroism. Simultaneously, however, she must perform the role of his antagonist, challenging his narrative vision and his non-rational subjectivity in order to derive some material benefit for their family from William’s amorous selflessness.

\(^{163}\) I am grateful to Mary Baine Campbell for this observation.

\(^{164}\) The *fin amour* tradition inevitably relies on some form of gender fluidity. Most often, a male lover submits to the service of a lady and abases himself before her, inverting their usual gendered hierarchy; if the lover is female, she occupies the abject position yet thus fills the masculine role in the strength of her devotion. The fluidity of gender inherent in the *fin amour* tradition has been discussed by a number of scholars, and is particularly well treated in Barbara Newman’s study of medieval courtly mysticism: see *From Virile Woman to WomanChrist* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 137-67.
Cavendish’s dedication of her work to King Charles concludes with a pointed assertion: “I have heard him often say, He loves Your Royal Person so dearly, that He would most willingly, upon all occasions, sacrifice his Life and Posterity for Your Majesty” (n2r, n2v). Throughout the *Life*, Cavendish demonstrates her husband’s singular royalist heroism through this boundless sacrifice for his master the King, whom he repeatedly professes to love more than his own wife and children, despite Charles’ consistent failure to respond in kind. William perceives his role as a royalist subject through the lens of romance, and Cavendish defines her husband’s heroism by his unwavering fidelity to the genre’s most extreme ideals: where all other subjects fall short, his fidelity remains perfectly unselfish. Yet at the same time, the dedication to the King and the entirety of the biography are a thinly veiled petition for long-overdue royal favor. Even as William’s character simultaneously marginalizes and strengthens himself by disclaiming any reward for his love, Margaret Cavendish never loses sight of her husband’s practical contributions to the royalist cause and the harsh arithmetic of her family’s losses as a result. The result is a generically complicated text founded on the tension between the factual pragmatism of Margaret Cavendish as the *Life*’s narrator and the romantic subjectivity of William as its hero.

James Fitzmaurice has suggested that William’s commitment to suffer for the King without complaint demonstrates masculine stoicism that conceals his “private anger and bitterness.” However, his devotion consistently appears not as resigned willingness but as *happiness* to suffer: “I have heard him say out of a passionate Zeal and Loyalty,

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That he would willingly sacrifice himself, and all his Posterity, for the sake of his Majesty, and the Royal Race. Nor did he ever repine either at his losses or sufferings, but rejoiced rather that he was able to suffer for His King and Countrey” (I1r). William perceives his “miseries” not as a necessary evil but as a joy and a privilege—an attitude out of place in historical realism, perhaps, but quite consistent with the tropes of erotic romance.166 Cavendish stresses the personal and particular nature of William’s feelings for his master, as when, unable to fulfill his “earnest desire” to accompany Charles into battle in Scotland, he must wait for news of the expedition: “so soon as he had Intelligence that the Scottish Army […] was defeated, and that no body knew what was become of His Majesty, [he] fell into so violent a Passion, that I verily believed it would have endanger’d his life; but when afterwards the happy news came of His Majesties safe arrival in France, never any Subject could rejoice more then my Lord did” (T1v).

William regards his relationship with the King, whom he educated as a youth, as singular, even intimate, and his contemporaries attest to this special affection even outside of Cavendish’s narrative: the Earl of Clarendon writes that his “particular reverence” for Charles I was surpassed only by his “more extraordinary devotion for that of the prince, as he had had the honour to be trusted with his education as governor.”167 The antagonistic Lucy Hutchinson puts it differently in her Memoirs of her own husband: “no man was a greater prince in all [the north of England]” than William Cavendish, “till a foolish ambition of glorious slavery carried him to court, where he ran himself much

166 Here, I depart from Fitzmaurice’s reading, which sees William’s stoicism as a gentlemanly veneer and a vehicle through which he transforms “private anger and bitterness […] into public amiability and wit” (95).
into debt, to purchase neglects of the king [...] and scorns of the proud courtiers.”168 Hutchinson’s republican disdain remains quite consistent with the ideals of William’s fin amour. In order to prove the full intensity of his love through both willing and joyful suffering, the lover in the fin amour tradition must necessarily serve a beloved who exacts such sacrifice from him indefinitely and without any guarantee of reward or reciprocity. Charles II, as Cavendish represents him, performs this role perfectly, and has yet to requite his servant. Throughout most of the Life, he is conspicuous by his absence as William serves him from afar, and their primary interactions are indeed defined by the King’s “neglect”: time and again, Charles expresses his appreciation for William’s fidelity while keeping him at arm’s length, permitting him to live in poverty in exile, failing to repair his ruined estate, and declining to admit him into the inner circle of his government or his graces. As for the “scorns of the proud courtiers,” William Cavendish’s literary sensibility evidently distinguished him even among other royalists, as Martine Brownley has noted: “Describing the Marquis of Newcastle as ‘amorous in poetry and music, to which he indulged the greatest part of his time,’ [the Earl of Clarendon] commented that ‘many inconveniences fall out’ for the Royalists because of their general’s refusal to interrupt his artistic activities for pressing military business. (Sir Philip Warwick more bluntly explained that Newcastle ‘had the misfortune to have somewhat of the poet in him.’)”169

168 Lucy Hutchinson, Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson, ed. Julius Hutchinson and Charles Firth. (London: George Bell and Sons, 1908), 117.
Significantly, Margaret Cavendish emphasizes their royalist compatriots’ bewilderment over William’s love rather than repressing it in her narrative. His extreme selflessness is incomprehensible, even undesirable, to observers who stand outside the love-relationship as William has defined it, but his romantic subjectivity compels him to disregard all who are too concerned with their own interests to be capable of his level of devotion. Cavendish thus manages to reproduce Sidney’s erotic exceptionalism and exclusivity without recourse to Calvinist election or godly community. Indeed, membership in a like-minded fellowship would diminish William:

My Lord entertaining one time some Gentlemen with a merry Discourse, told them, that he would not keep them Company except they had done and suffered as much for their King and Country as he had. They answer’d, That they had not a power answerable to my Lords. My Lord replied, They should do their endeavour according to their Abilities: No, said they, if we did, we should be like your Self, lose all, and get but little for our pains.

(Aaa2r, Aaa2v)

The “merry Discourse” turns suddenly serious when the gentlemen acknowledge both their own instincts for self-preservation and the King’s apparent indifference to William’s suffering. In a typically complex maneuver, Cavendish manages all at once to highlight Charles’ coldness, William’s reckless refusal to safeguard himself, and the extraordinary heroism that exalts him far above his practical fellows whose blunt rationality prevents them from attaining, or even admiring, his courtly perfection.

While his allies regard his losses as a pity, and perhaps even a source of shame, William wears his sufferance as a badge of honor. Cavendish recalls an incident in which “A Soldiers Wife, whose Husband had been slain in my Lord’s Army, came one time to beg some relief of my Lord,” but William’s own fortune is so much reduced that he must
turn her away empty-handed (Aaa2v). The widow, whose anger and bitterness may deliberately mirror Cavendish’s own, protests “That His Majesty’s Enemies were preferr’d to great Honours, and had much Wealth,” but William calmly replies that their mutual poverty “is a sign […] that your Husband and I were Honest Men” (Aaa2v). As William presents it, his unreciprocated fidelity ceases to signify only his weakness, diminution, and dependence on the King; instead, his very abjection becomes his greatest source of pride, comfort, and autonomy. His lowliness similarly serves as the foundation of his private integrity and public heroism in another of Cavendish’s recollections: “I have heard my Lord say, That when he was in Banishment, He had nothing left him, but a clear Conscience, by which he had and did still conquer all the Armies of misfortunes that ever seized upon him” (Zz1r). And as William’s romantic “Conscience” acts as a weapon against “the Armies of misfortune,” it shields him against the dismay of all those who would cast aspersions on his romantic code.

We eventually find that William is well aware of the singularity of his devotion and of its mystifying effect on others, despite his indifference to their objections. After Charles’ restoration produces no substantial honors for the Cavendishes, William finally resolves to retire to the country to make the best of the remnants of his estate. But first, he goes to the King to seek permission, and to dispel any rumors about his motives:

Sir, said he to His Majesty, I am not ignorant, that many believe I am discontented; and ’tis probable they”l say, I retire through discontent: But I take God to witness, That I am in no kind or ways displeas’d; for I am so joyed at your Majesties happy Restauration, that I cannot be sad or troubled for any Concern to my own particular; but whatsoever Your Majesty is pleased to command me, were it to sacrifice my Life, I shall most obediently perform it; for I have no other Will, but Your Majesties Pleasure.

(Aa1r)
With this final declaration of fidelity, “he kissed His Majesty’s hand, and went the next day into Nottingham-shire, to his Mannor-house call’d Welbeck,” where his lands and affairs lie in ruins (Aa1r). Anticipating that court gossips will presume his shortage of royal favour has bred bitterness and ill will, William reiterates that his brand of love necessitates the abandonment of will, or rather the total submission of one’s will to the desires of one’s beloved—an act that strengthens the lover to his own sublime satisfaction even as it diminishes him in the eyes of outsiders. Having already sacrificed his material goods, he would happily give infinitely more to prove that his love has no limit, and that it is too content within its own sphere to regard the incredulity of others. Even if the historical Duke of Newcastle was “profoundly disappointed to find himself excluded from the king’s inner circle,” the literary William Cavendish thrives on this exclusion because it enables his exclusion of all other subjects as lesser lovers.¹⁷⁰

As much as Cavendish celebrates it, William is not the only victim of his heroic exclusivity. The witness who regards his devotion with the greatest skepticism, and who suffers most in turn as a result of it, proves to be Margaret Cavendish herself. Whenever Margaret appears in the Life—sometimes as an active participant in its events, more often as an observer and counselor—her persona as character consistently resembles her persona as narrator in its preference for reason over romance. In this respect, she too occupies a doubly gendered role: while romance’s tropes allow the King to act as both master and mistress, and William’s feminized submission to a hierarchy of love allows his manly virtue to dominate the text, Margaret’s position outside of their homoerotic

relationship marginalizes her as a disenfranchised woman, denied political power and primacy in her husband’s affections. At the same time, it permits her to assume an aggressively rational, conventionally masculine perspective that regards romance as a foolish distraction from economic, political, and otherwise practical concerns. Cavendish frequently seems to insert herself into the narrative for the express purpose of serving as a skeptical counterweight, or an oppositional force, to William’s romantic tendencies. Very occasionally, Margaret’s rationality wins the day over her husband’s more extreme impulses toward fin amour, as when she manages to prevent him from embarking on a dangerous and virtually hopeless sea journey in search of his missing master:

My Lord being come to Rotterdam, was informed that His Highness the Prince (now our Gracious King) was gone to Sea: Wherefore he resolved to follow him, and for that purpose hired a Boat, and victual’d it; but since no body knew whither His Highness was gone; and I being unwilling that my Lord should venture upon so uncertain a Voyage, and (as the Proverb is) “Seek a Needle in a Bottle of Hay,” he desisted from that design[.]

(Q2v, R1r)

Far more often, though, Cavendish pits Margaret’s pragmatism against William’s romantic heroism only to have the generic conventions of romance prevail, or at least, only to depict Margaret being gently scolded by her husband for neglecting his ideals of honor, patience, absolute fidelity, and faith in a romantic telos to the royalists’ history. For instance, after emphasizing their penury in exile, Cavendish remarks on her husband’s enduring hope for a happy ending to the royalist story: “In this Condition (and how little soever the appearance was) my Lord was never without hopes of seeing yet [...] a happy issue of all his misfortunes and sufferings, especially of the Restauration of His most Gracious King and Master, to His Throne [...] whereof he always had assured
Hopes” (U2r, U2v). William is not merely hopeful, but “assured” that “Restauration” will come to pass, though his chief care is not for his own personal “happy issue,” but for that of “His most Gracious King and Master.” His conviction stands in marked contrast to his wife’s freely-admitted pessimism (or realism): “whenever I expressed how little faith I had in it, he would gently reprove me, saying, I believ’d least, what I desir’d most; and could never be happy if I endeavour’d to exclude all hopes, and entertain’d nothing but doubts and fears” (U2v). From our position of hindsight after the historical Restoration, William’s faith or foresight appears entirely justified, but as readers in the midst of the narrative, we can easily imagine ourselves feeling Margaret’s doubt. Thus, when his faith comes to fruition, Cavendish allows—even encourages—us to imagine that her husband possessed a special narrative vision of the structure of history that his more rational wife lacked. When Margaret asks “What kind of Fate it was, that restored our Gracious King […] to His Throne,” William gently corrects the terms of her inquiry by admitting divine providence into human contingency: “It was a blessed kind of Fate” (Zz2v).171

Of course, the providential conclusion to the royalist romance that William has anticipated proves limited: granted little share in the King’s glorious restoration, he fails to receive any significant material rewards or immaterial favor from Charles. He does, however, enjoy a much humbler moment of private restoration in Cavendish’s narrative. Returning home after years in exile, and “so transported with the joy of returning into his Native Countrey, that he regarded not” the dangerously dilapidated condition of his ship, 

171 David Norbrook has remarked that “Cavendish has no time for the providential explanations of events that preoccupied so many royalist as well as Puritan historians. She offers her husband’s life as a quest for individual glory in a world governed by fortune” (“Margaret Cavendish and Lucy Hutchinson: Identity, Ideology and Politics,” In-between 9.1 [2000], 179-203, 194). But while Cavendish’s disdain for providential history is indeed a pillar of her work, she admits it into the Life for William’s sake.
At last being come so far that he was able to discern the smoak of London, which he had not seen in a long time, he merrily was pleased to desire one that was near him, to jogg and awake him out of his dream, for surely, said he, I have been sixteen years asleep, and am not thoroughly awake yet. My Lord lay that night at Greenwich, where his Supper seem’d more savoury to him, then any meat he had hitherto tasted; and the noise of some scraping Fidlers, he thought the pleasantest harmony that ever he had heard.

(Y2v, Z1r)

William’s sublime contentment is soon intruded upon by the arrival of Margaret, who finds his London lodgings “not fit for a Person of his Rank and Quality, nor of the capacity to contain all his Family” (Z2v). In “some passion,” she urges him to leave London, where he remains for the King’s sake, and tend instead to his own affairs at last, but once more, her husband “gently reprove[s] [her] for [her] rashness and impatience” and remains in the city to wait on his master (Z2v).

We know that William is supremely satisfied, having always made his happiness entirely conditional upon his master’s, but Margaret continues to struggle with the political and emotional ramifications of her husband’s love. Questioning his perception of the monarch/subject relationship as an affective but immutably hierarchical bond between a master and a devoted servant, she writes,

I declared that I had observed Great Princes were not like the Sun, which sends forth out of itself Rays of Light, and Beams of Heat; effects that did both glorifie the Sun, and nourish and comfort sublunary Creatures; but their glory […] proceeded rather from the Ceremony which they received from their subjects.

(Aaa2r)

But William is unmoved by his wife’s argument for the natural necessity of reciprocal contract, countering “That Subjects were so far from giving splendor to their Princes, that all the Honours and Titles, in which consists the chief splendor of a subject, were principally derived from them; for, said he, were there no Princes, there would be none to
confers Honours and Titles upon them” (Aaa2r). The absolutism of his love for the King renders him a “sublunary creature” comforted by his master’s Sun; all “glory” flows from one source and all duty from the other, to the satisfaction of both parties and the consternation of all others. Finally, when Margaret expresses her skepticism for the entire concept of fin amour after the Restoration because of its failure to guarantee gratification for the lover, William simply responds with enduring resolution to make it the ongoing basis of his life and service to the King:

I have heard him say several times, That his love to his gracious Master King Charles the Second, was above the love he bore to his Wife, Children, and all his Posterity, nay to his own life: And when, since His Return into England, I answer’d him, That I observed His Gracious Master did not love him so well as he lov’d Him; he replied, That he cared not whether His Majesty lov’d him again or not; for he was resolved to love him.

(Zz2r)

William gladly acknowledges that his love for the King defies explanation; since, as in the New Arcadia, “they onely know it, which inwardly feele it,” it becomes an end and a good in itself. Its virtue is only heightened by his own admission that his “Master seem’d to have forgot him,” and his private commitment to it sets him apart from and above all of Charles’ more pragmatic but less heroic subjects, including his own wife (Bbb2v).

Cavendish’s juxtaposition of William and Margaret’s characters throughout the Life leads us to an inevitable question. Is Cavendish’s skepticism in her intra-narrative role as the hero’s wife meant as a genuine critique of William’s romantic values and of absolute devotion to the monarchy, or does she rather intend to magnify William’s heroism in the eyes of her readers (including Charles II) by emphasizing his loyalty to his

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172 Fitzmaurice also remarks on the juxtaposition between Cavendish’s voice and her husband’s, noting that her cynicism “only serves to make her depiction of her husband’s amiability come more to the fore” (98).
love in the face of his wife’s pragmatic, rationalist temptations? The answer to this either/or question, I think, can only be yes. William’s character confirms his status as the ultimate hero of the royalist romance by staying steadfast to his preeminent relationship with the King even when his devotion yields no clear benefits and jars with his secondary duties to his secondary beloved. At the same time, Cavendish uses William’s stunningly disinterested heroism as a means to advocate for his worldly interests, since he will not do so himself. Because he has sought the least, he deserves the most, and Charles’ failure to bestow favor commensurate with William’s “Actions and Sufferings” leaves both the King and fin amour as a political model open to criticism. Cavendish thus manages to idealize her husband’s romantic principles without compromising her own rational ones, unifying both sets of values in an effort to make the arc of William’s romance entirely complete by moving the King to the requital that she believes her husband has long merited. Pragmatic realism and romance, often seemingly dichotomous throughout the Life, finally function in mutual service to one another, and Margaret’s subjectivity, once fragmented into the roles of submissive wife and masculine rationalist, may become whole again.

We might see the legacy of William’s commitment to fin amour in Cavendish’s fictional romance narratives. Kahn has argued that “In contrast to William Cavendish, who sacrificed his interest to the king’s and whose love was unrequited, Margaret Cavendish suggests [in her prose romances] that passion and interest may together underwrite the contract of political obligation and that honor and loyalty may not be
 incompatible with ‘politic designs.’” The heroines of Cavendish’s romances—one of whom we will meet in the next chapter—may singly embody this unification of passion and interest, but in the *Life of William*, the passion is all William’s and the interest is all Margaret’s. Only when her pragmatism and his devotion operate in concert can *The Life of William Cavendish* function, in Cavendish’s terms, as a “Heroical” history that speaks on their mutual behalf; under Kahn’s formulation, only as a married couple can they serve as a unified subject. Despite Cavendish’s prefatory emphasis on the incompatibility of romance with historiographic and political concerns, she ultimately seems to find the productive interplay between rational skepticism and romantic vision as intellectually fruitful as her own relationship with William.

IV. “More [...] than the best romances describe”: Puritan Heroism, Genre, and Gender in Lucy Hutchinson’s *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*

There can be no doubt that Lucy Hutchinson—who did, in fact, compare her husband John to Moses—is the sort of Puritan writer that Cavendish has in mind when she disdains “mystical” styles of historiography colored by “romansical” overtones. For Hutchinson, as for Sidney on his mental pinnacle, the mundane backdrop of human history is really a translucent screen through which the godly may witness a shadow-battle between cosmic forces of good and evil. The recent civil war, she explains in her *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*, is no mere political circumstance, but one of many battles in an ongoing “spirituall combate.”

the war within a larger narrative before returning to John Hutchinson’s life, Hutchinson approaches Britain’s past century with a combination of analytical historiography and vivid literary imagination. The Catholic Mary, Queen of Scots assumes the lurid stock role of the “wicked Queene” of “bloody lustfull temper” who menaces her righteous Protestant rival, much as Cecropia or Duessa (fictional echoes of Mary) do in Sidney’s and Spenser’s romances, while Elizabeth is miraculously protected from harm “by the good providence of God” (39, 41). Mary’s son, the licentious and prodigal James, is guilty of more than excessive spending and conciliation toward papists: he also nurses a “secrett designe of revenge upon the godly” after his mother’s death (43). Under his regime, “Murther, incest, Adultery, drunkennesse, swearing, fornication and all sort of ribaldry” flourish, and as the result of “mix’d marriages of Papist and protestant famelies,” “children’s soules [are] sacrific’d to devills” (42). But throughout this struggle between the “children of darknesse” and the “children of light” (44), God “most miraculously order[s] providences” for the “preservation” of his chosen people (49), and the predestined conclusion of the narrative of history is never in doubt: however many battles may appear “more successefull to the devill,” the war will at last “happily be decided” when “the Prince of Peace come to conclude the controversie” (281).

The Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson, together with Lucy Hutchinson’s brief fragment of her own autobiography, stands as a remarkable companion piece to Cavendish’s Life of William. David Norbrook has provided an excellent overview about the relationships between the Hutchinsons and the Cavendishes (near neighbors in Nottinghamshire) and between the women’s heroic biographies of their husbands, which
were written around the same time, though Hutchinson’s republican *Memoirs* were not printed during Charles II’s reign. Norbrook notes that “it is possible that [Hutchinson] wrote the *Memoirs* in the knowledge of the Duchess’s work on her husband’s life […] and that this was a spur to making her work ideologically quite distinct from Cavendish’s writing,” a distinction that ostensibly involves the rejection of romance. However, Hutchinson’s engagement with romance is more like Cavendish’s than not, and a fuller consideration of the genre in the *Memoirs* helps us better appreciate the common ground, the contested territory, and the hard boundaries between Cavendish and Hutchinson as politically-engaged women writing heroic historiography. Much like Cavendish, Hutchinson explicitly disavows romance as a frivolous, culturally tarnished genre, only to rely on it as the best vehicle for conveying her subject’s singular heroism. Her autobiographical fragment acknowledges that as a girl, she “thought it no sin” to enjoy “amorous sonnetts or poems, and twenty things of that kind,” implying that in her maturity she does regard indulgence in “amorous” literature as unfit for Puritan readers (288). Still, romance proves indispensable for memorializing John Hutchinson as a republican hero, a Puritan saint, and—more importantly than in Cavendish’s *Life*—a devoted spouse. Like William Cavendish, his heroism is so singular that it fails to find its like within his partisan community; Lucy Hutchinson calls together a reading fellowship of her husband’s admirers and emulators only after his death. Moreover, the romance of the *Memoirs* is also chiefly one of love: like the heroes of the *New Arcadia*,

175 See “Margaret Cavendish and Lucy Hutchinson,” 194, 185.
176 Devoney Looser, discussing the genre of the *Memoirs* in *British Women Writers and The Writing of History, 1670-1820* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins U P, 2000), suggests that for Hutchinson, carefully controlled elements of romance “are not only acceptable but necessary to honest history writing” (45).
John derives his elect subjectivity, in no small part, from the providential direction of his erotic life. But where Cavendish deemphasizes her marriage to focus on William’s love for the King, Hutchinson struggles with the interplay between her and William’s ardor for one another and his even more passionate devotion to God—and the wife of the Memoirs, too, ultimately takes second place in her husband’s heart as John lives into his full heroic destiny to serve his first love. As a result, part of Hutchinson’s work in the Memoirs is to carve out a complex perspective on genre and gender for herself, together with some sense of her own heroic subjectivity, as a Puritan republican wife who does not always share her husband’s narrative vision—a harder task, we will find, than Cavendish’s comparable endeavor in the more secular Life.

Hutchinson’s autobiographical fragment frames the Memoirs by writing Lucy, as well as John, into English history as a godly heroine who has been chosen to enter the story at precisely the right moment. “[A]tt the time of my birth,” Hutchinson writes, the eternal conflict between darkness and light was just then “working up into that tempest wherein I have shar’d many perills [...] and many more mercies, consolations and preservations” (281). Being born into the midst of a historical “tempest,” she asserts, is a “considerable mercy” because it positions her at a crux within the divine narrative that gives her the potential both to witness the marvelous and to undertake heroic action (282). Her introduction into the narrative occurs “not in the midnight of poperie, nor in the dawne of the gospell’s restored day,” but “early in the morning, God being pleased to allow me the privelledge of beholding the admirable growth of gospell light in my dayes; and oh! that my soule may never forgett to blesse and prayse his name for the wonders of
power and goodnesse, wisdome and truth, which have bene manifested in this my time” (282). Hutchinson’s account of her birth further suggests that she may do more than simply “behold” God’s “wonders”: her mother dreams while pregnant that she catches a falling star, which (she is told) “signified she should have a daughter of some extraordinary eminency” (287). Hutchinson moves partly to diminish the effect of this startling claim by suggesting that the dream, “like such vaine prophecies, wrought as farre as it could its own accomplishment” in the form of her parents’ special care and indulgence, but her autobiography nevertheless introduces her as a potential heroine surrounded by the romantic tropes of tempests and prophetic signs (287).

Like Spenser’s Britomart, however, Hutchinson’s sense of wifely and pious obligation comes to interfere with her assertion of her own heroic agency.177 Her account of her portentous life breaks off while she is still a child, and the bulk of her life writing celebrates the civic and romantic heroism of her husband, driven primarily by his narrative vision, not by the ambivalent promise of her mother’s dream. John Hutchinson, too, is the focus of marvelous signs in infancy: “flung” from a runaway carriage by a desperate nursemaid, the baby is rescued from all injury “by the good providence of God,” which “reserv[es]” him for “a more glorious death” as a champion of the godly

177 Several scholars have addressed the question of Lucy Hutchinson’s feminist agency vs. her subordination to her husband. N. H. Keeble, the Memoirs’ most recent editor, has argued that Hutchinson’s recurring representation of herself as her husband’s shadow or reflection is symptomatic of her total subordination (“But the Colonel’s Shadow”: Lucy Hutchinson, Women’s Writing, and the Civil War,” in Literature and the English Civil War, ed. Thomas Healy and Jonathan Sawday, [Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1990], 227-47). On the opposite end of the spectrum, Erica Longfellow has mined Hutchinson’s Memoirs and her Elegies for evidence of her proto-feminist belief in the essential equality of the sexes (“The Transfiguration of Colonel Hutchinson in Lucy Hutchinson’s Elegies,” in Women and Religious Writing in Early Modern England [Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 2004], 180-208). Throughout his extensive body of work on Hutchinson, Norbrook has advocated for a more nuanced appreciation of her intertwined gestures toward wifely submission and female agency; I hope to do the same here.
His life continues to be preserved by providence many times in his adulthood, to
the point that he comforts himself after the Restoration that “the Lord had not thus
eminently preserv’d him for nothing, but that he was yett kept for some eminent service
or suffering” in the Good Old Cause (234). John matures into a handsome, “exactly well-
proportion’d” man, whose courtly beauty (lovingly detailed in his wife’s surprisingly
amorous blazon) is augmented by the indefinable allure that so many heroes of romance
possess: his “countenance [...] carried in it something of magnanimity and majesty mixt
with sweetenesse, that at the same time bespoke love and awe in all that saw him” (3).179
This “something” accords him “majesty” and mastery even in the plane of “spirituall
combate”: “so were all the children of darknesse convinc’d by his light that they were in
awe more of his vertue than his authority” (206). As soon as John becomes confirmed in
his Puritan faith and inwardly convinced that God “ha[s] bene pleas’d to chuse him out of
the corrupted masse of lost mankind,” he resolves to enter public life, incensed at the
injustices endured by his godly countrymen (35). Notably, Hutchinson separates her
accounts of her husband’s conversion and of his parliamentary debut with “a short
digression from our particular actions” to her history of Protestant England (37), but this

178 Lucy Hutchinson’s descendant Julius Hutchinson, who prepared the original manuscript of the Memoirs, occasionally expresses skepticism at episodes of Hutchinson’s life writing that “[savour] almost too much of the ridiculous for the gravity of an historian,” but acknowledges that while some may be “untrue,” literary exaggerations about his ancestor were not unusual: he had heard “other tales, resembling the legends of romance [...] of him at Owthorpe.” See Hutchinson and Firth, eds., 38n, 390n.
179 Sharon Achinstein has argued that in the erotic and devotional “schema of gazing and blazoning”—
typically of Christ—that we encounter in seventeenth-century Protestant women’s writing, “romance
became deployed [...] precisely because it worked to accommodate erotic desires as agency” (“Romance of
the Spirit: Female Sexuality and Religious Desire in Early Modern England,” ELH 69 [2002], 413-438,
418, 435). Throughout the Memoirs, Hutchinson grapples with the relationship between her romantic
agency and her husband’s. For a reading of the blazon and female agency in Hutchinson’s work, see
Pamela Hammons, “Polluted Palaces: Gender, Sexuality and Property in Lucy Hutchinson’s ‘Elegies,’”
separation also serves as an important link: John’s private consciousness of his election heralds his public heroism and his commitment to stand with the “children of light” in the unfolding providential narrative in which he is now a major figure. Like Sidney’s princes or Spenser’s knights, he has been called to challenge tyrants and chosen to defend truth, and his election is of a piece with his romantic subjectivity. At the core of his romance, though, we encounter not combat, but love.

At the conclusion of her account of John’s and her courtship, Hutchinson indicates that she has left much unsaid: “I shall passe by all the little amorous relations, which if I would take the paynes to relate, would make a true history of a more handsome management of love than the best romances describe; for these are to be forgotten as the vanities of youth, not worthy mention among the greater transactions of his life” (32). Her comment blends Puritan sobriety with authorial coyness: of course erotic romance is a worldly vanity “not worthy” of the Colonel’s “greater” heroism, and yet if we knew all that she could tell us, we would see that John Hutchinson is as consummate an amorous hero as he is a godly or martial one. But Hutchinson is being somewhat disingenuous even in her claim that her narrative will “passe by” romance here: her story of the courtship has already lasted several pages by the time she makes her disclaimer, and it has indulged in no shortage of romantic conventions. It begins by mentioning all the unfit lovers whom John has wisely and piously avoided: predestined for a bride who suits his spiritual nobility, he steers clear of the “fine snares” of “vaine weomen” hoping to “entangle” him (28). Hutchinson reminds us that John remains providentially ordained for eroticism of a different sort: “wealth and beauty thus in vaine tempted him, for it was
not yet his time of love; but it was not farre off” (26). Narrative suspense builds as we foresee an approaching destiny of which the hero remains ignorant; in keeping with Sidney or Spenser’s Protestant revisions of romance, the elect hero’s elect beloved will soon produce an interior effect in him that no other woman could.

Even more attached to the tropes of medieval romance than Sidney, Hutchinson goes so far as to introduces the possibility of magic, as John’s travels take him to a house endowed with a mysterious blessing or curse: according to local legend, it is a place “so fatall for love that never any young disengag’d person went thither who return’d againe free” (27). Naturally, John “laugh[s]” at this fantasy, and we may gather that he is therefore all the more likely to fall subject to it (27). The prophecy begins to work when he discovers some scholarly books in the house that belong to a lady called Lucy Apsley, who is currently absent. Like some particularly precocious romance lovers (including Sidney’s Pyrocles and Spenser’s Britomart), John appears to fall in love before first sight, and Hutchinson presents her audience with the gradual unfolding of his virtuous passion in a detailed sequence that echoes Sidney’s accounts of love’s progress. “[H]e began first to be sorrie she was gone before he had seene her [....] then he grew to love to heare mention of her”; upon being told of Lucy’s supposedly unfeminine “reserv’d and studious” manner and her ability as a poet, “it so much enflam’d Mr. Hutchinson’s desire of seeing her that he began to wonder at himselfe that his heart, which had ever had such an indifferency for the most excellent of weomenkind, should have so strong impulses towards a stranger he never saw” (28-9). When he is given the false impression that Lucy is already married to another suitor, the critical moment of internal transformation by
love is upon him: “Mr. Hutchinson immediately turn’d pale as ashes, and felt a fainting to seize his spiritts [...] it was not necessary for him to feigne sickness, for the distemper of his mind had infected his body with a cold sweate and such a dispersion of spiritt that all the courage he could at present recollect was little enough to keepe him allive” (30). Suffering from the usual psychosomatic effects of lovesickness, and marveling at his intense desire for “an unknowne person,” John “then remember’d the story was told him when he came downe, and began to believe there was some magick in the place which enchanted men out of their right sensces”; despite his pride in his own religious rationalism, he is unable to dissuade himself from this fanciful suspicion (30).

But Hutchinson is careful to remind us that magic cannot be the first cause of the love story in the Memoirs. In a “light person” not possessed of John’s elect heroism, she suggests, such “an extravagant perplexity of soule” over a nascent love affair would be frivolous and “not [...] admirable”; in him, however, it can signify only the inward “effect of a miraculous power of providence, leading him to her that was destin’d to make his future joy” (30). God’s election legitimizes John’s half-ironic sensation that his life has become a romance, and when Lucy finally arrives, she too partakes in the romantic subjectivity of the elect, “surpriz’d with some unusuall liking in her soule” at first sight of John despite her parallel history of “indifferency” toward other men (31). As the author of their romance, God has chosen them not just for himself, but for one another. Only at this point does Hutchinson elide the rest of their courtship, barring her readers from the intimate details that surpass “the best romances” and adding “only this”: “that never was there a passion more ardent and lesse idolatrous; he loved her better than his life, with
unexpressable tendernes and kindnes, had a most high oblieging esteeme of her, yet still consider’d honour, religion, and duty above her” (32).

This final qualification, while it may seem a pious afterthought following Hutchinson’s entertaining and passionate account, points to the heart of the Memoirs as a testimony to John’s Puritan heroism and introduces us to the gendered and generic tensions that follow. Much as William Cavendish’s idealized representation as a royalist hero stems from his absolute devotion to his master the king in lieu of his wife or his own interests, John Hutchinson emerges as the epitome of heroism for a godly republic because, for all his ardor and affection for Lucy, “he lov[es] God above her” (10). If he possesses such a sincere attachment to the “little amorous relations” of his marriage, which “vanities” are in themselves better “than the best romances describe,” his willingness to subordinate them to the greater romance of providential history becomes all the more heroic—just as Spenser’s Redcrosse embodies Protestant heroism only once he learns first to surrender their erotic plots to the divine plot, and then to integrate them with it. Critically, however, John alone possesses the far-seeing sense of narrative scope that enables him to glimpse God’s glorious end, having been “led up to see” a “soule-refreshing view” in his mind’s eye of “the promis’d land […] such a one as made him forget on what side of the river he stood, while by faith he tooke possession of future glory, and resign’d himselfe in the assured hope of returning with the Lord and his greate Armie of Saints” (36). John comforts himself and attempts to console his wife with this vision, but Lucy continues to be faced with Britomart’s archetypal feminine perspective: not granted her husband’s visionary faith or narrative foresight, she must rely on male
prophetic assurance and on her hope for her children in order to attempt any mediation between the triumphant romance of the elect and her tragic personal loss.

Thus, once Hutchinson has concluded the romance of John’s amorous adventures with his happy marriage to Lucy, the tone of the Memoirs shifts: the remainder details the Colonel’s devotion not to his wife, but to his nation and to his God. The theme of the hero’s “actions and sufferings” becomes as critical a refrain in the Memoirs as in Cavendish’s Life, and again, heroic sufferance takes precedence over heroic action once the protagonists’ personal and political hopes are frustrated. Fortunately for John Hutchinson, he, like his royalist counterpart, flourishes most when he has the most to endure and “ever [has] most vigor and chearefullnesse when there [is] most danger” to himself (202). Accordingly, the heroic glory of his military triumphs in wartime is soon eclipsed by that of his patience and magnanimity during his postwar disappointments. Once the Restoration dashes the Puritan republicans’ immediate hopes, the Colonel vows, with romantic rhetoric resembling William’s in the Life, that having “made shipwrack of all things but a good conscience,” “if the sacrifice of him might conduce to the publick peace and settlement, he should freely submitt his life and fortunes to their dispose” (228). But as John becomes increasingly committed to living a romance, even if that means giving his life for its end, Lucy increasingly sinks into Fulke Greville’s impression that the hero’s magnanimity will conclude in tragedy.

The Lucy of the Memoirs is forced into a position strikingly like Margaret’s in the Life of William: compelled to accept her status as her husband’s secondary beloved, she does and suffers all she can on behalf of her husband even as he does the same for God
and country, yet finds herself standing awkwardly between him and his heroic vocation. Realizing that John’s magnanimity may wreak dire consequences in the wrong political climate, and “that he was ambitious of being a publick sacrifice,” Lucy reacts with alarm and dismay “and therefore, herein only in her whole life, resolv[es] to disobey him”: she forges an affidavit in his name “to urge what might be in his favour” and beg pardon for his role in the regicide (229). The document (temporarily) has the right effect on the judges, but an adverse one on John and on their marriage:

his wife, who thought she had never deserv’d so well of him as in the endeavours and labours she exercis’d to bring him off, never displeas’d him more in her life, and had much adoe to perswade him to be contented with his deliverance […] had not his wife persuaded him, [he] had offer’d himsellfe a voluntary sacrifice. But being by her convince’d that God’s eminent appearance seem’d to have singled him out for preservation, he with thankes acquiesced in that thing […] and beg’d humbly of God to enlighten him.[]

(234)

The Colonel can never be “contented” to put his life or his wife before God, although insofar as he can be persuaded that Lucy’s design accords with the divine narrative for his life, he accepts it while remaining watchful for the proper providential occasion for his “eminent” action or martyrdom.¹⁸⁰ John continues to refuse Lucy’s pleas that he

¹⁸⁰ Although most readers of the Memoirs have not questioned Lucy Hutchinson’s version of events in recounting her forgery of John’s recantation, Derek Hirst and Guiseppina Iacono Lobo have offered provocative arguments that Hutchinson’s story here contains dubious elements and that she may be trying to recast her husband as a “pure” republican in the wake of a recantation that was possibly his idea all along. See Hirst, “Remembering a Hero: Lucy Hutchinson’s Memoirs of Her Husband,” in Ashgate Critical Essays on Women Writers in England, 1550–1700: Volume 5, Anne Clifford and Lucy Hutchinson, ed. Mihoko Suzuki (Aldershot, 2009), 263–72, and Lobo, “Lucy Hutchinson’s Revisions of Conscience,” English Literary Renaissance 42.2 (2012), 317-41. Hirst and Lobo’s cases remind us once again that the subjects of these politically charged, generically complex memoirs may be best understood in context as literary characters rather than historical figures. David Norbrook has called for our scholarly appreciation of the irresolvable ambiguities of the case, stating that “it proves extremely difficult to find a bedrock of truth about John Hutchinson independent of his wife’s narrative; what does become clear is the degree of the couple’s political interdependence, as part of much wider patterns of political and familial agencies. The senses in which [Lucy Hutchinson] actually wrote the letter […] ultimately remain […] equivocal”
protect himself on the grounds that he must not stray from the providential path on which he has been placed: when she begs him “to go out of England” for his own safety, “he would not; he sayd this was the place where God had sett him and protected him hitherto, and it would be in him an ungratefull distrust of God to forsake it” (237-8). And after he is taken back into custody, he (again like William Cavendish) admonishes his wife for doubting that their present misfortunes conceal a providential telos: “Mrs. Hutchinson was exceedingly sad, but he encourag’d and kindly chid her out of it [...] and told her if she had but patience to waite the event, she would see it all for the best” (249).

Fully convinced of his subjective narrative vision that his own story and the story of England as a godly state are inextricably interlaced, John points Lucy to evidence both of his own chosen status and of the predestined triumph of the elect nation. Concerning himself, he “[bids] her consider what reason she had to rejoyce that the Lord supported him, and how much more intollerable it would have bene if the Lord had suffer’d his spiritt to have sunke, or his patience to have bene lost under this” (264). The combination of his high spirits and his low station are a sure sign of the glory to come: “Once when his wife was lamenting his condition […] he told her he could not have bene without this affliction, for if he had flourisht while all the people of God were corrected, he should have fear’d he had not bene accounted among his children if he had not shared their lott” (265). Again, John’s confidence in his election is inextricably connected to his perception of his role in God’s narrative and his vow of solidarity with the community of the godly; if his story lacked their romantic structure, complete with loss and sorrow, he could not

number himself as one of the chosen. And he is equally certain that the romance of the
godly, which necessitates their trials, must conclude with the triumph of their cause:

he gave her reasons why she should hope and be assur’d that this cause would
revive, because the interest of God was so much involv’d in it that he was
entitled to it. She told him she did not doubt but the cause would revive. ‘But,’
said she, ‘notwithstanding all your resolution, I know this will conquer the
weaknesse of your constitution, and you will die in prison.’ He replied, ‘I thinke
I shall not; but if I doe, my blood will be so innocent I shall advance the cause
more by my death, hasting the vengeance of God upon my unjust enemies, than
I could doe by all the actions of my life.’

(264)

Lucy is devout enough not to reject John’s testimony that the Puritans’ narrative will end
well, but she doubts her husband’s conviction that the plot of his own life is so united to
it that even his death would spur its progress, to England’s and his own heroic glory.
Struggling to reconcile long-form communal romance to imminent personal tragedy, she
is “a little” encouraged by his “faith and cheerfulness,” but “her devining heart,” which
possesses a separate and more worldly generic foresight, is “not to be comforted” (249).

As the Memoirs and John Hutchinson’s life approach their ends, the subjective
and generic distance between husband and wife only increases. While Lucy becomes all
the more anxious and miserable in her “horrible toyle and inconvenience” laboring for
John’s material welfare, John grows all the more happy in his long-delayed fulfillment of
his spiritual destiny, “never more pleasant and contented in his whole life” (264): “His
wife bore all her owne toyles joyfully enough for the love of him, but could not but be
very sad att the sight of his undeserved sufferings; and he would very sweetely and
kindly chide her for it, and tell her that if she were but chearefull he should thinke this
suffering the happiest thing that ever befell him” (264). Hutchinson consistently stresses
that John is “not at all dismay’d, but wonderfully pleas’d” not only because his
opportunity for heroic sacrifice is finally at hand, but also because his misfortune renews his sense of narrative vision as he considers his role within the national romance (255). The worldly exigencies that he had faced immediately after the Restoration had pressed him into practical negotiation with the royalists, and Lucy had urgently advocated such diplomacy, but now his imprisonment reminds him that his story is one of absolute “spirituall combate,” not petty politics: “Mr. Hutchinson [...] told his wife this captivity was the happiest release in the world to him; for [...] now he thought this usage had utterly disoblig’d him from all ties” to “enemies to all just and godly interests” (255-6). He vows to have no future commerce with royalists, “convinc’d” once and for all that “there was a serpentine seed in them,” and blames his current condition on his former pragmatic complacency: “even that consenting submission that I had hath brought this suffering upon me” (265, 269). Yet “this suffering” is itself a providential mercy that restores the Colonel’s heroic subjectivity and thus strengthens his resistance, and so he orders his wife not to repeat her past mistake by “mak[ing] applications to any person whatsoever” and thus muddying the sacred distinctions between the “children of light” and the “children of darknesse” (256).

Finally, John Hutchinson’s death in prison—as foreseen by Lucy’s “devining heart”—concludes her personal tragedy while cementing his Puritan romance. While ill, he finds himself “Incomparably well, and full of faith” as his “continuall study of the Scriptures did infinitely ravish his soule [...] and take it off from all lower exercise”: elevated to a higher realm by his passionate devotion to God, he ultimately leaves behind the youthful erotic passion that prefigured it (270-1). Upon being informed that he will
die of his illness, “The Colonell, without the least dejection or amazement, replied very composedly and chearefully, ‘The will of the Lord be done, I am ready for it,’” professing his “unspeakable joy” in Christ and “[speaking] only these two words” on his deathbed: “‘Tis as I would have it. ’Tis where I would have it’” (271-2). His doctors see his easy passing as “evidence of a devine assistance that over-rul’d all the powers and operations of nature,” proof of a providential authority that presides over the end of John’s story (272-3). At the last, when the friends gathered around him remind him of his absent wife, his final thoughts of her convey wistfulness and gentle sympathy for her plight without descending to grief or disrupting his pristine contentment: “when some nam’d Mrs. Hutchinson, [he] sayd, ‘Alas, how will she be surpriz’d!’ [H]e fetched a sigh, and within a little while departed, his countenance settling so amiably and cheerefull in death that he lookt after he was dead as he us’d to do when he was best pleas’d in life” (272).

Similar to Cavendish, Hutchinson is committed to the sincere glorification of her husband’s romantic heroism even as she simultaneously invites her readers’ sympathy for the tragic end to her own love story. But while Cavendish declines to prioritize either William’s romance or Margaret’s rationality and welcomes the generic hodgepodge that results, Hutchinson suggests that her struggle to read and write John’s life in a spirit of fidelity to his narrative vision is symptomatic of her own weakness in devotion, both to John and to God. Hutchinson the author therefore strives toward a faith in providential romance that Lucy the character could not achieve, and her preface invokes an elect community that Lucy seems unable to perceive in the body of the text. Chastising herself for her tendency to become mired in the “amorous relations” that John could enjoy yet
subordinate, and for her difficulty in following his example of putting God before all other loves, she bestows upon her children both the *Memoirs* and the task of remaining “united” in carrying on their father’s heroic work:

Let not excess of love and delight in the stream make us forget the fountain: he and all his excellencies came from God, and flow’d back into their own spring. There let us seeke them, thither lett us hasten after him [...]. Our conjunction, if wee had any with him, was undissoluble; if wee were knitt together by one spirit into one body of Christ, wee are so still; if wee were mutually united in one love of God, good men, and goodnesse, wee are so still. What is it then we waile in his remoue? The distance? Faithlesse fooles! ’tis sorrow only makes it[.]

(3)

Rather than spend the rest of her life fruitlessly indulging in the tragedy of the loss of her beloved, Hutchinson presses herself and her audience to regard John’s death—and, by implication, the decline of his cause—as the middle, rather than the end, of the communal history of “God, good men, and goodnesse.” Notably, this generic shift from tragedy back to a form of romance higher than the narrative of their marriage remains contingent upon progeny as well as community: Hutchinson makes no clear distinction between the “children of light” and her own children, though she has come to borrow John’s vision of history in the absence of her own personal assurance.

Colonel Hutchinson has valiantly fulfilled his role in the romance of his biological and ideological family and has risen above it, and now serves as a guide to those who must continue to live and progress within it: “wee may mourn [...] that wee want his guide and assistance in our way; and yett, if our teares did not putt out our eies, wee should see him, even in heaven, holding forth his flaming lamp of vertuous examples and precepts to light us through the darke world” (3). To follow the example of John’s heroism is to further advance the narrative of the elect, as he anticipated before his death,
while to “persue [the] sad remembrance” of it is to “ramble into an inextricable wildernesse”—an anti-teleological, pseudo-romantic substitute for the romance of providence (63). Yet this exhortation contrasts sharply with the eerie wandering that Hutchinson imagines for Lucy at the end of the Memoirs: “the spring after [his death] there came [to the prison] an apparition of a gentlewoman in mourning, in such a habitt as Mrs. Hutchinson us’d to weare there […] and was often seene walking in the Colonell’s chamber” (277). While still alive, Hutchinson suggests that Lucy has become a ghost who haunts her beloved husband’s cell.181 This final literary fancy blends the supernatural elements of romance with the perturbed spirits of tragedy while leaving the author of the Memoirs not quite unified with her character. Lucy Hutchinson’s endeavor to reconcile the romance of the elect to the tragic experiences that befall them, and to find prospects on which both male and female “children of light” could stand together in visionary resistance to the plots of the “children of darknesse,” would prove to be an ongoing project in her Genesis epic Order and Disorder.

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181 Erin Murphy has noted that while Hutchinson’s preface “promises her children that her text will preserve the memory of their father, suggesting that, through writing, the connection between past and present, parent and children will be maintained in the face of morality,” this “transcendence of time becomes threatened” at the end of the Memoirs by the appearance of Lucy’s ghost (Familial Forms: Politics and Genealogy in Seventeenth-Century English Literature [Lanham, MD: U of Delaware P, 2011], 149). Keeble, in “But the Colonel’s Shadow,” cites Lucy’s shade as further evidence of her wifely subordination, but I believe we can also read the ghost as a sign of both her generic agency and her ongoing struggle to locate a romantic or heroic role for the female believer.
Chapter Three
The Fall and the Summit:
Milton’s Counter-Revision of Romance
in Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained

The fact that both Puritans and royalists could insist that Spenser’s allegory spoke for their reli-gio-political community and that Sidney was their ancestral champion—and the ease with which Cavendish and Hutchinson could sneer at romance as their enemies’ hobby-horse before turning to embrace it as a mode of representation for their husbands’ heroism—confirm Sidney’s sixteenth-century Protestant hope and Hobbes’ seventeenth-century absolutist fear that romance was subjective and subversive, all the more powerful for the non-rational interiority it enabled. Hobbes was not alone in his midcentury anxiety: although postwar royalists and post-Restoration republicans continued their battle for romance as a genre that could accommodate and explain both heroic victories and crushing disappointments, their competition became increasingly self-conscious. Both communities were aware that the generic conflict, and the easily-manipulated subjectivity that occasioned it, needed to be faced and wrestled with: in Sir Percy Herbert’s postwar royalist romance The Princess Cloria, the beleaguered king Euarchus articulates the problem of romantic subjectivity run amok when he wonders “what assurances” he and his allies can possibly have of their status as the heroes of history “when every one pretends to be in the right, both in his belief and proceedings?”¹⁸² Many writers of political prose and poetry did not, however, assume along with Hobbes that the

¹⁸² Percy Herbert, The Princess Cloria, or, The Royal Romance (London, 1661), 319. All subsequent references to this text will appear parenthetically by page number.
best answer was to abandon romance. Instead, their efforts became less concerned with heroic and communal faith in providential favor—the sort of unfalsifiable conviction that disturbed Hobbes—than with how a narrative’s protagonists might negotiate between belief and uncertainty, and between the hope of future success and the present realities of failure, contingency, and delay. This chapter explores the ongoing, increasingly meta-generic ideological struggle, but with particular emphasis on John Milton’s turns (back) to romance in his post-Restoration poems—for while royalists are well known for their enduring engagement with the genre, Milton is broadly considered to have forsaken it in frustration as his career progressed.

The young Milton’s love of romance is accepted as a matter of record. In his 1642 anti-episcopal pamphlet *An Apology for Smectymnuus*, Milton recounts his literary education, dwelling at some length on how his “younger feet wandered [...] among those lofty fables and romances, which recount in solemn cantos the deeds of knighthood.” Clear signs of this romantic reading appear prominently in his fanciful masque *Comus* and throughout his later prose. *Areopagitica*, for example, features the extended chivalric metaphor of “the true warfaring Christian” and his quest for Truth, and praises “our sage and serious Poet Spenser” as “a better teacher then Scotus or Aquinas.” The allegorical search for truth reappears in *Of Education*, and the imagery of Spenserian and folk romance features even in the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, where Milton again imagines history as a heroic narrative in which chosen protagonists defend Truth from “serpentine” Error: at select times, God “calls together the prudent and religious counsels

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183 CPW, 694.
184 Ibid., 728-9.
of men [...] to be the sole advocate[s] of a discountenanced truth: [...] a high enterprise and a hard, and such as every seventh son of a seventh son does not venture on.”

Nevertheless, as the tensions of civil war escalated, and as his political enemies began increasingly to define royalist heroism and history through the language and narrative shape of romance, Milton’s youthful enthusiasm for the genre seemed rapidly to cool. In his 1650 *Eikonoklastes*, Milton denounces romance as an insincere, ungodly tool with which Charles I and his followers manipulate popular sentiment. *Eikonoklastes* mocks its target, the propagandistic *Eikon Basilike*, for assigning to Charles a seemingly heartfelt prayer that was in fact plagiarized from “no serious book, but the vain amatorious poem of Sir Philip Sidney’s *Arcadia*—a book in that kind full of worth and wit, but among religious thoughts and duties not worthy to be named,” accusing the King of slavish devotion to the “sweet rhapsodies of heathenism and knight-errantry.” Milton was clearly familiar enough with Sidney’s *New Arcadia* to recognize a passage cribbed from it, but if the royalists were now claiming Sidney for their own in a war of both arms and ideas, he was compelled to disdain the book as witty enough (for a romance), but otherwise “not worthy.” The “religious” zeal and romantic rhetoric that often went hand-in-hand in Milton’s earlier writing appeared to become incompatible.

The anti-romantic *Eikonoklastes* is often regarded as Milton’s final word on the genre. While a small set of Miltonists, including Barbara Lewalski, Northrop Frye, Maureen Quilligan, and Colin Burrow, have suggested that Milton remained committed to romance’s

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185 Ibid., 697.
186 Ibid., 793, 795.
godly potential for a Puritan audience, more have determined that the genre’s royalist associations overshadowed his enthusiasm, and that his eventual distaste for it spread into his later epic poems, *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. George Williamson finds that Milton ultimately rejected romance as too Cavalier; Stanley Fish and Regina Schwartz both propose that Milton was politically and religiously motivated to abandon genre altogether in favor of a poetics of divine temporality that resisted conventional narrative shape; and David Loewenstein suggests that the crushing disappointment of the Puritan cause left Milton uneasy about optimistic genres after the Restoration. Annabel Patterson makes the crucial point that both positive and negative views of romance seem to coexist in Milton’s late poetry, a dichotomy also noted by Clare Kinney and John Steadman. But all three conclude that Milton saw something about the genre as finally and fundamentally fallen: in Patterson’s words, its usurpation by the royalists led to “his sense that the romantic mode, cultural or political, was irretrievably spoiled.”

Scholars who argue for Milton’s break with romance overwhelmingly cite the genre’s cosmetic associations with royalist ideology as his primary reason for rejecting it. However, historicist critics have often put too much stock in romance’s being a distinctly

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191 Patterson, “Last Chance at True Romance,” 197.
royalist genre, as Nigel Smith and Amelia Zurcher Sandy have pointed out; moreover, we
must keep in mind that even the young Milton never defined romance by its externalities
alone.¹⁹² Defending his reading habits in the *Apology for Smectymnuus*, Milton claims that
narratives of knighthood taught him “that every free and gentle spirit without that oath ought
to be borne a Knight, nor needed to expect the guilt spurre, or the laying of a sword upon his
shoulder to stirre him up [...] to secure and protect the weaknesse of any attempted
chastity.”¹⁹³ In other words, Milton, like many Protestant writers before him, sees romance
as belonging to the “free and gentle” soul, whose heroic vocation is to stand in defense of
godliness, regardless of the presence or absence of other chivalric tropes. I argue in this
chapter that Milton never abandoned this idea. Rather than trusting an angry political
pamphlet to contain Milton’s final word on genre, we might look to his most seminal
poetry instead.¹⁹⁴ In so doing, we find that romance as a Puritan literary mode is very
much alive in *Paradise Lost*, and especially in *Paradise Regained*, despite aspects of
these texts that appear anti-romantic, and that Milton actually found romance more useful
to his ideology, not less, after 1660.

Milton’s late poems feature both positive and negative gestures toward romance
not because of Milton’s ambivalence, but because they embody a struggle between the
genre as an ungodly, implicitly royalist mode and an equally (or more) romantic Puritan
alternative. Critically, they are concerned not so much with the early Caroline approaches

¹⁹³ *CPW*, 694.
¹⁹⁴ *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* offers an apt lesson about drawing conclusions from emotional
source material. Milton declines to interpret David’s cry in Psalm 51, “Against thee onely have I sinn’d,” as
evidence that Kings are beholden only to God: “any wise men will see that the pathetical words of a Psalm can
be no certaine decision to a poynt that hath abundantly more certain rules to goe by” (in C. A. Patrides,
to amorous and chivalric romance that Patterson cites as with the much more recent postwar romances and semi-historical romans-à-clef of the 1650s and 1660s. While these later royalist texts retained many of the genre’s external tropes by featuring the meandering adventures and hardships of dispossessed aristocratic characters, they made major revisions to the foundations of its narrative structure, and particularly to its didactic and religious components. As Paul Salzman and Victoria Kahn have discussed in detail, although the restoration of Charles II seemed to align history with romance’s common theme of royal loss and recovery, the King’s supporters were disturbed enough by the upheaval of the Interregnum that their treatment of the genre was irrevocably altered to address the problems of historical contingency and unstable heroic subjectivity. A brief look at Herbert’s The Princess Cloria and at Margaret Cavendish’s postwar prose romance Assaulted and Pursued Chastity will introduce the royalist revisions that Milton counters with his own poetic assertion of Puritan romance. This chapter will then turn to three of Milton’s poetic perspectives on historical time, narrative, and genre, ordered not according to the date of their composition but by their chronology within Christian history: first Paradise Lost, followed by the early but essentially Miltonic “On the Morning of Christ’s Nativity,” and concluding with Milton’s truly final word on romance, Paradise Regained.

“A World Within Him Self”: Royalist Romances of Pragmatic Providence

The unique structural characteristics of postwar royalist romance have been well characterized by Salzman, whose analysis helps begin to reveal a great deal about the

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most immediate textual backdrop to Milton’s 1671 poem. Salzman argues that the royalist narratives that reacted to the demise of Charles I and the eventual restoration of Charles II fundamentally revise several assumptions about the narrative structure and didactic goals of the genre. Postwar royalist romances thrive on ambiguity instead of absolutes, offering their readers “questions rather than answers” about the nature of providence and of heroic virtue. Their dispossessed and disillusioned characters wonder about the extent of God’s role in human events and hence about their own responsibilities, unsure whether to interpret the tempest of history as a divinely-structured plot or a series of contingencies dependent upon the interaction of individual agency with uncontrollable fortune. As Smith, Kahn, and others have discussed, the writers of such romances were engaging directly not just with their ideological opponents, but with the anti-romantic political philosophy of their fellow royalist Hobbes, who was particularly alarmed by the genre’s chaotic potential to convince anyone of his or her special status as a hero ordained and justified by providential decree. Instead of shunning romance altogether, some royalist writers set out to attempt a quasi-Hobbesian variant on the genre. In denying the certainty of providential authorship and of any divine inspiration for heroic subjectivity, they continued to combat Puritan theology while confronting their own doubts; in acknowledging the remoteness or silence of a heavenly authority, they continued to resist republicanism by insisting upon the need for a heroic earthly authority to provide for the common good by determining and imposing the most effective political and narrative order.

196 Salzman, 166.
Sir Percy Herbert’s *The Princess Cloria*, a coded *roman-à-clef* begun in exile during the 1650s and printed in England after the Restoration, epitomizes the royalist revision of romance in its self-conscious anxiety over heroic subjectivity and providential narrative structure.\(^{197}\) As Salzman has noted, the protagonists of *Cloria* are not atheists, but they do, in the words of Cloria’s page, continually question “whether [divine] power have any consideration or regard to our actions, otherwise then to maintain a succession and increase upon earth [...] as it fareth with Birds, Beasts, Plants and the like” (361). The royal Arethusius (Herbert’s figure for Charles II) finds himself so stymied by the political machinations of religious zealots that he at times doubts the value and purpose of religion: “scarce can it be believed, there are any Gods in Heaven, or at the most that minde our actions upon earth” (463). Throughout the narrative, character after character verges on the conclusion that “either [the Gods’] Justice or [their] Power” must be lacking (555). Herbert does introduce other sympathetic characters who attempt to offer pious consolation to the heroes, such as the priest Hephestion, who counsels Euarchus that ignorant humans must “observe in a manner continually, both a perfect charity, and an entire patience” (320). “Perfect charity” and “entire patience” have the sound of Milton’s favorite Protestant virtues, but unlike most of Milton’s heroes, the denizens of *Cloria* fear that they may be practicing them in a spiritual vacuum, valuing patience for its own sake rather than as the expectation of the fulfillment of providential order. In the context of Hephestion’s advice, “Perfect charity” and “entire patience” are tools for survival in a world without assurances; they seem more like the armor of resignation than the weapons

\(^{197}\) Echoing Salzman, Smith also notes that Percy Herbert’s *Cloria* “provides reactions rather than answers” to the problems of history and to the decline of sincere and straightforward royalist romance (237).
of faith. Indeed, Herbert’s characters express unresolvable doubt and discomfort about how providence ought to be understood and defined as a force operating within history. Locrinus conflates divine providence with an impersonal “predominate fate” that has used “some strange period” of civil strife as an instrument “for the punishing of wickedness” (539-40). And when Arethusius has the opportunity to trust that providence will reward righteousness rather than dispassionately punish evil, he instead grounds his hope that he may one day return to the throne of Lydia in “the instability of things,” or the vague vicissitudes of time, which “would of necessity at last bring him to his Rights” (445). Not God, but Arethusius’ subjects, awash in cosmic uncertainty, will ultimately depend upon a mortal monarch to restore (or impose) order, just as Hobbes’ political philosophy finds fit. Salzman notes that Arethusius’ eventual triumph and return to power are made retroactively “inevitable” by the historical fact of Charles II’s restoration and are then “gladly embraced by fiction”—that is, history happens to have conformed to romance’s conventional shape—but the king’s happy ending is not obviously the work of any providential power internal to his story.\(^{198}\)

As an inhabitant of a formulaic genre that nevertheless acknowledges no clear authorial providence, the romantic hero Arethusius ironically arrives at a personal philosophy that embraces many of Hobbes’ most anti-romantic principles. He finally finds comfort in his stoical avowal that “man was a world within him self, being not to be deprived of an inward felicity by any power or tyranny, if he proved not the destroyer thereof by his own passions” (416). Much as Hephestion’s “perfect charity” and “entire

\(^{198}\) Salzman, 174.
patience” resemble Miltonic virtues but prove distinct in their lack of a zealous origin and end, Arethusius’ “world within him self” might sound like Milton’s “Paradise within” (PL 12.587), but it is not. In Cloria’s universe, which might be ruled by a cold providence or by “predominate fate” or by atomistic chance—or by some vague combination of the three—Arethusius must weather the tempest of history through clear-eyed self-reliance, not through faith in the unseen. He turns inward not for divine guidance and inspiration, but because his only certain reference is himself, and his own judgment leads him to a pragmatic philosophy in which one’s outward actions may not match one’s inner sense of virtuous heroism: in order to be an effective ruler, Arethusius resolves, “sometimes we must dissemble towards people [...] I cannot deny it” (392). He comes to the Hobbesian conclusion that while his duty as king compels him to act for the good of his kingdom and its people, he has no external “assurances” about the right course of action, and so the nature of that public good, and the substance of that individual action, must be his to determine as well as he can. Having acknowledged the instability of romance and the self-imposed nature of heroic subjectivity, he is free to take control of the navigation of his story while also benevolently controlling others.

Margaret Cavendish’s romantic style, while less melancholy than Herbert’s Cloria and less overtly historicized, features a similar principle of wariness about crediting a narrative plan to divine providence and hence a similar emphasis on politic pragmatism and self-reliance. As we have seen in her Life of William, Cavendish deeply mistrusts any human claim to know the mind of God, associating such assertions with

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Puritans such as Milton. In her *Philosophical Letters*, she derides those who claim to hold “the Key of Divine Providence”:

The truth is, what is Immaterial, belongs not to a Natural knowledge or understanding, but is Supernatural, and goes beyond a natural reach or capacity. Concerning “the Key of Divine Providence”, I believe God did never give or lend it to any man; for surely, God, who is infinitely Wise, would never intrust so frail and foolish a Creature as Man, with it, as to let him know his secret Counsels, Acts, and Decrees. But setting aside Pride and Presumption, Sense and Reason may easily perceive, that Man [...] is not made with such infinite Excellence, as to pierce into the least secrets of God; Wherefore I am in a maze when I hear of such men, which pretend to know so much[.]

Cavendish strips all such dangerously zealous presumption from her definition of providence in *The World’s Olio* as the distinctly human ability “to observe the Effect of Things, and to compare the past with the present, as to guess, and so to provide for the Future.” We will recall that in her introduction to the *Life of William*, Cavendish disdains the Puritans’ vision of history as a “mystical” narrative authored by God’s providence in which heroism is the exclusive province of the godly. Writers who compose “mystical” histories, she alleges, do so “out of Policy to amuse and deceive the People” and substitute “Romansical Falshoods for Historical Truths.” In her own romances, Cavendish releases herself from accountability to William’s model of the genre and holds even her fanciful narratives to the standards of rational historiography and natural philosophy. Her fictions reformulate the genre’s Protestant reliance on providential plot: as in *The World’s Olio*, providence signifies not God’s design for

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200 Anna Battigelli has also noted that Cavendish uses scientific skepticism to undermine the religious dogmatism that she blamed for the civil wars, replacing prophets with scientists. See “Political Thought/Political Action: Margaret Cavendish’s Hobbesian Dilemma” in *Women Writers and the Early Modern British Political Tradition*, ed. Hilda Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1998), 40-55.


202 Margaret Cavendish, *The World’s Olio* (London, 1655), Y3v

203 Cavendish, *The Life of William Cavendish*, c2r, d1r.
human affairs, but the individual’s potential to provide for herself. In so doing, she reasons and acts in order to chart her own future, rather than attempting to strain for a glimpse of a sacred narrative vision that might explain her movement through time and space. Rather than inhabiting a preexisting and predestined narrative, they create their own narratives out of apparent chaos.

In Cavendish’s 1656 *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity*, both heroine and narrator regard pragmatic providence as their guiding principle. The romance’s nameless heroine, hereafter known by one of her assumed names, Travellia, enters the narrative when an unscrupulous guardian abandons her “to Chance, Time, and Fortune.” The lady set adrift on fortune’s figurative and literal tide is, of course, a common trope in Early Modern, medieval, and classical romance, but her destiny usually proves to be secure in the hands of providential forces. Travellia, however, must provide for her own ends. Like *The Princess Cloria, Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* is not an atheistic romance: its characters acknowledge the Greco-Roman pantheon, and Travellia’s adoptive father goes so far as to pronounce on his deathbed that the gods “will reward [her] Vertue” (L14v).

Crucially, though, the heroes presume no knowledge of how the gods direct the trajectories of their lives, apart from their belief that heaven helps those who help themselves. For instance, upon “considering” her “dangerous condition” at finding her virginity for sale in a brothel, Travellia reflects “that the Gods would not hear her, if she lasily called for help and watch’d for Miracles neglecting Naturall means; Whereupon she

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204 Margaret Cavendish, *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity*, in *Natures Pictures Drawn by Fancies Pencil to the Life* (London, 1656), Ff2v. All subsequent references to this text will appear parenthetically by quarto page number.
thought the best ways was secretly to convey herself out of that place, and trust herself againe to chance; by reason there could not be more danger than where she was in” (Ff3r).

While Travellia never rejects outright the potential for miracles to occur, she determines that there is neither sense nor virtue in expecting one to save her now. Divine providence, in her experience, functions through pragmatic providence, and so she turns to “Naturall means” and judges future contingencies less dangerous than the certainties of the present.

Yet while she often acknowledges the roles of “Chance” and “Fortune” in aiding or frustrating mortal endeavors, Travellia leaves as little as possible to their random disposal. Most notably, she acquires a pistol by exploiting the naïve romantic imagination of her captor’s maidservant, concocting a parodic story about the prophecy of a “wise Wizard” to justify her request for the gun, which she conceals in anticipation of future need and eventually uses to shoot her would-be rapist (Ff3v). Although she deceives the “simple Wench” by pretending that the pistol can perform a supernatural charm to protect her from evil and ensure her happiness, the weapon’s purpose in Cavendish’s rational narrative—as opposed to Travellia’s opportunistically fanciful one—is almost comically natural (Ff3v).

Metaphysical forces arrange for neither the pistol nor successful escape to come to Travellia by happenstance; she provides both for herself. Moreover, while she harbors a Hobbesian disdain for romances as full of “impossibilities [...] ridiculous to reason” (despite inhabiting one herself), she is well aware of the genre’s power to manipulate the passions of others—a power that she exploits to further her own rational romance (Ff4v).

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205 Along the same lines, Travellia also disfavors “Divine books,” arguing that “they raise up such controversie, as they cannot be allayd againe, tormenting the minde about that they cannot know whil’st they live” (Gg1r).

206 Kahn argues that Cavendish “uses the concerns of romance to counter the Hobbesian response” to England’s political crisis; however, she also points out that Cavendish’s decision to employ rather than
Like her fictional heroine, the authorial Cavendish’s narrative vision for *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* is founded not upon providential “impossibilities,” but upon the study of human nature and in the relationship between probability and contingency. Her rational romance attributes unhappy events, such as defeat in battle, to Fortune: Travellia’s father observes that “nothing [is] more subject to Chance than War, and that the valiantest and wisest Men might fall by Fortunes hand” (L13v). Cavendish even takes care that felicitous events that would pass without question in many romances must not be made “ridiculous to reason” in hers. When the Prince receives word that his first wife has died, leaving him free to marry Travellia, the message from his home reaches him despite the fact that he has been abroad in disguise for many years; yet it arrives not by supernatural or even authorial intervention, but thanks to the pragmatic providence of his loyal subjects, who, “although they knew not where he was, yet they sent Letters into several Countryes, in hope some might light into his hands” (Mm1v). *Assaulted and Pursued Chastity* may follow a conventional romance trajectory through tribulation to satisfaction, but Cavendish ensures its narrative progress through the confluence of chance, human discernment, and statistical logic.

At the height of her narrative, Travellia becomes an evangelist on behalf of pragmatic providence. Shipwrecked and held by natives who plan to sacrifice her to their gods, she patiently observes her captors until the ideal opportunity, then astounds them with a learned sermon on how “[their] ignorance hath lead [them] wrong wayes” despite their well-meaning piety (Hh3v). She persuadesthe natives to forsake their superstitious

dismiss romance is sometimes “less a simple rebuttal of Hobbes [...] than an adaptation of [his] arguments concerning the power of self-interest” (*Wayward Contracts*, 172, 192).
zeal and thus to become “a civilized people” (Hh4v) by explaining that while the gods of nature certainly “governe all their Works,” they do so in a surprising manner:

the Gods made [Chance] by their providence when they made man, for man hath no more knowledge of the transitory things of the world than what chance gives them, who is an unjust distributer, For all externall gifts comes from her hand [....] none have perfect knowledge, for the Gods mix mans nature with such an aspiring ambition; that if they had a perfect knowledge [...] of the first cause; and the effects produced there from, they would have warr’d with the Gods, and strove to usurp their authority, so busie and vain-glorious hath the Gods made the minds of men. Wherefore the Gods governe the world by ignorance[.]

(Hh3v)

Throughout Cavendish’s works, “providence” refers almost always to human prudence; here, Travellia employs it just once in a metaphysical sense. This divine providence has a single design for creation: to order it by creating disorder in the form of “Chance.” It protects human affairs not by bestowing prophetic visions upon the faithful or by guiding them toward a sacred end, but by frustrating such a teleology and any mortal claim to know it, since if man could truly perceive divine order, the result of that heady knowledge would be a Hobbesian form of spiritual chaos. The function of divine providence, Travellia concludes, is to necessitate human providence. For despite Chance’s regency in the material world, it cannot intrude into the realm of individual reason and subjectivity: “For the Soul is a kind of God in it self, to direct and guide those things that are inferior to it; to perceive and descry into those things that are far above it, to create by invention, to delight in contemplations” (Hh3v-Hh4r). While divine providence makes the world subject to contingency, human providence allows self-reliance and pragmatism to contend with Chance. Travellia assumes that randomness is intrinsic to the universe, and arrives at a happy ending through her ability to “provide for the Future” by owning her own secular subjectivity, analyzing patterns of experience, and
making the best of contingency. Rather than pretending to a vision of predestined sacred narrative, she creates her own narrative out of apparent chaos. In Catherine Gallagher’s terminology, much as Herbert’s Arethusius becomes convinced by his romantic trials of the necessity of acting as roi absolu, Travellia steps in to perform as moi absolu, “a kind of God in [her] self.”

Kahn has described postwar royalist romance as “a crisis of genre”: after the execution of Charles I, and despite the eventual restoration of his son, the royalists required a “revised [...] form” of romance in order to sustain it as a mode suitable for their community after the Interregnum, one which could account for individual subjectivity and for the tragic vicissitudes of history while emphasizing the need for pragmatic personal rule over the self and others. This “crisis” manifests itself through romances that retain their conventional narrative arc—from loss through wandering trials to eventual renewal—but take nothing else for granted. While Herbert laments the loss of naive providential romance, and Cavendish is more cheerfully ironic in her embrace of new perspectives on subjectivity and narrative, both writers feel compelled to raise similar questions: is the structure of plot—whether historical or fanciful—guided by providence, by fate, by random chance, by human agency, or by a combination thereof? Can mortals reliably distinguish between these forces? What constitutes heroic identity amidst such structural and spiritual ambiguity? Herbert’s and Cavendish’s responses are likewise similar: creation is barred from knowledge of divine providence, if such a thing

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208 Victoria Kahn, “Reinventing Romance; or, the Surprising Effects of Sympathy,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 55.2 (2002): 625-61, 630.
exists; pragmatic and secular self-reliance is essential, since the “world within” is an individual’s only constant reference amidst external turmoil; and because events occur apparently at random, a successful figure of authority must act to impose order, while a successful search for narrative order requires a sense of self-possession over one’s own persona and plot. Patience is often rewarded in these romances, but it is not the Miltonic version of the virtue: for Herbert and Cavendish, it signifies either resignation or calculated compromise, a waiting for a better chance, not for the providential “fullness of time.” The result, in Kahn’s words, is “an ironic self-consciousness about literary convention and genre,” a worldly “detachment from the conventions of romance” that coexists with the royalist reliance on romance’s political utility as a narrative of tribulation and restoration.209

Paradise Lost: Two Falls into Two Romances

Given The Princess Cloria and Assaulted and Pursued Chastity as representative models of the latest variations on seventeenth-century romance, Milton’s knotty approach to the genre in his late poetry becomes considerably easier to untangle. The new royalist paradigm of the pragmatic, individualistic hero struggling to contend with the vicissitudes of fortune—treated with seriousness and skill by writers like Herbert and Cavendish—appears from a Miltonic perspective as something far more sinister. George Williamson has claimed of Paradise Lost that “its romantic elements, if any, [belong] to the forces of evil. If the ‘true warfaring Christian’ had once been a ‘Knight in Arms,’ he had defected

209 Kahn, Wayward Contracts, 231.
to the other side” by the time Milton wrote his epic. As Williamson, Patterson, and others have noted, Milton clearly does associate Satan and his fallen confederates with many of the trappings of romance. They are compared to “Faerie Elves” (1.781) or “Aerie Knights” who “Prick forth” across the landscape of a weirdly Spenserian hell (2.536); their martial ranks resemble

what resounds
In Fable or Romance of Uthers Son
Begirt with British and Armoric Knights;
And all who since, Baptiz’d or Infidel
Jousted in Aspramont or Montalban,
Damasco, or Marocco, or Trebisond
Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore
When Charlemain with all his peerage fell
By Fontarabbia.

(1.579-87)

Satan even imagines himself as a romantic hero, claiming to believe in his own version of the fortunate fall, by which his “wandring quest” undertaken “with lonely steps” may one day appear “More glorious” (2.828-30, 16). The chivalric narratives the young Milton loved appear to have been corrupted, co-opted by the ungodly. Annabel Patterson argues as much—yet she also points out the puzzle that “much of what Milton condemned” about romance, “he also managed to retain in one way or another” elsewhere in Paradise Lost. Clare Kinney observes a similar apparent contradiction: “[Satan’s] fallen romance is never entirely transcended [...]. One might even suggest that Adam and Eve’s ‘wandering steps and slow’ at the conclusion of Book 12 will carry them out of Christian epic and into this most errant of genres.” I propose that the poem presents us with two

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210 Williamson, 18.
211 Patterson, “Last Chance at True Romance,” 200.
212 Kinney, Strategies of Poetic Narrative, 129.
parallel falls into romance, and with two parallel visions of romance’s narrative form. In light of Herbert’s and Cavendish’s texts, the relationship in *Paradise Lost* between bad romance and acceptable—even godly—romance appears less contradictory and mysterious: Satan falls into the royalist romance of the exiled subject of fortune, while Adam and Eve fall into the providential romance of God’s community.

Crucially, the distinction between Satanic and godly romance does not rest entirely on generic externalities. Williamson proposes that Milton grew to reject narratives of war and chivalry in favor of those “Of Patience and Heroic Martyrdom” (*PL* 9.32), and it is true that Satan is more often associated with the spectacular trappings of romance such as knight-errantry and tournaments (though these outward signs are not wholly absent from the poem’s positive turns toward the genre). Yet as the royalist romances that postdate Charles I’s fall reveal, Milton was hardly alone in coming to prefer a heroic ethic of patience and endurance over one of martial prowess. To a large extent, the harsh reality of civil war had soured royalists and republicans alike on the glories of chivalry, and the most famous “Heroic Martyr” of the age was surely Charles I himself. Milton does not simply condemn romance in *Paradise Lost*, nor does he merely oppose a gaudy romance of war to a sober narrative of obedience to God; instead of this stark and simple difference, he actively resists the *new* royalist romance of patience and self-integrity by assigning its unique characteristics to the fallen angels and by combating it with a providential romance that extols corrective Puritan forms of the same traits. Where royalist writers approach the fact that heroic identity may be assumed by anyone by suggesting that it may have no basis

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213 See Williamson, 19.
in divine favor, Milton insists more strongly than ever on the authenticity of an exceptional subjectivity for the godly; where they make room for tragedy, contingency, and doubt by displacing providence, he proposes that these apparent threats to romance reassert the value of a providential understanding of the genre.

Once we have identified the distinctive features of postwar royalist romance—deliberate murkiness about ordered or predestined narrative, valorization of secular subjectivity and strength of will, and a thematic blend of fatalism and pragmatism—the prevalence of these features in *Paradise Lost*’s infernal romance is striking, even uncanny. The poem’s first two books in particular, set in Hell and focused on Satan, pursue the thematic concerns of writers like Cavendish and Herbert, suggesting that regardless of what texts in particular Milton may or may not have known, he remained as familiar as he had been in his pamphlet-writing days with popular royalist strategies of manipulating history as story. Book 2, for instance, opens with Satan calling his followers to a council on how they may be restored to their “just inheritance of old,” and “by what best way, / Whether of open Warr or covert guile” (2.38, 41). The debate that follows amongst the devils bears a marked resemblance to the ongoing conversations throughout *Cloria* and other royalist *romans-à-clef* about the proper course(s) of action for the deposed prince and his community of followers: should the exiles fight, wait, plot, or do all these things at the times they deem best? While the unsubtle and belligerent Moloch, like a demonic variation on Herbert’s passionately martial figure for James II, urges open war with the adversary who has driven them from their “just inheritance,” Belial advises

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214 For a strong discussion of this problem in royalist romance, see Kahn, *Wayward Contracts*, esp. 227-33.
what the narrator describes as “ignoble ease, and peaceful sloath,” but what he himself represents as sufferance and pragmatic patience (2.227). “To suffer, as to doe, / Our strength is equal,” he claims, suggesting that “since fate inevitable / Subdues us,” the fallen angels should delay action until they discover “what chance, what change” might be “Worth waiting” (2.197-200, 222-3).215 Mammon agrees, stressing the royalist virtues of politic consideration and self-reliance: he favors “peaceful Counsels” and proposes that they “might rise / By pollicy, and long process of time” (2.279, 296-7). Instead of relying on “force impossible,” they ought to embrace the superior liberty and “inward felicity” that Cloria’s Arethusius recommends, which comes only from accepting the self-sufficiency of one’s subjectivity: “Let us [...] // rather seek / Our own good from our selves, and from our own / Live to our selves [...] / Free, and to none accountable” (2.249-55). Finally, Beelzebub, “Majestic though in ruin” and radiating the “Princely counsel,” “Deliberation,” and “public care” of a royal exile like Herbert’s hero (2.303-5), serves as the public mouthpiece for Satan’s plan to tempt humanity into the same sin and false belief that the devils share: once they have fallen from their own “inheritance” into hell’s perverse narrative, they too “shall curse / Thir frail Originals, and faded bliss” (2.374-5). Having thus determined, the devils disperse, comforting and entertaining themselves by recasting recent events within romantic molds, as the royalist writers of historical romances do: they compose epic tales of “Thir own Heroic deeds and hapless fall / By doom of Battel; and complain that Fate / Free Vertue should enthrall to Force or Chance” (2.549-51).

215 Roy Flannagan has argued that Milton’s Belial in particular functions as a figure for the royalist libertine, and that Belial’s supposed advocacy of patient sufferance is in fact “the exact opposite of ‘Patience and Heroic Martyrdom’ (9.32) advocated by the narrator” (The Riverside Milton [Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1998], 387, n.50). As ever, Milton finds that the royalist virtues that seem most similar to his own could not, in fact, be less alike.
Milton here parodies another trend in postwar royalist romance which should now be familiar. The devils are notoriously vague whenever they ponder the origins of their story or contemplate its future course: is their narrative shaped by divine will, impersonal fate, contingency, or personal agency? Beelzebub questions whether God’s “high Supremacy” is “upheld by strength, or Chance, or Fate” (1.132-3); Mammon imagines that “him to unthrone we then / May hope, when everlasting Fate shall yeild / To fickle Chance” (2.231-3); and Satan proposes that resolution to perform “Great things [...] / Will once more lift us up, in spight of Fate,” speculating that “perhaps [...] / with neighbouring Arms / And opportune excursion we may chance / Re-enter Heav’n” (2.392-7). All three lack clarity not just about which of these forces orders events, but about how they stand in relation to one another. Can chance overcome fate? Can action subdue fortune? Satan even equates “chance” with “Arms / And opportune excursion,” which seem to belong to the deliberative sphere of skill and careful planning. Like the royalists’ heroes, they avoid settling on a cosmology that could definitively structure or frustrate their narrative and are skeptical that God’s design might supersede fate, chance, or strategy. Satan resolves that “If then his Providence / Out of our evil seek to bring forth good, / Our labour must be to pervert that end, [...] // Which oft times may succeed”: with fortune’s favor, politic consideration and timely action might prove more influential than a mysterious, ambiguous God (1.162-6).

The fallen angels’ doubt that divine providence exercises complete control over events leads them to seek alternative means of explaining their own story’s past and determining its future. Much as the deposed Arethusius finds his chief solace in his belief that “man was a world within him self, being not to be deprived of an inward felicity by
any power or tyranny,” and as Travellia lives by the maxim that “the Soul is a kind of God in it self,” the community of devils console themselves by deriving their heroic subjectivity not from sacred conviction, but from the secular supremacy of the individual will. “[T]he mind and spirit remains / Invincible,” pronounces Beelzebub (1.139-40), anticipating Satan’s more famous declaration: “The mind is its own place, and in it self / Can make a Heav’n of Hell, a Hell of Heav’n. / What matter where, if I be still the same[?]” (1.254-6). Milton’s refiguration of the exiled prince justifies his continued leadership by boasting “A mind not to be chang’d by Place or Time” (1.253). Moreover, such interior constancy and dauntlessness also allow him to claim that he and his followers have won a moral victory: “What though the field be lost? / All is not lost; th’ unconquerable Will [...] // And courage never to submit or yield: / And what is else not to be overcome?” (1.105-9). The passive self-reliance that is characteristic of Herbert’s Arethusius soon persuades Satan to depend on an active self-reliance that is typical of Cavendish’s heroes as well: “Let us not slip th’ occasion” to regain the upper hand, he urges, since all occasions within his narrative are potentially equal and must be analyzed as logistical rather than providential opportunities (1.178). Indeed, Satan places the same emphasis on pragmatic providence that Cavendish and Travellia do: looking back on his defeat, he considers that “through experience of this great event [...] in foresight much advanc’t, / We may with much more successful hope resolve / To wage by force of guile eternal Warr” against Heaven (1.118-21). His narrative vision comes only from personal experience; in Cavendish’s words, by “observ[ing] the Effect of Things,” and “compar[ing]
the past with the present,” he aims “to provide for the Future” that he and his army wish to bring into being.

Imitating the heroes of postwar royalist romance, Satan thus attempts to create his own order out of what looks to him like a disorderly universe by turning to a “world within him self” for guidance. But within a Miltonic narrative cosmology, such profoundly secular and self-reflexive subjectivity is doomed. Milton ensures that instead of finding a “paradise within” himself, Satan instead discovers, “Which way I flie is Hell; my self am Hell” (4.75). His world within is a world insulated from both divine guidance and providential hope. In the midst of all of Satan’s romantic pretensions, we must keep in mind that he does not even believe in the narrative that he takes such pains to construct. When he urges his followers to exercise their own capacity for rational providence to regain their lost inheritance, he is “Vaunting aloud, but wrackt with deep despair” (1.126). In this despair, he clings all the more closely to his relativistic, neo-romantic “world within,” but forsakes a major structural pillar of the genre, unable to imagine a happy ending to his own story: “So farwell Hope, and with Hope farwell Fear, / Farwell Remorse: all Good to me is lost; / Evil be thou my Good” (4.108-110). Satan’s illusory romance thus collapses into irrevocable tragedy.

Maureen Quilligan has said of Satan and his followers that “In effect, their story is over” before it begins: “Having already fallen […] they have been hardened in their hearts; they are no longer free to choose the one thing that would give their story a plot—a developing climactic chronology. All they can do is repeat their mistakes.”216

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216 Quilligan, 108.
adopting the royalist romance of restoration as the official narrative model for their cause, the fallen angels abandon the teleological romance of the godly for the parody and tragedy of the unregenerate: as they “[reason] high / Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will and Fate, / Fixt Fate, free will, foreknowledg absolute,” They “[find] no end, in wandring mazes lost” (2.558-61). Wandering movement, of course, is endemic to the genre’s structure and to its characters, as Milton reminds us in the closing lines of *Paradise Lost*. But the devils’ wandering— unlike the wandering that Adam and Eve will later experience when they descend into the romance landscape beyond Eden—is doomed to have “no end,” no telos. The peregrinations of God’s heroes will finally lead them, as individuals and as a community, to reunion with the divine, but those who embark on a romantic quest separate from Providence are “lost” in a maze without an exit. In the absence of any sincere attempt at mediation between an errant middle and a teleological end, this endless romance is not really romance at all: the devils, using the royalist model, are doing it wrong. Milton’s narrator concludes that their treatment of the genre, with its “Vain wisdom” and “false Philosophie,” may possess the “pleasing sorcerie” to “charm / Pain for a while or anguish, and excite / Fallacious hope, or arm th’ obdured brest / With stubborn patience as with triple steel,” but it lacks any power to produce a perfectible story of loss and restoration (2.565-9).

Time and again, Milton’s fallen angels demonstrate postwar royalist perspectives on the absence or inaccessibility of inherent narrative order and the need to create a pragmatic personalized substitute. They also display what Milton (like many Puritans) saw as a royalist affinity for consciously and ostentatiously packaging their own history
in the frivolous trappings of genre (the sort of behavior that he also mocked and denounced in Eikonoklastes.) These parodic themes dominate Books 1 and 2 of Paradise Lost—and yet, as a number of readers have perceived, the poem’s overall attitude toward romance is not obviously or simply parodic. Considered comprehensively, the genre proves to be one of Milton’s many “things indifferent,” neither godly nor ungodly in itself, but only insofar as it is handled and interpreted by regenerate or unregenerate minds. The first two books of Paradise Lost explore the dire implications of a romance divorced from providential structure; the last two, on the other hand, “assert Eternal Providence” as the author of the arc of time (1.25). Adam and Eve’s fall into romance comes with new terms for a right understanding of the genre, including a rejection of both fatalism and the power of conventional heroism; an emphasis on the insufficiency of the individual mind to interpret or control the plot of history; an insistence upon the authenticity of a special narrative perspective for those whom God has chosen for such a vision; and a reaffirmation of romantic structure that, by providential design, is simultaneously errant and teleological.

Book 11 opens with Adam and Eve “in lowliest plight” but declared newly “Regenerat” (11.1, 5). As the first sinful and repentant members of the godly community, they have fallen into a romance that is Puritan and providential in nature where Satan’s was royalist and secular. The Father pronounces the entirety of their plot as individual believers, declined from “Happiness / And Immortalitie” to “Death [...] / after Life / Tri’d in sharp tribulation” but ultimately “refin’d / By Faith and faithful works, to second Life” and “up with Heav’n and Earth renewd” (11.58-66). The larger romance of the entire community
throughout history remains for Adam to learn from the archangel Michael during the final two books. Michael comes to Adam in a fitting shape, and one that indicates that the external markers of romance are not quite restricted to Satan or his secular model: he appears in “A militarie Vest” like those “worn by Kings and Heroes old,” armed with his “Sword, / Satans dire dread” (11.241-8). He thus enters Adam and Eve’s newly romantic world in his knightly biblical form as the hero of heaven’s army and the vanquisher of “the dragon” Satan.217 Milton may further intend for him to evoke the image of Saint George, England’s dragonslayer, who is of course also Spenser’s Redcrosse Knight, another godly hero who receives a sacred vision concerning time and genre on the peak of a mountain. (Milton also adheres to Spenser’s gendered archetypes of prophetic reception here: while Adam “to foresight [wakes]” on high, Eve “sleep[s] below,” assured in dreams that “the Promis’d Seed,” her progeny, “shall all restore” [11.368, 12.623].) In the vision that Michael subsequently reveals to Adam, several other types of the final battle against the Satanic serpent will take place, and Adam (now in Redcrosse’s position) will learn with difficulty to reject wrong perspectives on romantic narrative in favor of the providential model reserved for the regenerate, avoiding the royalist-inflected errors into which the devils fall in the first two books of the poem.

Like Contemplation leading Redcrosse, Adam’s literary progenitor and “historical” progeny, Michael and Adam “both ascend / In the Visions of God”:

\[
\text{It was a Hill} \\
\text{Of Paradise the highest, from whose top} \\
\text{The Hemisphere of Earth in clearest Ken}
\]

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Stretcht out to ampest reach of prospect lay.  
Not higher that Hill nor wider looking round,  
Whereon for different cause the Tempter set  
Our second Adam in the Wilderness,  
To shew him all Earths Kingdomes and thir Glory.  
(11.376-84)

Regina Schwartz has noted that Milton here typologically anticipates the yet-unwritten *Paradise Regained* and suggests the challenge that Adam faces in his mountaintop vision:

“The analogy is not to a place of definitive revelation, but to a place of temptation, and the temptation that Adam faces in the final books is to view the prospect of what lay before him and want to possess it.” Schwartz argues that Adam’s desire “to possess that entire story, to ‘know’ his future rather than to determine it […] is, in Stanley Fish’s phrase, the ‘temptation of plot.’” But in Fish’s reading (to which Schwarz subscribes), to succumb to the temptation of plot is to mistake timeless divine non-narrative for human narrative; what Adam (and later Jesus, as I will argue) must learn to do on their respective visionary summits is accept sacred time as a still-unfolding narrative, and as one which they, called to obey God and to trust in his authorial providence, have only limited power to “determine.” Unlike the heroes of postwar royalist romance (and Satan), who do strive to determine their own destinies in the absence of providential certainty, the protagonists of Milton’s Puritan romance demonstrate the superior authenticity of their heroic subjectivity by living in willing accordance within the plot predestined by God. The urge to leap to the end of the romance while bypassing the tortuous

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218 Schwartz, 134.
219 Mary Beth Rose has discussed Milton’s passive heroism (particularly as gendered feminine) in *Gender and Heroism in Early Modern English Literature* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2002), 85-99. Miltonic heroism is indeed often passive and implicitly feminized, though the potential for active heroism in the providentially correct moment always stands as a critical aspect of the hero’s calling.
experience of the middle—to possess the full story at once while elevated to a god’s-eye view without embracing the intra-narrative human perspective—is the temptation of non-plot. Satan will fall to this temptation, and press Jesus to do the same, in *Paradise Regained*; in *The Faerie Queene*, as we have seen, Redcrosse begs for permanent residency on the visionary peak and for a premature exit from his romance, which his guide forbids. On the mountain with Michael, Adam too repeatedly imposes his perspective on the narrative of history over the providential plot, and prematurely presumes a conclusion to the story that winds and stretches on, often to his dismay. As he must learn from his own guide, the long and burdensome middle of the romance must precede the sure but distant end, historical time must precede apocalyptic timelessness, and only divine narrative can point the way to divine non-narrative.

Much as the fallen Eve contemplates suicide, and as Satan’s concealed reaction to his own fall is circuitous despair, Adam is first tempted away from narrative temporality upon witnessing death: “O miserable Mankind, to what fall / Degraded, to what wretched state reserv’d! / Better end heer unborn” (11.500-2). Like Herbert’s forlorn exiles, he questions whether a providential hand may be glimpsed amidst such “inhuman pains”; only after Michael reinterprets death as indicative of human faithlessness does Adam “yeild it just” and “submit” (11.511, 526). As his vision of history continues, Adam faces both the temptations of wrong romance and the temptation of non-romance again and again, and must learn to renounce both before his re-descent into the “lower World” where individual and communal narrative unfolds within time (11.283).
Adam is first confronted with the tropes of “Soft” and “amorous” romance as he witnesses the courtship and marriage of his progeny with “A Beavie of fair Women” (11.582-4). Unsurprisingly, this vision “Of love and youth not lost” holds strong allure for the man “soon enclin’d to admit delight” who had recently defended his own inclination toward courtly love for his wife: “Much better seems this Vision, and more hope / Of peaceful dayes portends [...] / Here Nature seems fulfill’d in all her ends” (11.594, 599-602). Adam makes two mistakes here: his attraction to the amorous courtly romance of “these fair Atheists,” and his assumption that wooing and marriage can in themselves be the “end” of nature and of his descendants’ story (11.625). Yet once Michael corrects him, he reacts too vehemently, lamenting the very nature of the genre into which he himself has fallen—“O pittie and shame, that they who to live well / Enterd so faire, should turn aside to tread / Paths indirect”—and interprets this errant mode as feminine, inextricably associated with the evils of “Woman” (11.629-33). Scolded by his guide once more, he is immediately presented with the spectacle of another, more typically masculine, mode of romance: “Cities of Men with lofty Gates and Towrs, / Concours in Arms, fierce Faces threatning Warr, / Giants of mightie Bone, and bould emprise” who “joine” in “cruel Tournament” (11.640-2, 652). Michael is quick also to denounce this martial and chivalric variant, in which destruction and conquest are “Valour and Heroic Vertu call’d,” although Adam finds the violent story before him inherently unappealing.

220 Erin Murphy has noted in *Familial Forms* that the “tangle of historical styles” in Books 11 and 12, including “tragic, cyclical, millenarian, and typological,” contribute to a “problem of narrative” (126, 117). Adam’s greatest difficulty with this narrative is that it undermines his “ability to authorize”: to license and control the actions of his offspring, and also to determine the narrative’s shape (124).

221 Spenser’s Redcrosse makes a similar about-face, from expressing his yearning for “Ladies love” in one stanza to over-zealously renouncing “joyes so fruitlesse” in the next (*FQ* 1.x.62-3).
(11.690). The last and most critical alternative corrupt narrative that he must resist is the one that appeals most to the war-weary royalists and the fallen angels, which valorizes deliberative action and avoidance of conflict over both love and war. Neither the “Council” of the “grave” not the “jollitie” and “luxurie” of the peaceful can produce a happy ending once “The brazen Throat of Warr [has] ceast to roar,” much to Adam’s sorrow (11.661-2, 713-15):

I had hope
When violence was ceas’t, and Warr on Earth,
All would have then gon well, peace would have crownd
With length of happy dayes the race of men;
But I was farr deceav’d; for now I see
Peace to corrupt no less than Warr to waste.

(11.779-84)

Godless peace, Michael explains, is simply godless war’s twin: both “great exploits, but of true vertu void,” each leads endlessly to the other, with no triumphant conclusion in sight (11.790). Neither love, nor war, nor either politic or indulgent peace can underpin a teleological narrative with the power to redeem fallen humanity.

Faced with all this failure, Adam again laments history as story, along with his privileged oversight of it. The genre of history, he now assumes, must really be tragedy: “those few escap’t” on Noah’s ark, he grieves, “Famin and anguish will at last consume / Wandring that watrie Desert” (11.777-9). He has forgotten both the providential structure of the godly community’s story and the providential source of his own special view of it:

O Visions ill foreseen! better had I
Liv’d ignorant of future [...] 
Let no man seek
Henceforth to be foretold what shall befall
Him or his Childern, evil he may be sure[.]

(11.763-72)
David Loewenstein, reading Milton’s work through the hermeneutic of drama, sees Adam’s vision on the summit as evidence that Milton could not discount the fallen nature of all human endeavors and hence could not shake the sense that the tragic mode pervades historical narrative, despite holding out simultaneous hope for history as “divine comedy.” Romance, known onstage as tragicomedy, helps us navigate this generic divide. As we have seen other writers strive to manage, tragedy is the close companion of romance prior to its apparently unlikely resolution, and the incarnation and the second coming of Christ guaranteed for Milton that romantic structure stood internal to time as well as externally as time’s telos. In believing that history can only end tragically, Adam again speaks too soon. While the visions of Book 11 teach him to reject bad romance in all its guises, they also lead him into another temptation: to despair of the genre’s promise altogether, as Satan secretly does. Michael’s continued narrative in Book 12 therefore serves a new purpose: to re-educate Adam to recognize right romance as the true genre of history and to embrace it despite its formal challenges. Crucially, the final book of Paradise Lost returns to the most recognizably romantic tropes that the poem has previously associated with the demonic fellowship of Satan—the wandering quest and heroic combat—and reclaims them for the providential romance of a Puritan community. Perhaps more importantly, it warns against the devils’ and the royalists’ greatest narrative error as Milton perceives it: failure to entrust the structure of events to God’s often occluded design.

Unable to view the romance of providence, as opposed to its secular substitutes, with his deficient “mortal sight,” Adam relies on Michael to narrate the rest of history.

Loewenstein, 123-4.
The archangel unfolds his story though one type after another of Jesus’ wandering(s) in the wilderness and his battle(s) with Satan. First, Abraham escapes from the tyranny and idolatry instituted by the first despot, Nimrod, and leads his people—“one peculiar Nation” selected “From all the rest”—into the wilderness, “Not wandering poor, but trusting all his wealth / With God, who call’d him, in a land unknown” (12.111-12, 133-4). Later, the heroic brothers Moses and Aaron liberate the community of God’s chosen from slavery and “return / With glory and spoile back to thir promis’d Land” through “the wide Wilderness” (12.171-2, 224). Along the way, they engage in allegorical chivalric combat with the Pharaoh, taming “The River-dragon” with “ten wounds,” and in real warfare with other nations: “the rest / Were long to tell, how many Battels fought, / How many Kings destroyd, and Kingdoms won” (12.190-1, 260-2). Joshua, Moses’ successor, is the next martial hero to foreshadow the eponymous Jesus, “His Name and Office bearing, who shall quell / The adversarie Serpent, and bring back / Through the worlds wilderness long wanderd man / Safe to eternal Paradise of rest” (12.311-14). All these figures, Michael assures Adam, prepare the way for “the true / Anointed King Messiah,” the hero of the right royal romance, “born / Barr’d of his right” but destined at last to “ascend / The Throne hereditarie” of his father (12.358-60, 369-70).

Yet the very romantic tropes that enlighten Adam about the chosen people’s providential plot becomes a source of further confusion to him: he tends to over-literalize Michael’s metaphors and to revert to his old habits of rashly assuming knowledge of the story’s shape and end. In his joy at the introduction of the Messiah, he does both:

O Prophet of glad tidings, finisher
Of utmost hope! now clear I understand
What oft my steddiest thoughts have searcht in vain [...]  
Needs must the Serpent now his capital bruise  
Expect with mortal pain: say where and when  
Thir fight, what stroke shall bruise the Victors heel.  

(12.375-85)

Although the last hero has indeed entered the story, Adam’s haste to declare it “finish[ed],” and to proclaim that “now [...] [he] understand[s]” what he had missed before, remains problematic. He has been disposed both to mourn and to celebrate prematurely since the start of his vision, and responded with nearly identical exultation to Michael’s account of Abraham’s success:

O sent from Heav’n,  
Enlightner of my darkness, gracious things  
Thou hast reveald [...]  
now first I finde  
Mine eyes true op’ning, and my heart much eas’d,  
Erewhile perplext with thoughts what would becom  
Of mee and all Mankind; but now I see  
His day, in whom all Nations shall be blest[.]  

(12.270-77)

As he did then, Michael must again correct his pupil: “Dream not of thir fight, / As of a Duel, or the local wounds / Of head or heel” (12.386-8). Clearly, Adam has been inspired by the imagery of the divine romance, but he remains at risk of understanding the genre strictly through the secular externalities that have ensnared the devils. Yet his graver mistake is to presume that now he understands, that the great battle must surely occur now: he is still poised to use his subjectivity to justify seizing and interpreting his own occasions, to strive toward the end of a human narrative rather than live fully immersed within the providential plot. And just as the fight between the Satan and the Son will not resemble a human duel, its temporality resists easy placement within human history.
As Schwartz has discussed, the Son’s destined combat with the devil appears both endlessly repeated and indefinitely forestalled as Michael draws his narrative to a close: Satan’s defeat first seems accomplished at Jesus’ birth, but the bruising of the serpent’s head must be performed again through his perfect obedience to God (12.393-7), again during his sacrifice on the cross (12.427-33), and once more at his harrowing of hell and reascension into heaven (12.451-7). Yet even then, the divine romance remains unfinished: Michael explains that after the “deliverer’s” victory, “the few / His faithful” will resume their roles as the narrative’s exclusive community of earthly heroes, armed “With spiritual Armour” in resistance to “The enemies of truth” (12.479-91). This spiritual chivalry will endure as long as time itself, until the Son returns “to dissolve” his enemy—a verb that likewise vaporizes the weight of the previous martial imagery—and to establish “Ages of endless date” (12.546-9). The end of time marks the final end of the romance; until then, both history and genre stretch on towards an indistinct vanishing point. Schwartz argues that Michael’s lesson in deferral indicates that sacred time is fundamentally non-narrative and resistant to teleology—that “Adam cannot get there, Adam cannot see there, because there is no ‘there’ there”—yet Michael is quite clear that a ‘there’ that is not here is not the same as a ‘there’ that will never be anywhere.223 Adam must learn not that the romance and its end are unattainable or unreal, but that they do not belong to him to possess or identify. The hardest challenge he faces on the summit is to distinguish the ways in which reading history as a romance can enlighten him from the ways in which it can only make wandering in darkness bearable.224

223 Schwartz, 134-6.
224 Milton understood romance as a genre that mediated between deferral and fulfillment, and between enlightenment and ignorance, at least as early as Areopagitica (1644), which famously compares humanity’s slow quest for Truth to Plutarch’s ancient romance of Isis and Osiris: “the sad friends of Truth,
By the time Adam descends from the visionary mountain of meta-narrative back to the lower world of lived narrative—and back to Eve, consoled by her dreams of the hero that will spring from the tree of her descendants—his perspective on the structure of history is neither transcendently clear nor existentially nebulous. Unlike the protagonists of royalist or infernal romance, he feels compelled neither to exercise sole control over his story nor to despair of its meaning. We might recognize the “mystical” zeal of Cavendish’s stereotypical Puritan in Adam’s vow “ever to observe / [God’s] providence, and on him sole depend, / Mercifull over all his works, with good / Still overcoming evil,” but we no longer see any pretense to ownership of the “key” to that providence (12.563-6, emphasis mine). His full view of the romance of time has had a similar effect as his earlier prayer for forgiveness, which brought him “Strength added from above, new hope to spring / Out of despair, joy, but with fear yet linkt” (11.138-9). Rather than exulting in his newly regenerate subjectivity, he is compelled to conclude, “full of doubt I stand, / Whether I should repent me now of sin / [...] or rejoyce / Much more, that much more good thereof shall spring” (12.473-6). This doubt never appears fully resolved; as Adam and Eve take their “wandring steps” out of paradise and into the world of Michael’s errant narrative, they share “one Faith unanimous though sad, / With cause for evils past, yet much more cheer’d / With meditation on the happie end” (12.648, 603-5).

For both Milton and his ideological opponents, the romance of an individual life or such as durst appear, imitating the carefull search that Isis made for the mangl’d body of Osiris, went up and down gathering limb by limb still as they could find them. We have not yet found them all, Lords and Commons, nor ever shall doe, till her Masters second comming; he shall bring together every joynt and member, and shall mould them into an immortall feature of lovelines and perfection” (CPW, 1018).

225 Achsah Guibbory argues in The Map of Time that Adam and Eve’s imperfect understanding of their narrative represents the failure of education in a fallen world; people cannot be taught, and retain, divine
of a community’s history offers not a straight path to knowledge, but a wandering course through which the heroes can perceive the limits of knowledge and yet keep moving. But in Mil tonic romance, only the promise of providential structure, and the legitimacy of a sacred perspective bestowed by God, can justify that movement and lend it direction.

“On the Morning of Christ’s Nativity”: The Persistence of History

Milton’s 1629 poem celebrating the birth of Jesus, “On the Morning of Christ’s Nativity,” offers an important temporal link between the fall of man and the regaining of paradise as moments within Christian history. Despite the fact that the lyric was composed half a lifetime before Milton wrote his epics on the Nativity’s prequel and sequel, it also illuminates the coherence of his career’s commitment to a poetics of sacred temporality and sacred genre. While Milton honed his approach to narrative in his much later poetry and incorporated heightened political concerns into his postwar treatment of romance, he was also returning in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* to ideas that had dominated his earliest work.

The young Milton’s Nativity Ode opens with a jubilance that anticipates Adam’s naive delight in collapsing vast stretches of narrative into *now*:

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This is the month, and this the happy morn
Wherein the Son of Heav'n's eternal King,
Of wedded Maid, and Virgin Mother born,
Our great redemption from above did bring;
For so the holy sages once did sing,
That he our deadly forfeit should release,
And with his Father work us a perpetual peace.
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(1–7; emphasis mine)

truths (193–9). While Milton would surely agree, Adam and Eve’s doubt and confusion are symptomatic not simply of their denseness, but also of the genre that they now inhabit; moreover, part of their task in entering their new narrative is to live with their doubts rather than struggle to overcome them.
Verbs in past and conditional future tenses are circumscribed by the “now” and “forever” implied in the stanza’s first and last lines; the poem’s narrator dips us into historical time and then draws us upward out of it with the ecstatic promise that we are about to be granted our own vision of an event that transcends history. His enthusiasm flourishes throughout the Nativity Ode’s first half, permeating the world of the poem like the music of the angelic chorus:

Nature that heard such sound  
Beneath the hollow round  
Of Cynthia's seat, the Airy region thrilling,  
Now was almost won  
To think her part was don,  
And that her raign had here its last fulfilling[.]  

(101-6)

Again, the narrator’s supposition of what Nature “almost” thinks resembles Adam’s untimely conclusion upon witnessing his progeny’s amorous romance: “Here Nature seems fulfill’d in all her ends” (PL 11.602). As David Quint has argued, the Nativity Ode is a conscious exercise in this kind of narrative prematurity.226 The eager poet’s fantasies of temporal perfection reach far higher than Adam’s: he imagines that, hearing the music of the spheres that heralds Christ’s birth, “Time will run back, and fetch the age of gold” (135). Rather than merely stopping, time (as in the opening stanza) will effectively implode into infinity, drawn into a singularity that is apocalyptic as well as originary: “Yea Truth, and Justice then / Will down return to men,” and “Hell it self will pass away, / And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering Day,” while “Heav’n as at some festivall, / Will open wide the Gates of her high Palace Hall” (139-42, 147-8). Quint has observed that Milton’s

speaker enjoys a brief flirtation with universalism here as he imagines a defunct hell and a communally inclusive heaven. Like either Redcrosse or Adam on their overseeing peaks, the speaker is poised to grasp and possess the entirety of the story at once, to wind up the thread of history so that its entirety is visible, with the end result that time and plot, and perhaps even the exceptionalism of the godly, no longer carry useful meaning.

We already know what Michael would say, and the voice of wisdom likewise enters the Nativity Ode to temper the poet’s anti-narrative zeal: “But wisest Fate sayes no, / This must not yet be so” (149-50). As Adam must accept the forestalling of the final battle with the serpent throughout his vision, the speaker is forced to acknowledge that the birth of Christ spells neither the fulfillment of nature nor the end of the Christian plot: “The Babe lies yet in smiling infancy, / That on the bitter cross / Must redeem our loss, / So both himself and us to glorify” (151-4). Time, history, and their attendant sorrows persist. Having established that the poem remains set firmly in historical rather than apocalyptic time, Milton offers a brief but sudden introduction to the antagonist of the ongoing story, characterizing him with an image that is medieval or Spenserian as well as biblical:

from this happy day
Th’ old Dragon under ground
In straiter limits bound,
    Not half so far casts his usurped sway,
And wroth to see his Kingdom fail,
Swindges the scaly Horrour of his fouled tail.
(167-72)

227 Ibid., 208-9.
228 It is worth noting that in 1629, well before the royalists’ exilic writing, the young Milton feels free to conflate Fate and Providence unproblematically and without any further explanation. We might compare his lack of concern over terminology here to the Father’s sharp clarification in Paradise Lost: “Necessitie and Chance / Approach not mee, and what I will is Fate” (7.172-3).
229 Quint argues that the poet’s “desire to be exempted from history” through his temporal fantasy “is a form of regressive ‘infancy,’ and the poem must subsequently remind him that, instead, the Last Judgment will involve the destruction of ‘the aged earth’ (line 160), a creation that will die to be reborn” (“Expectation and Prematurity,” 210, 207-8).
Satan here appears as “Th’ old Dragon” of both Revelation and England’s foundational romance, destined for eventual combat with the Christian narrative’s martial hero(es). The Dragon’s role in the Nativity Ode is small, but startling and complex: technically, the stanza he dominates reports that the birth of Christ has constrained his power and struck a decisive blow against his usurpation, yet the monster’s abrupt appearance serves nevertheless as an alarming warning that the final battle has yet to take place. The Dragon may be “bound,” but he remains a menacing creature, lurking “under ground” in all his wrath and “scaly Horrour”: like the peasants who run to see the spectacle of the satanic dragon after its defeat in Book I of *The Faerie Queene*, but wisely dread “Some lingering life within his hollow brest,” we are invited at once to celebrate the enemy’s predestined doom as though it were already accomplished, and yet to fear his persistent power (*FQ* 1.12.10). Milton evokes a similar sense of temporal ambivalence in the stanza’s opening lines: “And then at last our bliss / Full and perfect is, / But now begins” (165-7). In these few words, we are reminded that the romance of history concludes in “bliss,” but that we can only trust in this finality from our imperfect vantage point somewhere in the melancholy middle of an unfinished and very long story—and yet that the present moment promises and anticipates the ending.

This limited perspective may sound similar to the ambivalent consolation offered to Spenser’s Britomart or to Eve, and Milton’s figure for the heroic acceptance of it is again an expectant mother. The last stanza of the poem presents a powerful corrective to the temporal acrobatics of the first, as time, motion, and creation rest in momentary contemplation and communion with Mary:
But see the Virgin blest,
Hath laid her Babe to rest.
Time is our tedious Song should here have ending:
Heav’n’s youngest teemed Star,
Hath fixed her polished Car,
Her sleeping Lord with Handmaid Lamp attending:
And all about the Courtly Stable,
Bright-harnest Angels sit in order serviceable.

(237-44)

While Balachandra Rajan has seen in this final stanza a moment of “crystalline joy,” other readers have been less optimistic.\textsuperscript{230} J. Martin Evans, for one, finds Milton’s conclusion emblematic of the sorrowful “poetry of absence” that characterizes the Nativity Ode: the scene of “rest” in the stable holds us “trapped in the long-drawn-out ‘moment’ of transition preceding the millennium,” able dimly “to apprehend the paradisal state of perfection,” but excluded from dwelling within it.\textsuperscript{231} Evans sets his interpretation in direct opposition to Rajan’s; however, it seems to me that these two positions need not be mutually exclusive. The poem does press us to acknowledge the absence of paradise, justice, harmony, and an eschatological experience of history; but it also points us to an understanding of this absence as present absence—not eternal, though keenly palpable for now—and to a perception of a form of divine presence within the absence. Much as Adam descends from his mountaintop vision in neither joy nor sorrow but “peace of thought” (\textit{PL} 12.558), the small community in the stable at the end of the Nativity Ode “does achieve a measure of readiness and composure.”\textsuperscript{232} The stillness of the tableau vivant in the poem’s last stanza mediates between celebration and melancholy, between

\textsuperscript{232} Quint, “Expectation and Prematurity,” 215.
the absence of an apocalyptic Messiah and the presence of the newborn Babe, an emblem not of action and conclusion but of potential and beginning. As the figures in and around the stable all fall silent to wait on the infant Jesus “in order serviceable,” we are left with an image of patience as pristine presentness, of contentment with providential narrative as it is imperfectly understood, with “sitting” inside the moment as it stands internal to history. Mary, the poet, the star, and the angels share this “crystalline” moment with one another, and perhaps with the reader—but on this occasion of his birth, the Son of God is the focus of their experience rather than a participant in it. More than forty years later, Milton’s last poem returns to many of the themes of his early ode, but *Paradise Regained* allows us to witness the adult Jesus’ own human contentions with the problems and promises of subjectivity, time, and genre.

*Paradise Regained: A New “Chance at True Romance”*  

Published nearly forty years after *Comus*, *Paradise Regained* stands as Milton’s only other work that does not merely allude to or contain elements of romance, but arguably is a romance in its entirety. The poem opens with one of the genre’s archetypal premises: an unknown hero raised in obscurity suddenly discovers that he is the son of a king and heir to a usurped kingdom, and must then face the personal and practical implications of his identity. The Jesus of Book I is “the Son of *Joseph* deem’d […] as then

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233 With good reason, it has become commonplace to connect the conclusion of the Nativity Ode to the final line of Milton’s sonnet on his blindness: “They also serve who only stand and wait.”

234 A version of this section appears as “Milton’s Counter-Revision of Romantic Structure in *Paradise Regained*,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 76.1 (2013). I am grateful to John Rogers; to Erin Murphy; and to Nigel Smith, Peter Lake, and the members of the Folger Institute’s 2011-2012 Researching the Archive Seminar for their great help in revising and polishing this material.
obscure, / Unmarkt, unknown” (1.23-25). Having grown to “youths full flowr” (1.67), he learns the truth of his birth from his mother:

For know, thou art no Son of mortal man;  
Though men esteem thee low of Parentage,  
Thy Father is the Eternal King, who rules  
All Heaven and Earth, Angels and Sons of men,  
A messenger from God fore-told […]  
Thou shouldst be great and sit on David’s Throne,  
And of thy Kingdom there should be no end.  
(1.234-241)

Over the course of Milton’s brief epic, 235 Jesus withdraws from human society to wander through an isolated landscape, where he encounters and defeats his mortal enemy, and returns to the world confident in his heroic identity and in the providential teleology of his life’s story. Milton’s use of the conventional tropes and narrative structure of romance is deliberate and sincere, as I will argue hereafter, but Paradise Regained’s relationship to the genre is certainly more complicated than it appears in this cursory sketch of the plot. Jesus’ story may be a romance in itself, but the hero must resist a Satanic presentation of romance that seems equally conventional in its chivalric content and its narrative about heroic action in pursuit of a lost paternal inheritance. Given the generically-charged nature of the opponents’ combat, why does Milton regard romance as such a ground of contention, and what is his final attitude toward it in Paradise Regained?

These questions were once the subjects of extensive critical conversation. Nearly fifty years ago, Barbara Lewalski described “Jesus’ adventure and conquest over Satan in the Wilderness” as “the true, fully achieved Romance Quest” in which the hero “antitypes

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235 I follow Barbara Lewalski in finding it unproblematic to categorize Paradise Regained as both a brief epic and a romance (see, respectively, Milton’s Brief Epic [Providence, RI: Brown U P, 1966] and “Revaluations of Romance”).
the romance knights” and “achieves, as Adam did not and as fallen man cannot, the highest romance purposes.”\(^{236}\) Her reading of Milton’s poem as a bold experiment with genre that “exalt[s] [the romance ethos] to the order of perfection” accords with Northrop Frye’s description of *Paradise Regained* as “a parody of a dragon-killing romance, or, more accurately,” as “the reality of which the dragon-killing romance is a parody.”\(^ {237}\) Stanley Fish visited the poem twice, once in 1971 and again in 1983. His earlier essay on the Son’s “Inaction and Silence” hesitates to break from Lewalski and Frye’s pro-romantic reading: while he argues that the audience faces a “literary temptation” in its expectation of an active hero, he concludes that heroic action finally becomes “purified” by complete submission to God, and is therefore “now not only allowed, but enjoined.”\(^ {238}\) However, Fish’s return to the poem in 1983 implies that reading it as a romance is impossible after all. This later essay—Schwartz’s source for the “temptation of plot”—redefines the core temptation in *Paradise Regained* for both Jesus and the reader as the temptation not just of heroic action, but of narrative itself. Fish contends that Satan makes a “continual effort […] to persuade the Son of God that the Son himself is a character in a plot, in a narrative where every change of scene brings new opportunities and new risks,” and that “What defeats Satan finally is the Son’s inability or unwillingness […] to recognize the fact that there is a plot at all.”\(^ {239}\) Even the final temptation on the pinnacle is not the “climax” of a “plot,” Fish concludes: “There is no final moment in *Paradise

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\(^ {236}\) Lewalski, “Revaluations of Romance,” 68-70.


\(^ {239}\) Fish, “The Temptation of Plot,” 166.
Regained. In this last scene, which ends nothing, the Son does no more or less than he
does before and will have to do again.” Jesus’ active inaction is not a definitive triumph
but an ongoing process: the poem’s events (or non-events) are removed “from the story
line of a plot into a timeless realm where they are eternally occurring.” Rather than
perfecting romance, Fish decides, the Son both refuses the heroism that characterizes the
genre and erases the temporality that makes its narrative shape possible. Finally, Annabel
Patterson’s 1983 essay on Paradise Regained, “Milton’s Last Chance at True Romance,”
concludes that this last chance ultimately fails to redeem the genre. “The poem appears to
be constructed on rigorously antiromantic lines,” she argues, as it avoids a clear sense of
a beginning, a middle, and an end, and portrays the genre’s tropes and trappings as
Satanic temptations to be rejected in favor of an ambiguous “new Christian narrative
whose rules are yet to be revealed.” Within the same publication in the same year,
Patterson and Fish each determined that Milton was politically and religiously motivated
to exclude Paradise Regained from traditional categories of genre and narrative
temporality; their consensus marked the poem’s “last chance at true romance” in Milton
studies, and twenty years of critical conversation on Paradise Regained’s relationship to
romance came to an end.

240 Ibid., 181-3. For another argument for Paradise Regained’s ultimate sense of removal from narrative
time, see Stuart Curran, “The Mental Pinnacle: Paradise Regained and the Romantic Four-Book Epic,” in
(Cleveland, OH: The Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1971), 133-62. Curran proposes that “the
epiphanic moment on the pinnacle” is “literally for Milton the moment divorced from time” and that
“Christ himself is further and further separated from a time-bound world as he progresses” throughout the
poem (160). I argue, rather, that Jesus’ capacity for extra-temporal insight only heightens his commitment
to performing the right role within the temporal narrative.
241 Patterson, “Last Chance at True Romance,” 201.
I hope to show here that the matter has not been settled, and that a more complete historicist consideration of post-Restoration contexts can in fact strengthen Lewalski and Frye’s structuralist instincts about the poem’s genre. *Paradise Regained* does not abandon outworn romance in order to escape its temptations; rather, like *Paradise Lost*, it counters the new royalist romance by assigning its innovative quasi-Hobbesian characteristics to Satan and by combating it with a Puritan alternative. Satan’s temptation in *Paradise Regained* is indeed literary, but Jesus’ resistance and his triumph are no less literary: while Satan’s self-conscious assumptions and uncertainties about heroic narrative bear all the hallmarks of the royalist genre in crisis and seem more anxious than ever, Jesus becomes progressively more assured that providentially-guided romance is the genre of human history, and that his sense of heroic subjectivity is authentically sacred, self-sufficient proof against his enemies. If anything, Milton displays a heightened generic self-consciousness compared with Herbert or Cavendish, since one of the forces that the hero of his “dragon-killing romance” must overcome is a rival form of the genre itself.242

*Paradise Regained* opens as Jesus “One day forth walk’d alone, the Spirit leading” into the wilderness, armed only with his tentative new knowledge of his identity and purpose and “Musing and much revolving in his brest, / How best the mighty work he might begin / Of Saviour to mankind” (1.185-9). Having retreated from the public world into the indeterminate landscape of romance, he soon encounters another of the genre’s well-known figures: “an aged man in Rural weeds” who offers the wandering hero his assistance.

242 I am grateful to John Rogers for this observation.
(1.314).\textsuperscript{243} Scholars have long noted this seemingly innocuous old shepherd’s resemblance to Spenser’s Archimago, the cunningly deceitful villain of *The Faerie Queene*; unlike Spenser’s Redcrosse Knight (also an unknown hero traversing the wilderness on a mission of holiness), Jesus easily recognizes his foe, and his romantic and meta-romantic battle with Satan thus begins. Satan’s anxiety over Jesus’ uncertain future and his urgent sense that the dethroned heir must form a plan for regaining his father’s kingdom are again parallel to the concerns in postwar royalist romance, and at *Paradise Lost*’s infernal council, about which active or passive postures the exile should adopt. The ensuing temptations are accordingly varied, as Satan alternately exhorts Jesus to rely on martial force, on pragmatic patience, and on his wits. This new heroic narrative offers many paths to triumph, as long as its protagonist, like Cavendish’s Travellia, does anything other than wait for a divine sign (such as those found in *passé* romances that are “ridiculous to reason”) and acts to further his own ends.

The order of Satan’s temptations notably corresponds to the order in which Adam must learn to reject false heroics in *Paradise Lost*: first love, then war, then shallow peace. As Salzman has remarked, erotic romance plays a relatively minor role in postwar royalist narratives, and so Satan wastes little time in confirming that Jesus is immune to the sensual charms of women modeled on the ladies of archaic Arthurian texts, “Fairer then feign’d of old, or fabl’d since / Of Fairy Damsels met in Forest wide / By Knights of Logres, or of Lyones, / Lancelot or Pelleas, or Pellenore” (2.358-361).\textsuperscript{244} Instead, he turns to romantic allures that are less obviously frivolous and that feature more prominently in postwar

\textsuperscript{243} Like many romances, *The Princess Cloria* also opens with an errant protagonist (Cassianus) wandering through an unfamiliar country and encountering a (legitimately) hospitable stranger.

\textsuperscript{244} Satan scoffs at the “libertine” Belial’s suggestion that the devils entrap Jesus with “Amorous Nets,” arguing that many great men “[make] small account / Of beauty and her lures [...] / on worthier things intent,” but he tries the tactic anyway, just to be sure (2.162, 193-5).
heroic texts: the temptations of combat and of politics. He begins by warning Jesus that his
“years are ripe, and over-ripe” for the martial display with which the untried young hero of
chivalric romance conventionally proves his mettle to the world, and for which Arethusius’
younger brother in Cloria (Herbert’s figure for James II) particularly yearns (3.31). Such is
Jesus’ “skill,” Satan suggests, that were he “sought to deeds / That might require th’ array
of war […] all the world / Could not sustain [his] Prowess”:

These God-like Vertues wherefore dost thou hide?
Affecting private life, or more obscure
In savage Wilderness, wherefore deprive
All Earth her wonder at thy acts, thy self
The fame and glory, glory the reward
That sole excites to high attempts the flame
Of most erected Spirits[?]

(III.16-30)

Jesus responds by denying the value of the conventional quest for individual credit,
which he scorns as “false glory, attributed / To things not glorious, men not worthy of
fame,” in language reminiscent of Michael’s to Adam (III.69-70). Moreover, he rejects
martial action as a means of demonstrating one’s heroic virtue:

They err who count it glorious to subdue
By Conquest far and wide, to over-run
Large Countries, and in field great Battels win,
Great Cities by assault: what do these Worthies,
But rob and spoil, burn, slaughter, and enslave
Peaceable Nations[?]

(III.71-76)

Conquest and victory in battle, the chivalric hero’s badges of honor, are exposed by Jesus
as excuses for wanton destruction and, what is more, as the cornerstones of tyranny: the
conquering champion’s only motive and reward, he argues, is to become the unlawful
king of an unconsenting people.
After linking martial chivalry to the corruption of absolute monarchy, Jesus counters that any earthly glory must be “attain’d / Without ambition, war, or violence; / By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent, / By patience, temperance” (3.89-92). Yet as Adam learns in *Paradise Lost*, peace is not without its own perils. In *Cloria*, an inclination toward peaceful prudence rather than glorious violence distinguishes Arethusius from his bellicose brother, but as we have seen, Arethusius’ cautiousness works in tandem with his ambition for advancement and political success. Lewalski has pointed out that Milton regards the entire premise of heroic ambition as mistaken in his later work: in *Paradise Lost*, Eve “assumes the faulty heroism of a knight-errant looking for adventures to prove her unaided virtue” when the trials of romance will “come unsought” (*PL* 9.366), while Jesus, who functions in *Paradise Regained* as the antitype not only of Adam but also of Eve, instead accepts the trials that God has ordained, crucially seeking not his own glory, “but his / Who sent me” (*PR* 3.106-7). Heroic patience, for Milton, can never be politic in the ambitious sense (though it is certainly political in the sense that it allows Jesus to resist his adversary). Jesus is waiting not for the right time to exercise his own pragmatic providence, as Arethusius and Travellia continually do, but for divine providence “To exercise him,” as it is now doing “in the Wilderness” (1.156).

Having thus failed to move Jesus to action by encouraging him to go out in search of unknown adventure to prove his merit and win glory, Satan turns instead to a more specific quest, one that constitutes the plot of countless heroic romances, including *Cloria*.

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and, of course, the historical trajectory of Charles II. As the unrecognized heir to a kingdom, he insists, Jesus must surely answer the clear call of narrative destiny:

Of glory as thou wilt, said he, so deem,  
Worth or not worth the seeking, let it pass:  
But to a Kingdom thou art born, ordain'd  
To sit upon thy Father David's Throne;  
By Mothers side thy Father, though thy right  
Be now in powerful hands, that will not part  
Easily from possession won with arms […]  
and think'st thou to regain  
Thy right by sitting still or thus retiring?  
(3.150-6, 163-4)

Now knowing Jesus’ hatred of monarchical oppression, Satan reminds him that his father’s throne has been wrongfully usurped by the Romans, who have ruled the realm as tyrants and “violated” its sacred Temple “with foul affronts, / Abominations rather” (3.160-2): if Jesus is truly the long-lost heir of David, as the rumor runs, then the obvious task before him as a romantic hero is to reclaim his royal right, end the usurpers’ tyranny, and establish a reign of virtue. And having found Jesus to be unmoved by power or worldly possessions, Satan appeals directly to the hero’s sense of godliness, invoking

Zeal of thy Fathers house, Duty to free  
Thy Country from her Heathen servitude;  
So shalt thou best fullfil, best verifie  
The Prophets old, who sung thy endless raign,  
The happier raign the sooner it begins,  
Raign then; what canst thou better do the while?  
(3.175-80)

According to Satan, Jesus is bound by all the obligations of royal romance, which Satan describes in vivid generic terms: he has a “monster” (as Satan terms Tiberius) to “expel,” an ancestral right to reclaim, a people to liberate, a prophecy to fulfill (4.100). And in addition to mobilizing romance’s conventional imagery in support of his argument, Satan
incorporates the revised royalist theme of politic calculation, proposing to his adversary that “Zeal and Duty are not slow; / But on Occasions forelock watchful wait. / They themselves rather are occasion best” (3.172-4). In other words, the dispossessed hero remains passive and patient only in anticipation of the right opportunity, which his own “Zeal and Duty” can easily bring about. Critically, these virtues “are occasion” in “themselves”; the right time for action in royalist romance is dictated not by providence, but by the hero’s internal political barometer. Jesus refuses to adopt this revisionary rhetoric, insisting that “All things are best fulfil’d in their due time,” which “The Father in his purpose hath decreed, / He in whose hand all times and seasons roul” (3.182, 186-7). Providential temporality, not royal birthright, political contingency, or secular subjectivity, determines the proper “occasions” for the hero’s struggles and his eventual victory.247

In a final effort to motivate Jesus to yield to the pressures of his artificial narrative and meet his enemies in combat, Satan shows him the battling armies of Parthia and Scythia, which Milton’s narrator explicitly links to the chivalric Roland cycle in a lengthy metaphor reminiscent of *Paradise Lost* 1.579-87:

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Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,
When Agrican with all his Northern powers
Besieg’d Albracca, as Romances tell;
The City of Gallaphrone, from thence to win
The fairest of her Sex Angelica
His daughter, sought by many Prowest Knights,
Both Paynim, and the Peers of Charlemane.
Such and so numerous was thir Chivalrie;
At sight whereof the Fiend yet more presum’d,
And to our Saviour thus his words renew’d.
(3.337-346)
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247 Laurie Zwicky identifies the distinction between satanic and messianic understandings of time as the difference between the Greek concepts *chronos* and *kairos*: see “Kairos in Paradise Regained: The Divine Plan,” *ELH* 31.3 (1964), 271-7.
Apparently inspired by the impressive visual trappings of “Chivalrie,” Satan claims that he has shown Jesus this spectacle not to test his virtue, but to spur him along his destined course: he will never regain his “foretold” kingdom, Satan warns, “unless [he] / Endeavour[s], as [his] Father David did” (3.351-3). He attempts simultaneously to attach Jesus to earthly hereditary succession by offering him his royal ancestor as a model of political virtue—as Herbert’s Euarchus functions for Arethusius, and the historical Charles I for his son and his subjects—and to persuade him that a providential plan for his heroic story is indeterminate at best, and perhaps nonexistent. Fate and prophecy may interact with chance, mass contingency, and individual agency in some nebulous fashion, but no outcome can be guaranteed: “prediction still / In all things, and all men, supposes means, / Without means us’d, what it predicts revokes” (3.354-6). Here again we find a dependence on pragmatic providence that parallels Cavendish’s conviction that the gods are most helpful to those who act instead of waiting on divine aid. Satan thus rests his case in accordance with the postwar royalist stance that the plot of romance is founded upon the uneasy collaboration of uncertain fortune or fate and opportunistic heroism. Within this model, the hero may either “on Occasions forelock watchful wait” or “Endeavour” to reclaim his right; both options require politic judgment and self-generated authority, since faith in providence alone answers no questions and ensures no victory.

Earlier in the poem, Jesus has privately acknowledged that he once found the royal romance of usurpation and restoration compelling.248 Prior to his discovery of his

248 While Adam, creation’s first lover, is innately horrified by violence but drawn to erotic romance, Jesus sees no appeal in amorous narrative, yet initially finds himself attracted to a romance of valor.
identity from Mary and his exercise of his heroic subjectivity in the wilderness, the young hero aspired to just the sort of virtuous martial chivalry to which Satan tempts him:

\begin{verbatim}
  victorious deeds
  Flam’d in my heart, heroic acts, one while
  To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke,
  Then to subdue and quell o’re all the earth
  Brute violence and proud Tyrannick pow’r,
  Till truth were freed, and equity restor’d[.]
\end{verbatim}

(1.215-20)

However, as he comes to understand his own sacred nature and the sacred nature of his quest, his perspective on romance matures, and he exposes Satan’s entire heroic narrative as a perverse veneer parodying, overlaying, and obscuring the true divine plot. In Jesus’ re-reading, it is Satan, not Tiberius and the Romans, who has “usurp’t” the earthly kingdom and must be overcome, and who “first made” all “brutish monster[s]” in need of expulsion (4.127-9, 183). As for the enslaved Israelites, their suffering under Roman rule is their own divinely ordained trial, and an apt punishment for their idolatry; moreover, their deliverance will come without any need for good fortune, politic “occasion,” or monarchical might, since God “at length, time to himself best known […] May bring them back repentant and sincere” in accordance with his divine “providence” (3.433-5, 440). The time for action belongs to God to determine. In response to Satan’s insistence that he fill an authoritative void by acting as roi absolu of his people and as moi absolu of his narrative, Jesus rebuffs these false absolutes as the desperate skeptic’s substitutes for the one true absolute, which will prevail no matter how long it may remain concealed by political disaster or disappointment.
Finally, Jesus rejects Satan’s assumption that his mission to reclaim his kingdom is identical to that of the worldly royal hero and must therefore be accomplished by worldly royalist means:

Know therefore when my season comes to sit
On David’s Throne, it shall be like a tree
Spreading and over-shadowing all the Earth,
Or as a stone that shall to pieces dash
All Monarchies besides throughout the world,
And of my Kingdom there shall be no end:
Means there shall be to this, but what the means,
Is not for thee to know, nor me to tell.

(4.146-53)

Jesus’ declaration that his romance of inheritance is explicitly anti-royalist, opposed to “All Monarchies besides,” settles the matter of his narrative’s ideology while refusing to answer any questions about its practical progress or its temporal telos. Yet even as he dismisses martial chivalry and worldly politics as elements of his narrative, he stresses that narrative’s temporal reality and the thematic conventionality of its inevitable conclusion. As in Book 12 of *Paradise Lost*, the Christian champion’s victory is both indefinitely forestalled and absolutely assured: contrary to Fish’s case that Jesus must resist the temptation of teleological plot, he reiterates that his “season” will come, that his story’s glorious ending is guaranteed by divine will, and that this ending does, in fact, involve the forceful conquest of enemies and the recovery of a kingdom. Satan has been right about the most basic tropes of the romance of sacred kingship, but entirely wrong about their packaging and about the means that govern their progress. That progress is certain, but Satan—despite his insistence on fixed generic rules for heroic success—is too committed

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249 For another argument that heroic action in the temporal world is consistently deferred in *Paradise Regained*, but never denied its ultimate importance and eventuality, see Norbrook, “Republican Occasions,” 136.
to his own revision of Jesus’ romance to believe in authentic narrative certainty, and therefore cannot conceive of the middle of the story that ensures the transcendent end.

Jesus’ pronouncement that the true story of his recovery of his father’s throne is “not for [Satan] to know, nor [him] to tell” may recall the Lady’s dismissal of Comus—“Fain would I somthing say, yet to what end? / Thou has nor Eare, nor Soul to apprehend / The sublime notion” (783-5). It should also put us in mind of all the other instances in which we have witnessed the exclusionary power of divinely-inspired subjectivity and the stunted ability of the unregenerate to produce or comprehend romance. Satan’s temptations that Jesus replace God’s romance with an inferior revision may be deceitful, but they also correspond to Satan’s own willfully faulty understanding of the genre. Being “compos’d of lies / From the beginning,” Satan tells the same lies about the nature of romantic narrative to himself, as we have seen in Paradise Lost (1.407-8). His suggestion that Jesus’ success hinges upon the collaboration of politic action and fortune mirrors his speech to his demonic followers in Book I, wherein he proposes that they take urgent measures to “learn” Jesus’ true identity in order to assess their “danger” which stands “on the utmost edge / Of hazard” (1.91-5). Satan’s use of the terminology of gambling here again suggests his Cavendish-esque belief that chance and agency together govern affairs; accordingly, he imagines that he may yet “subvert” God’s plan for his Son if he acts swiftly (1.124). Even so, his stance on the nature of fate vacillates throughout this poem as well, continuing to offer conflicting royalist perspectives on the muddled powers of personal agency, impersonal fortune, random contingency, and providence.

Both Jesus and Milton’s narrator are unequivocal that God’s providence is the only
driving force behind the narrative of history: Jesus reproves the Greek philosophers, and by implication Herbert’s forlorn characters, for “accus[ing] [God] under usual names, / Fortune and Fate, as one regardless quite / Of mortal things” (4.316-18), while the narrator reminds us that Satan, “unweeting” and “contrary” to his own perceived purpose, “fulfill’d / The purpos’d Counsel pre-ordain’d and fixt / Of the most High” (1.126-8). However, Satan can neither admit such certainty nor fully shake it. Despite his suggestion to himself and his crew that they may act to influence their fate, elsewhere he admits once more that he despairs of altering God’s judgment: “all hope is lost / Of my reception into grace; what worse? / For where no hope is left, is left no fear” (3.204–6). Like Arethusius, Satan finds it easier to conceive of divinity as the inexorable punisher of wickedness than as the assured ally of virtue. His hopeless courage thus serves only to inspire further fruitless action, and with it, further delusional hope; the circularity of Satan’s belief and behavior locks him into an anti-teleological pattern entirely opposed to the trajectory of heroic romance, despite his apparent affinity for recent royalist treatments of the genre. Ironically, while Satan does indeed attempt to convince Jesus that he is a character in a certain kind of chivalric text, as Fish suggests, Jesus is already aware that he is a character in the ultimate providential plot, while Satan is finally defeated by his own “inability or unwillingness […] to recognize” that that plot exists.250 Having rejected a legitimately developing narrative for himself, Satan’s cannot conceive that his adversary could possess one without relying on illusory “hazard” to direct its progress.

250 Fish, “The Temptation of Plot,” 166
Satan’s inability or refusal to grasp the full sense of an ending to God’s or his own narrative impacts his most seemingly candid speech in the poem, throwing it into sharp relief. When Jesus demands to know the reason for his solicitous concern—“Know’st thou not that my rising is thy fall, / And my promotion will be thy destruction?” (3.201-2)—Satan replies that he has grown weary of waiting to learn the nature and extent of his defeat, since he is already certain of his doom:

If there be worse, the expectation more
Of worse torments me then the feeling can.
I would be at the worst; worst is my Port,
My harbour and my ultimate repose,
The end I would attain, my final good.

(3.207-11)

Claiming to be eager for the conclusion of the divine narrative, he irrationally justifies his attempts to provoke Jesus into alleviating his uncertainty by alleging that he is already certain how the story ends. With his characteristic terseness, Jesus declines to sympathize with Satan’s suffering and cuts through the Gordian knot of his illogical claim to simultaneous suspense and despair:

My time I told thee (and that time for thee
Were better farthest off) is not yet come;
When that comes think not thou to find me slack
On my part aught endeavouring, or to need
Thy politic maxims, or that cumbersome
Luggage of war there shewn me, argument
Of human weakness rather then of strength.

(3.396-402)

Beyond banishing “politic maxims” and the “Luggage of war” from his heroic narrative as signs of secular “weakness,” Jesus speaks only of that narrative’s certain progress toward its actively heroic climax, and gestures parenthetically toward his enemy’s willful ignorance. Satan is granted no insight into the divine plot because he refuses to believe
that any such insight is really possible or that any such immutable plot really exists. And he cannot in fact conceive of the story’s conclusion; if he could, he would have no desire to hasten it. Satan pleads for relief from the suffering caused by the narrative’s illusory suspense; Jesus ominously informs him that if he understood the narrative’s providential plot, he would be in no suspense at all.

The effect of Jesus’ words is often to frustrate not only his adversary, but the audience too. The subjectivity of Milton’s protagonist is so intensely interiorized, exclusive, and combative that it has been excluding and repelling readers for centuries. In consequence, *Paradise Regained* has developed a reputation for being a difficult, narratively unconventional poem about indeterminacy, negation, inaction, and silence. Fish, Patterson, and Schwartz all broadly agree that Satan’s goal is to press Jesus into making certain statements about his divinity and taking actions that confirm it, and that Jesus resists him by refusing to provide answers that would violate the ambiguity of the sacred (or, for that matter, give the reader any satisfying information). This argument is sensible from a very specific angle, but we must be careful about how we understand Satanic “certainty” as opposed to divine “ambiguity.” Satan, committed to a royalist romantic discourse, actually harps on ambiguity and uncertainty as absolute facts before grasping at their opposites. Just as it is he who experiences the real difficulty in thinking of himself as a hero within a teleological plot, it is he who keeps insisting upon the inauthenticity of sacred subjectivity, narrative ambiguity, and its attendant vexations, as in his warning that prophecy does not entail predestination (3.354-6), his willful claim
that the title “Son of God [...] bears no single sense” (4.517), and his final grand tirade before setting Jesus on the pinnacle of the temple:

        if I read aught in Heaven,
        Or Heav’n write aught of Fate, by what the Stars
        Voluminous, or single characters,
        In their conjunction met, give me to spell,
        Sorrows, and labours, opposition, hate
        Attends thee, scorns, reproaches, injuries,
        Violence and stripes, and lastly cruel death.
        A Kingdom they portend thee, but what Kingdom,
        Real or Allegoric I discern not,
        Nor when, eternal sure, as without end,
        Without beginning; for no date prefixt
        Directs me in the Starry Rubric set.
    
(4.382-393)

With this last gasp of malicious frustration, Satan articulates all the confusions of his revised romance at once: is he reading the text of Heaven or of Fate? Can a hero’s suffering really be a meaningful and necessary harbinger of his triumph? Is Jesus’ kingship “Real,” or only a convenient metaphor? Finally, his confusion leads him to proclaim that, because he cannot discern its pattern, the narrative itself must be inherently unstructured and meaningless: there are no ends, no beginnings, no coherent middles. He is obsessed not with seeking answers to his questions, but with endlessly repeating the questions to which he has already decided there can be no answers. Patterson holds that Satan is “driven by the need to know the truth” about Jesus’ identity and his mission, but as the eternal enemy of all Milton’s heroes who seek out and defend Truth, Satan is repelled by the truth about anything. He has spent the entire poem insisting to Jesus that truth is relative, that special godly subjectivity is a delusion, that a nebulous

251 David Gay also interprets Satan’s reading of Jesus’ horoscope in the “Starry Rubric” as his mistaken reliance on both empty external icons and irreligious fatalism. See “Astrology and Iconoclasm in Milton’s ‘Paradise Regained,’” Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900 41.1 (2001): 175-190.
providence cannot allow him to know anything for sure, and that the only path to power and security is through one’s own secular standards and politic self-determination.

Jesus, on the other hand, appears to become increasingly vague in his responses to Satan even as he becomes increasingly sure—at least, sure enough—of his sacred heroic identity and of his quest. Whatever narrative vision his wandering trials have granted him, however, would be meaningless to Satan, who is always already convinced that providential illumination cannot be real or trustworthy. To Satan, divinely-imparted certainty and self-assuredness look indistinguishable from infuriating ambiguity, as is the case with Jesus’ riddling “Think not but that I know these things, or think / I know them not; not therefore am I short / Of knowing what I ought” (4.286-8). We, the audience, are also not fully privy to what Jesus knows about himself and his destiny; but we, like the poem’s hero (and like Adam in Paradise Lost or the “serviceable” cast of the Nativity Ode), know all that we need to at present. It would be a grave mistake for us to assume along with Satan that what we do not know does not exist to be known, that “there is no ‘there’ there.”

The critical impulse to reduce Paradise Regained to anti-narrative silence is perhaps linked to the urge to decouple its imagery from romance or any other genre. For instance, Patterson proposes that the answer to whether the Son’s Kingdom is “Real or Allegoric” is “neither,” but we would do much better to accept the full weight of the romantic trope and say that it is both.²⁵³ The Kingdom of God that would “to pieces dash / All monarchies besides” may have been a powerful symbol in the hearts and minds of

²⁵³ Ibid.
the community that passively resisted the restoration of royalism, but Milton and his fellow Puritan republicans would have insisted that its immateriality was temporary, just as Jesus does. Milton’s Christian narrative, as “the reality of which the dragon-killing romance is a parody,” features a real hero destined to overcome a real foe in real time and finally for all time. Even though (as Michael warns Adam) the Son’s battle with Satan remains deferred and never takes the form of a martial “Duel” (*PL* 12.387), the real fact and the providentially ordained outcome of their combat still stand as traditional bulwarks against Satan’s innovative ambiguation. When Jesus stands on the pinnacle of the temple, he stands in opposition to his enemy’s attempts to strip all absolute meaning from sacred identity, godly heroism, and narrative temporality and to locate the self as the only absolute power. Undaunted by all temptations to value romance’s surface over its structure, to choose politic calculation over faithful patience, and to create a new story to suit his own heroism in his own time, Jesus takes his place within the story that has already been written and waits for its next adventure. He becomes so possessed with the certainty of his heroic identity, his narrative, and its providential form that Satan flees before that profoundly interiorized conviction, “smitten with amazement,” unable to withstand what he refuses to understand (4.562).

In that moment, the romantic plot within *Paradise Regained* has reached its predestined climax: Jesus has “vanquish[ed] / Temptation” and “regain’d lost Paradise” (4.607-8). Yet the challenges of Milton’s poem do not disappear. Jesus may have attained the knowledge he needs, but the audience has heard few revelations and seen little action. And as countless readers have noted, the larger story does not end with Jesus’ descent
from the pinnacle. He can only now “on [his] glorious work / [...] enter, and begin to
save mankind,” and the horizon of the romance landscape remains wide open as he
returns “Home to his Mothers house” (4.634-5, 639). As one romantic episode concludes,
another begins. But the divine romance of Paradise Regained is neither endless nor
aimless. J. Martin Evans has also argued that Milton regards contemplation as a
predecessor to action rather than a replacement for it, and that Paradise Regained signals
the continuation of the Christian story rather than the dissolution of narrative: “Although
the final lines return Christ to his mother’s house, Milton has made it clear that the
‘Queller of Satan’ (4.634) is only on the brink of his divine mission. The real action is
just about to begin.”254 The poem does continually promise “real” romantic heroism in an
indefinite future—but given those promises, why does Milton return Jesus to Mary’s
house at all? Why do the last lines of the poem gesture toward further patience and quiet
contemplation rather than to action?

To begin to answer this question, we must return to the visionary summit,
Spenser’s device in The Faerie Queene that so inspired Milton. The Redcrosse Knight,
Adam, and Jesus are all granted visions of sacred narrative as they stand on great heights.
When Redcrosse descends from his momentary prospect above his story, his vision fades
as his eyes readjust to the mortal world; he then returns, only imperfectly enlightened, to
the burden of time and action in his role as a Christian warrior. Adam’s mortal sight is
likewise too weak for a complete understanding of providential history, and he returns
from the mountain poised to enter the active world with mixed faith and doubt. But

254 Evans, 121-2.
Paradise Regained ends not with Jesus’ spectacular battle with Satan or his commencement of active labors: it ends with his quiet return to his mother’s house. Had Spenser made a similar move, the Legend of Holiness would have concluded with Redcrosse relaxing in the castle of Cœlia, his combat with the dragon still ahead. A historicist explanation is possible: while Spenser is immediately concerned with the next tasks facing his elect nation, Milton’s England has been derailed from its course. But this rationale seems insufficient. Unlike Redcrosse and Adam, Jesus does not lose his grasp on the narrative vision he has received. When he comes down from his mountain or his pinnacle, his descent is only physical. In effect, Jesus dwells in his visionary moment even after it has passed: he finds it down on the ground, whether at the banquet that the angels provide in the wilderness or in Mary’s house, in the midst of everyday life. From that time on, his universal prospect and his private home are one and the same.

Paradise Regained’s concluding evocation of Jesus at home with his mother also recalls the quiet scene in the stable at the end of the Nativity Ode, which finds the “Courtly Stable” full of angels waiting with the “Virgin blest” in “order serviceable,” peacefully anticipating her baby’s remote heroic future (237-44). When he returns from the wilderness of his first romantic quest, Jesus reenters this domestic space as an adult who can consciously participate in the experience of standing “serviceable” to God’s will, simultaneously aware of the “Full and perfect” arc of sacred narrative and of his present place within its meandering course. He sees the story at once from a divine, authorial height and through the lowly striving of a human character like Mary, bridging the gap between masculine and feminine types of romantic perspective. Stuart Curran has
proposed that by the end of the poem Jesus “lives without time,” “liberated from the constraints of time and history.” In a sense, this is so, but the full extent of Jesus’ heroic accomplishment (and of Milton’s generic accomplishment) is only apparent if we recognize that he lives simultaneously within time, dedicated to the occluded demands of historical narrative as they arise and make themselves known. Both Jesus and Milton remain committed to providential romance as a genre ideally suited to the tempest of time, and of the post-Restoration Puritan moment in particular, in that it embodies the tension between the doubts and disappointments of the present and the triumphant promise of the future, using that tension to drive the story of the godly community onward through its political vicissitudes and toward its final vanishing point. While Satan’s royalist-inflected romance attempts to shed an artificial light on the darkness of history, Milton’s renewed chance at true romance depends both upon the hero’s providential illumination and on his willingness to venture, or to stand and wait, in the human world of darkened narrative vision.

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Percy Herbert, Margaret Cavendish, and John Milton all determined, in their own ways, that postwar ideological romance had to confront the challenges of contingency and variable subjectivity, and that both heroism and identification with a romantic community might depend less on narrative vision than on one’s response to narrative uncertainty. Milton, in his generic conflict with royalist romance, continued to insist on the legitimacy of divinely-inspired subjectivity, opposing the Hobbesian proposition that no such thing could be proven and perhaps did not exist at all. In her biblical epic Order and Disorder, Lucy Hutchinson is similarly adamant; as we will see, though, she is particularly invested in resisting a royalist model that questions not elect subjectivity’s authenticity, but its exclusivity. This chapter, and the final one that follows, explore a subtle shift in seventeenth-century attitudes to romance: some writers, instead of concerning themselves with the genre’s subversive power (for good or ill) to locate subjects within already-demarcated ideological communities, grew more interested in its potential to envision and construct new communities, and to repair old divides in subjectivity. While Hutchinson refuses to indulge the idea that romance might mend rifts in religion or politics—a possibility that inspired her royalist contemporary, John Dryden—her tacit return to romance in Order and Disorder does help her renegotiate some of the ruptures in generic and gendered perspective that troubled her Memoirs of her husband.

256 An article derived from this chapter is forthcoming from Studies in Philology.
Although scholarship on Lucy Hutchinson’s twenty-canto Genesis epic *Order and Disorder* is only now emerging from its infancy, one assertion in her preface has already struck a number of readers and become the subject of extensive conversation. Hutchinson warns a potential audience of “people [...] that understand and love the elegancies of poems” that they will find “nothing of fancy” in her work, and avows that a literary imagination has no place in biblical hermeneutics:

> Had I a fancy, I durst not have exercised it here; for I tremble to think of turning Scripture into a romance; and shall not be troubled at their dislike who dislike on that account, and profess they think no poem can be good that shuts out drunkenness, and lasciviousness, and libelling satire, the themes of all their celebrated songs. These (though I will not much defend my own weakness) dislike not the poem so much as the subject of it.257

Hutchinson thus appears to identify romance as an ungodly literary form, and (as has also been the case with Milton) many scholars have taken her at her word. C. A. Moore, who discussed the 1679 publication of the first five cantos of *Order and Disorder* long before the poem’s full length and its authorship were known, read it as “a veiled rebuke of Milton” for his highly inventive retelling of Genesis in *Paradise Lost*.258 Many decades later, Robert Mayer agrees that Hutchinson meant to rebuke *Paradise Lost* for romanticizing scripture, preferring to represent *Order and Disorder* “not as an

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257 Lucy Hutchinson, *Order and Disorder*, ed. David Norbrook (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 5. All subsequent references will be to this edition and will appear parenthetically in the text by canto and line numbers.

imaginative work at all but as a ‘recourse to the fountain of Truth,’” and David Norbrook, who discovered, attributed, and edited the complete text of the poem, likewise acknowledges that Hutchinson “may have been hitting at Milton” for his creative “[addition] to the text” of Scripture. Indeed, Hutchinson does seem to equate such “fancy” with a crass and impious treatment of God’s word as “romance,” a genre she associates not only (perhaps) with Milton but also with Cavalier writing.

Yet Norbrook also regards Hutchinson’s declamation of “fancy” with a healthy measure of skepticism: he rightly finds *Order and Disorder* “far from artless” and reads the poem as suggesting that “human artifice can be redeemed” by God. Even in the poem’s preface, Hutchinson begins to imagine precisely this sort of artistic redemption. Referring to her previous translation of Lucretius’ and Ovid’s pagan accounts “of the original of things,” she claims that *Order and Disorder* began as a form of personal prayer and penitence: “These meditations were not at first designed for public view, but fixed upon to reclaim a busy roving thought from wandering in the pernicious and perplexed maze of human inventions; whereinto the vain curiosity of youth had drawn

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260 David Norbrook, “The Poem and its Contexts,” introduction to *Order and Disorder*, xii-lviii, xxv. Norbrook also points out that we cannot be entirely certain that the composition of *Order and Disorder* postdates that of *Paradise Lost*, finding it “not wholly implausible” that either Milton or Hutchinson might have had “access to the other’s manuscript” through their “mutual friend, the Earl of Anglesey, to whom each of them entrusted sensitive manuscripts” (xiv, xvii). See also Norbrook’s “Lucy Hutchinson, John Milton, and the Republican Biblical Epic,” in *Milton and the Grounds of Contention*, eds. Mark Kelley et al. (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2003), 37-63.
261 As Robert Wilcher has noted in “Lucy Hutchinson and Genesis: Paraphrase, Epic, Romance,” Hutchinson’s denunciation of romance in the preface to *Order and Disorder* illustrates McKeon’s observation that the genre was frequently invoked in a “trivializing or pejorative” sense in the seventeenth century (34); see McKeon’s *The Origins of the English Novel* (27). Salzman, in *English Prose Fiction*, claims that by 1670, romance was often associated with love rather than war or politics (179). While Hutchinson links romance to “lasciviousness” in her preface, as the poem unfolds, she does not treat these thematic categories as separate.
me” (3). In essence, Hutchinson began to compose her poem in her hope of redemption from a “roving,” “wandering” romance of the mind; her pious “meditations” on Scripture have led her, by the grace of God, away from the Lucretian “maze” of atomistic contingency and into a providential plot in which God presides over the teleological narrative of creation. Not at all unlike Milton in his supposedly more imaginative *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, Hutchinson turns away from the ideologically corrupt romance of Fortune, but rather than truly rejecting the genre, she instead embraces the romance of Providence, the plot of which follows the ever-purposeful trials and triumphs of the Elect. The poem that she began in search of redemption *from* romance will, by its (unfinished) end, prove to be a Puritan redemption *of* romance.

As Robert Wilcher has noted, “Romance was a narrative genre that had appealed to [Hutchinson’s] adolescent imagination during the 1630s”.263 In her fragmentary autobiography, Hutchinson recalls that as a girl, “I thought it no sin to learne or heare wittie songs and amorous sonnetts or poems, and twenty things of that kind, wherein I was so apt that I became the confident in all the loves that were managed among my mother’s young weomen.”264 Norbrook has judged that she was probably one of the seventeenth century’s many admirers of Sidney’s *Arcadia*; he observes parallels between Sidney’s romantic imagery and Hutchinson’s in her Elegies and points out that Elegy 11 “gives her husband the Sidneian name of ‘Philocles’ [...] which fuses Sidney’s male Pyrocles with the female Philoclea.”265 But apart from Norbrook’s passing note, Wilcher

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is the one scholar to date who has concerned himself specifically with Hutchinson’s poetry, the romance tradition, and the potential for a godly treatment of the genre. Wilcher provides a useful overview of some of Order and Disorder’s romance elements in “Lucy Hutchinson and Genesis: Paraphrase, Epic, Romance,” arguing that while “features of fictional romance” are “deliberately eschewed in the 1679 volume,” which included only the poem’s first five cantos and their account of the Creation and the Fall, elements of the genre “became prominent in the narrative expansion of later episodes involving the experiences of such female characters as Sarah, Rebecca, and Rachel”; he proposes “to draw attention to some differences between the five-canto poem published in 1679 and the fifteen cantos that follow it.”\(^{266}\) In particular, he points to sections in which Hutchinson does invent psychological interiority for her Biblical characters and to passages that feature love, wooing, and marriage—most notably Jacob and Rachel’s pastoral courtship near the end of the poem. Wilcher claims that these “features of fictional romance” are sparse in the first half of the poem and that when they do appear, they chiefly involve the emotional and erotic experiences of women. The chapters of Genesis that do not feature “the marriages and other sexual liaisons of the patriarchs,” he argues, give Hutchinson scope for “moral and religious ‘meditations’” and “occasional political observations,” but “offer little to stimulate an imagination nourished in its early years on amorous sonnets and romances.”\(^ {267}\) In his reading, romance occasionally emerges to enrich certain episodes of Order and Disorder, but does not underlie the poem’s full form or its narrative purpose.

\(^{266}\) Ibid., 25-6.

\(^{267}\) Ibid., 35.
Wilcher is quite correct to “draw [our] attention” to the elements of romance inherent in *Order and Disorder*, and indeed, Hutchinson’s engagement with the genre frequently pertains to affective emotion, love, and marriage. However, while this chapter is indebted to his work, I would like to move beyond Wilcher’s straightforward enumeration of some of the romantic episodes in the poem and his definition of the genre according to Pierre Huet’s seventeenth-century view that “Romances [...] have Love for their principal Theme, and meddle not with War and Politicks but by accident” (an opinion that his contemporaries did not necessarily share, as we have seen). As Wilcher recognizes, Hutchinson did not always automatically “tremble to think of turning Scripture into a romance”; it now remains for us to determine what modes of romance she employed and, perhaps most importantly, why she turned to the genre so often in *Order and Disorder* after repudiating it in her preface.

First, I hope to show that Hutchinson effects no clear separation between romance that is amorous, psychological, or pastoral (or feminine) and romance that is chivalric, heroic, or political (or masculine); indeed, her poem reconceives some of the generic and gendered gaps that emerged in the *Memoirs*. Moreover, as is often the case with other writers whom we have discussed, Hutchinson’s romantic eroticism is inextricably connected to her sense of heroism, and private emotion and action in her text have direct relationships to public politics and governance. It is thus not quite true that Hutchinson reserves romance for the second half of *Order and Disorder*; erotic and heroic romantic content runs throughout her text and connects later episodes in Genesis and passages in

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268 Huet’s definition of romance is cited by Wilcher (“Paraphrase, Epic, Romance,” 35) and Salzman (179).
the poem to earlier ones. Second, I propose that Hutchinson’s self-contradictory tendency to romanticize Scripture is neither an accident nor merely a natural offshoot of her youthful enthusiasm for the genre. Rather, like Milton, Hutchinson takes royalist modes of amorous and heroic romance into account in composing *Order and Disorder* and combats them not with anti-romance, but with right romance as the exclusive province of a godly republican audience. While Wilcher regards Hutchinson’s exploration of “the mystery of ‘election’ [in the poem’s first several books] as one of [her] “moral and religious ‘meditations’” rather than an example of “creative engagement,” we shall see that her treatment of elect exceptionalism lays fundamental groundwork for her postwar Puritan romance, and that it reappears as a major theme throughout diverse instances of her engagement with the genre.269 Before we return to her Genesis epic, a consideration of the romantic elements of John Dryden’s poem “Astraea Redux” will help illuminate how Hutchinson intends *Order and Disorder* to present a godly audience with treatments of exclusive elect community, erotic love, chivalric heroism, and teleological narrative that actively resist both Cavalier literature and royalist political ideology.

*Patrilineal Romance and Erotic Universalism in Dryden’s “Astraea Redux”*

Dryden’s jubilant lyric poem, written to commemorate Charles II’s return to England more than a decade after his father’s execution, does not attempt to approach the royalist narrative of a tyrant’s usurpation of the throne and the rightful heir’s recovery of it by recounting the story in lengthy, detailed chronological order, as a generically conventional romance would do. Nevertheless, there is no question that “Astraea Redux”

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269 Wilcher, “Paraphrase, Epic, Romance,” 35.
embraces romance’s form and its tropes as a means of understanding history, celebrating Charles’ restoration, and advocating for royalist policy. Dryden’s young king appears not simply as another Augustus, the Virgilian harbinger of a new golden age of justice, but also as the tempest-tossed hero of countless classical, medieval, and Early Modern romances. Having been driven “into exile from his rightful throne,” the “Heir to his father’s sorrows with his crown” is “ Forced to suffer for himself and us,” his people.\(^{270}\) Charles has been “tossed by fate, and hurried up and down”; Dryden describes the physical and psychic journey of his youth as a long “pilgrimage” through which “His manly courage over[comes] his fate” and he returns to rule his kingdom at last (50-56). And as generic expectations dictate, the sources of the hero’s strife are directed, however indirectly, to guide him to security and triumph: “those loud storms that did against him roar / Have cast his shipwrecked vessel on the shore” of his kingdom, where Charles’ romance will conclude in his reunion with his loving subjects in a symbolic marriage (123-4). Dryden’s poem, reconceiving romance as reparative rather than exclusive, depicts the Restoration as the harmonious telos to the turbulent national story, and hints moreover at religious universalism: God has blessed and redeemed all English people equally in their blissful union with the King.

“Astraea Redux” reminds us that while Herbert and Cavendish’s postwar discomfort with providential or “mystical” romance was widespread among royalist writers, it was not ubiquitous. Although Dryden’s poem attributes its events to various forces, including fate and the stars, it insists upon God as the final authority,

wholeheartedly embracing a divine design to history and a narrative shape in which all of the hero’s peregrinations and sufferings are constructed to restore him to his rightful station. In his epigraph, with its beautifully free translation of Virgil’s fourth eclogue, Dryden conforms to the classical tendency to depict historical time as cyclical: “The last great age, foretold by sacred rhymes, / Renews its finish’d course; Saturnian times / Roll round again” (epigraph). In the body of the poem, however, his vision of predestined history unfolds according to the more linear modus operandi of a Christian providence. Charles II’s peaceful restoration to the throne illustrates Christ’s mercy upon sinful England:

Heaven would no bargain for its blessings drive,
But what we could not pay for, freely give.
The prince of peace would, like himself, confer
A gift unhoped, without the price of war[.]
(137-140)

Such free grace is granted to an entire nation that does not deserve it; Dryden begins to suggest that neither he nor God have marked out an exclusive subset of Englishmen and women as the sole beneficiaries. Still, the “ prince of peace” has his own policy for conferring such gifts: they are best given and best received only when their absence has been long felt. Knowing “his blessing’s worth,” God in his providence “took care, / That we should know it by repeated prayer; / Which stormed the skies and ravished Charles from thence, / As heaven itself is took by violence” (141-4). In other words, he has authored and presided over a lengthy national romance. Even in rejoicing at the king’s

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271 For discussions of Dryden’s complex treatment of the pattern(s) of historical time, see Anne Barbeau, The Intellectual Design of John Dryden’s Heroic Plays (New Haven, CT: Yale U P, 1970); Guibbory, 213-253; and James Winn, “Past and Present in Dryden’s ‘Fables,’” Huntington Library Quarterly 63.1/2 (2000), 157-74.
miraculous return, Dryden’s language evokes the “violence” that “ravished” him away in the first place and reminds his audience how many times their pleas for deliverance had to be “repeated” before they were granted; the story of Charles’ loss and recovery is linear and orderly in retrospect, but (by God’s will) it did not appear so while it was still in progress. Although Dryden’s divine romance belongs to England, not to a subset of its people determined by religion, his God is not unlike Milton’s or Hutchinson’s in that he punishes, rewards, and teaches his people through the patterns of genre.

Indeed, once the unfolding of history has allowed him to see the full arc of the divine plot, Dryden’s poetic voice resembles Milton’s Adam in questioning how best to “express” his “doubtful thoughts” that must “both regret and bless” the “sufferings” of Charles and of the realm (71-2). His realization that “blind” humans can “light alone in dark afflictions find” likewise has a Miltonic ring to it (95-6). And like Hutchinson in her autobiographical memoirs, Dryden ultimately chooses to celebrate the fact that he was born in an age of historical romance, an age of heroism and hardship:

Some lazy ages lost in sleep and ease
No action leave to busy chronicles:
Such whose supine felicity but makes
In story chasms, in epochés mistakes;
O’er whom time gently shakes his wings of down
Till with his silent sickle they are mown.
Such is not Charles’s too too active age,
Which, governed by the wild distempered rage
Of some black star infecting all the skies,
Made him at his own cost like Adam wise.

(105-114)

As Ingo Berensmeyer notes, “We tend to identify this trope [‘the traditional metaphorics of light against darkness and of physical blindness against spiritual insight’] with Milton,” but “By using the Puritans’ very own weapons, ‘Astraea Redux’ thus denies Puritan claims to a special authority of interpreting contemporary political events in religious terms” (“The Art of Oblivion: Politics of Remembering and Forgetting in Restoration England,” *European Journal of English Studies* 10.1 [2006], 81-96, 89). We will remember that the anonymous author of “The Faerie Leveller” made a similar move in 1648.
The present period may be “too too active,” subject to great suffering and “cost,” yet it seems that Dryden’s speaker would hardly have it otherwise. A peaceful era is “lazy” and “supine,” and finally “lost,” doomed to be “gently [...] mown” into historical oblivion; it creates a dull blank or even a nihilistic rift within the great “story” of time and offers no material to great storytellers. The age of Charles II may appear to be “governed by the wild distempered rage / Of some black star,” but it is really (or also) authored by God, and it offers the kind of wisdom that can only be attained by one who—“like Adam”—lives through the tempest of the story rather than the “chasm” of peaceful ignorance.

Dryden further distinguishes himself from a Cavendish-esque approach to romance by downplaying the role of heroic agency in shaping history. Like Milton’s characters, the historical figures in “Astraea Redux” may err when they mistake the right occasion for heroic action, such as Sir George Booth, whose 1659 military campaign on Charles’ behalf ended in defeat. Dryden commends Booth’s dutiful courage but rebukes his “valour” as “forward,” comparing him to “the watchful traveller / That by the moon’s mistaken light did rise”: “The attempt was fair; but heaven’s prefixed hour / Not come” (145-9). Divine illumination alone can determine the right time for the right agent to act, and in this case, it is General Monck “whom Providence designed” to deliver England from the “real bonds” of “false freedom” (151-2). Unlike the conclusion of Paradise

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273 John Patrick Montaño, in *Courting the Moderates: Ideology, Propaganda, and the Emergence of Party, 1660-1678* (Newark: U of Delaware P, 2002) also points to “Astraea Redux” in remarking on “Dryden’s belief that history cannot be influenced by man, but is a preordained plan which—through the workings of providence—will both justify and verify his moral philosophy” (98). Montaño identifies Booth as one of Dryden’s figures of “passionate virtue” who “attempt to shape or influence history,” adding that “For them, as for the rebels, tyrants, and lawbreakers, there can be no lasting victory. In the end, the onward rush of
Lost, however, which emphasizes the centuries of anticipation and struggle that both pre- and post-date the arrival of the Messiah, and which reminds us that neither Adam’s first-born son nor his grandchildren nor any of his conceivable descendants will complete the narrative that Adam’s fall began, “Astraea Redux” comforts its audience with the conventional romantic promise of the next generation. History enabled Dryden to rejoice in a real-world exemplar of patrilineal romance, in which a faithful son recovers what was stolen from his father, and also of intergenerational romance, in which young people set the foolish mistakes of their parents to rights.

The poem opens by establishing tense resentment between the younger generation (among whom Dryden counts himself) and their puritanical elders: “Youth, that with joys had unacquainted been, / Envied grey hairs, that once good days had seen: / We thought our sires, not with their own cont / Had ere we came to age our portion spent” (26-9).

By the time the poem ends, however, this fear has been allayed by the restoration of the young king and by his restoration of England, in turn, to an even happier state than it had enjoyed under his father. Charles may be “Heir to his father’s sorrows with his crown,” but he is also destined to see those sorrows end and to heal his nation’s grief, undoing the ill suffered and the damage done by the previous generation (52). Indeed, his time of trial proves to be precisely that, a test rendering him worthy of his crown and ensuring that he will wear it with care:

Nor is he only by afflictions shown
To conquer others’ realms, but rule his own;
Recovering hardly what he lost before,
His right endears it much, his purchase more.

history will sweep them from the stage and make way for the patient examples of exact virtue,” such as Monck and Charles II (ibid).
Charles II’s diplomatic future reign is implicitly contrasted with his father’s past, which may occasionally have been marred by “rash procedure” as a result of Charles I’s sheltered youth. The son’s triumph is even more complete in that he does not merely correct his father’s flaws but also transcends his virtue, perfecting the patrilineal narrative. Dryden praises the new king for the same peace-loving personality that made Charles I an easier target for his enemies: “But you, whose goodness your descent doth show, / Your heavenly parentage and earthly too, / By that same mildness which your father’s crown / Before did ravish, shall secure your own” (256-9). Finally, at the conclusion of “Astraea Redux,” the young people who lamented the wrongs of their “sires” will welcome their monarch’s return and collectively perform the role of the bride in the historical romance’s royal wedding, as both figures of promising generational futurity unite in the present.

Critically, the happy ending to the exiled king’s story is represented not by Charles’ or General Monck’s martial conquest, but by the loving marriage of Charles to his subjects after a long span of strife and separation. Dryden’s England, deprived of her royal bridegroom before the consummation of their union, has spent years envying her happier sisters on the continent and bemoaning the God or the star that keeps her from her lord:

    And heaven that seemed regardless of our fate,
    For France and Spain did miracles create [...]  
    We sighed to hear the fair Iberian bride

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Must grow a lily to the lily’s side;
While our cross stars denied us Charles’s bed,
Whom our first flames and virgin love did wed.

(13-20)

For Dryden, the rebellious people and their monarch are star-crossed lovers rather than adversaries in war. Even the rebellion itself, which must be attributed not just to “Heaven” or to the “stars” but to the English nation, ought to be understood not as political hostility between irreconcilable foes, but as the folly of an amorous quarrel: instead of traitors, the people are “Like early lovers, whose unpractised hearts / Were long the May-game of malicious arts,” subjecting the faithful Charles to the mistrust and fickleness of the archetypal coy or harsh mistress (211-12). But Dryden assures the king that, like all tragicomic lovers who have put their love to the test, “since reformed by what we did amiss / We by our sufferings learn to prize our bliss” (209-10). Having found that “their jealousies were vain,” the repentant subjects “With double heat renew their fires again”; and now that they have endured separation from their beloved as a fitting punishment for their coldness, the much-anticipated wedding night is finally at hand (213-14).

This consummate reunion accomplishes more than putting an end to a quarrel: it effectively wipes the quarrel from history and memory, an erotic Oblivion Act comparable to the legislation that pardoned countless republicans after monarchy was

275 Charles thus plays a more gender-normative role in the amorous romance of Dryden’s “Astraea Redux” than in Cavendish’s Life of William, which figured the King as the fickle mistress and William as his long-suffering lover.

276 Winn suggests that these lines describe “the English as repenting their affair with Cromwell and returning to their true lover Charles” (“When Beauty Fires the Blood”: Love and the Arts in the Age of Dryden [Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1992], 256).
Dryden performs this erasure with another metaphor of marriage and sexuality in identifying the ship that carried Charles back to England: “The Naseby, now no longer England’s shame, / But better to be lost in Charles’s name, / (Like some unequal bride in nobler sheets) / Receives her lord” (230-33). The Naseby, first named in 1655 for the 1645 battle that dealt a crushing defeat to the royalists, was rechristened the Royal Charles five years later when it arrived in Holland to transport the king home. By bearing the weight of Charles’ body and by taking his name, Dryden suggests, the vessel’s former “shame” is “lost” along with the name that commemorated that ignominy. England’s feminine inferiority submits to the King’s masculine authority and is claimed and transfigured by it; the ugly shame of civil war morphs first into the alluring shame of the “unequal” virgin bride in her marriage bed and then into unashamed wedded union. Through the power of love and marriage, the original significance of the old name is transformed, and then forgotten. A similar process occurs as Dryden imagines the ship nearing the white cliffs of Dover, whose color again initially signifies shame. The poet assures the monarch that his eager eyes do not deceive him: “As you meet it, the land approacheth you. / The land returns, and in the white it wears / The marks of penitence and sorrow bears” (253-5). Yet Charles’ love and forgiveness remake England’s remorse into something new: tears of humility turn into “tears of joy, for your returning spilt,” which “Work out and expiate our former guilt” (274-5). Likewise, Dryden soon reassesses the significance of whiteness—“And now time’s whiter series is

Berensmeyer argues that “Astraea Redux” imagines a kind of “anti-republican countermemory” (90). Paul Hammond notes that “Such renaming reverses the revolution of the 1640s and 1650s which had involved many instances of public renaming as new leaders assumed control of the language of government, and radical groups produced new vocabularies for the description of English history and society” (John Dryden: A Literary Life [London: Macmillan, 1991], 28).
begun, / Which in soft centuries shall smoothly run”—and the color of England’s contrition implicitly becomes the color of its purity and perfection as the king’s bride (292-3). Mingling the imagery of amorous reunion and Catholic penitence, Dryden represents the mutual love between the king and his people as a force that transforms all the sufferings of the past two decades into the blessings of a finished romantic narrative. The poem’s earlier hints at universalism merge with its amorous romance: the entire nation is redeemed; all subjects are reinscribed as feminine in shame but then as masculine in marriage; and most important, everyone is now a royalist.²⁷⁹ Dryden’s royal romance has transformed elect community into all-inclusive erotic union.

Lois Potter has pointed out that the dramatic and prose Stuart romances that idealized the relationship between Charles I and Henrietta Maria delineated a distinctively royalist stance on erotic love and marriage, in which “true love” valorizes compromise and transcends the worldly divisions of nationality and religion that might otherwise have kept the king and the French Catholic queen apart.²⁸⁰ “Astraea Redux” takes a similar position in celebrating the restored relationship between Charles II and his universally beloved subjects: love overcomes all obstacles and heals all wounds, even those caused by bitter civil strife. Erotic love, in this royalist mode, is a nebulous yet tremendously potent force that sweeps away abstruse political and philosophical concerns. Of course, as Potter and Victoria Kahn have demonstrated, it erects different

²⁷⁹ Berensmeyer proposes that “The poem’s Royalist ideological content is perfectly mirrored in its form, the ‘perfect union’ of subjects under a patriarchal kingship and the hierarchical order of things poetically expressed in the well-ordered and harmonious form of the couplet. In Dryden’s lines, civilization rhymes with empire and London with Rome rather than Jerusalem” (90-1).
²⁸⁰ See Potter, 77-80. Love plays a similarly conciliatory role in the postwar fiction of Margaret Cavendish, according to Victoria Kahn (Wayward Contracts, 171-95).
ideologies in their place and is far from apolitical. The royalist politics and poetics of
eroticism serve to extol monarchy as the only form of government that can effect a
perfect union between the state and its people, pointing to harmonious affection as both
the rationale and the result of policy such as the Indemnity and Oblivion Act of 1660 and
the subsequent Test Acts that mandated membership in the Anglican Communion for
public employees. Such love conquers all, joining royalists and republicans, fostering
religious harmony through conformity, and reuniting spouses whom violence or
misunderstanding have thrust apart. This universalizing spirit of love, which proceeds
from Charles II as the messianic prince of peace, inspires Dryden’s ardent patriotism in
“Astraea Redux”—and Hutchinson’s burning contempt in Order and Disorder.

“Mixed Marriages” Produce Monsters: Spiritual Miscegenation and Tyranny in Order
and Disorder

Lucy Hutchinson has left us some indication that she was familiar with Dryden’s
widely-read “Astraea Redux,” and even that she may have admired the poem’s style if
not its political sentiment. In one of her elegies on the death of her husband, Hutchinson
reminds that “Glorie itt Selfe is a vaine Thing,” with the exception of glory bestowed by
God.281 She compares receiving this heavenly gift both to the convergence of rivers and
to wifely submission in marriage: “Soe Marriadge floods ye lesser streames / Looseing
Their owne gett nobler names.”282 If the image has its emotional source in Hutchinson’s
adoration of her republican husband, its poetic source may well be Dryden’s royalist
ecstasy at being “lost in Charles’s name / (Like some unequal bride in nobler sheets)”

(231-2). Despite her possible adoption of his language, however, Hutchinson uses *Order and Disorder* to express contempt and revulsion for the royalist perspective on universalizing love that we find in “Astraea Redux” and elsewhere. But while she takes pride in the notion that her poem will be unpopular with Cavalier readers because it “shuts out […] lasciviousness,” her biblical narrative does not distinguish itself from royalist models of romance by shunning eroticism. Instead, godly love in *Order and Disorder* plays a vital role in the divine romance by explicitly and utterly eschewing Dryden’s royalist policy of prioritizing harmonious union over perfect religious and political agreement: according to the poem’s conception of right romance, unity of ideology must precede unity in marriage. Hutchinson’s elect community, conventionally Sidneian in its erotic foundation, remains as exclusive as ever.\(^{283}\)

Hutchinson’s uncompromising stance on romantic love emerges within the poem’s first five cantos and arises out of martial chivalric rhetoric. It is founded on her identification of the Fall, together with God’s subsequent promise that Eve’s “seed” will break the head of the serpent, as the “first beginning” of the “great war” between “two opposèd seeds”:

Two sovereign champions here we find,
Satan and Christ contending for mankind.
Two empires here, two opposite cities rise,
Dividing all in two societies:
The little Church and the World’s larger State,
Pursuing it with ceaseless spite and hate.

(5.80-1, 85-90)

\(^{283}\) As Erin Murphy has observed in *Familial Forms*, Hutchinson strongly upholds marriage between people of different nationalities in her autobiographical fragment, in which she traces her own family’s descent through both the Saxons and the invading Normans: “Hutchinson uses marriage as a figure of consent, which has the power to remake the relation between the conquerors and the conquered, allowing the nation to find a more peaceful future” in the intermarriage of its people, rather than in a stable line of kings (158). But critically, while Hutchinson imagines that mutual love within an *intercultural* marriage may nurture the growth of a godly state, the discordant values within an *interfaith* marriage can never do so.
While Christ and Satan are the “champions” of this cosmic combat, humans serve as lesser warriors: “each age [is] with new combatants supplied,” and the “great war” has been “Carried along more than five thousand year, / With various success on either side” (5.82-84). Yet the “little Church” finds “Hope in the promise” of God’s “most certain oracle,” while “Hell and the World fight upon desperate terms” (5.92-94): both sides know that the war is predestined to end with Christ and his “society” victorious. This interpretation of Genesis as the beginning of the narrative of Christian salvation is a theological commonplace, which Hutchinson couches in the language of epic romance.284 Her expanded reading of the divine “oracle,” however, adds further nuance to her scriptural reformation of the genre for a godly audience. God’s promise, she explains, implicitly contains his “Precepts and rules” for the “new obedience” of his chosen people (5.210). Chief among these is the forbidding of any association with the seed of Satan:

Our first injunction is to hate and fly
The flatteries of our first grand enemy;
To have no friendship with his cursèd race,
The interest of the opposite seed t’embrace[.]

(5.213-16)

Much is contained within this primary “injunction.” First, there is Hutchinson’s assumption that it is “ours”—in other words, that she and her readers are among the community of the elect, the protagonists of and “combatants” in the sacred heroic narrative for whom the command is intended. Next, there are several polarizing absolutes:

284 Wilcher has noted that Hutchinson also “adopts the epic machinery of infernal councils and devilish intrigue to underpin crucial turns” elsewhere in Order and Disorder’s narrative, “often with the slenderest of biblical warrants” for her generic play: “For example, when the ‘pious’ followers of Enos thwart the devils’ hope that the ‘holy seed’ of Adam has been ‘extinguished’ by the murder of Abel, Satan ‘calls his mates to arms’ and, to the acclaim of ‘Hell’s malicious court’, proposes that they once more use ‘woman’ as a ‘bait’ to ‘lure’ mankind into ‘the fool’s paradise’ (6:423-80)” (“Paraphrase, Epic, Romance,” 29).
that all who do not fall into this first person plural are the “cursèd race” of the “grand enemy,” that their “interest” is diametrically opposed to that of the godly, and that the two factions must therefore have nothing to do with one another (other than battle). Last, there is a hint of sexual prohibition in particular within the broader rule of separation: “The interest of the opposite seed” may suggest philosophical and political concerns, but the outlawing of “friendship” and “embrac[ing]” verges into the personal and the erotic. Critically, any eroticism in Hutchinson’s lines is restrictive rather than inviting; she gestures toward the possibility of sexual congress with the “opposite seed,” but only to dismiss it as repugnant. Her formulation renders Dryden’s universalist erotics unthinkable.

Order and Disorder’s narrative following the Fall makes the theme of spiritual miscegenation, and God’s hatred of it, explicit. After murdering his brother Abel, Cain, the first reprobate, “found a wife who left for him her God” and “Both founders of the Worldly State became” (6.350-1). An unholy marriage in which religion is subordinated to desire produces the entirety of the “cursèd race” that is destined to wage war on the elect for millennia to come. (Notably, the annotations of the Geneva Bible suggest that Cain’s son Lamech, by taking two wives, was the first to profane “the lawful institution of marriage, which is, that two should be one flesh”; Hutchinson, who imagines marriage already corrupted by Cain’s wife’s abandonment of God for her reprobate husband, sees no need to include Lamech or his bigamy in her poem.)

She then identifies Seth, Adam and Eve’s third child, as “the founder of the Holy State,” but notes that from the inception

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285 Christopher Barker (printer), The Bible. Translated according to the Ebrew and Greeke, and conferred with the best translations in diuers languages. With most profitable Annotations vpon all the hard places, and other things of great importance, as may appeare in the Epistle to the Reader (London, 1583), 3.
of history, God’s elect community has been in danger of losing its numbers to the “Worldly State” through intermarriage: “Seth’s offspring did God’s ways decline, / Mixed with Cain’s impious brood, yet of that line / In every age some few with pure hearts sought / The Lord of Life and to their children taught” (7.1-4). The combat between the “two opposite cities” becomes a reproductive battle as well as an ideological one, though as ever, the elect are destined to win, regardless of their army’s small size: although Cain and his wife’s “family increased,” Hutchinson notes that “Oft are they multiplied who are not blessed,” their increase becoming mere rankness of nature devoid of providential purpose, while “The holy seed still with advantage dies / That it in new and glorious form might rise” (6.353-4, 429-30).

As the narrative continues, Hutchinson’s emphasis on God’s prohibition of love and marriage between the elect and the reprobate leads her into forcefully Calvinist readings of scripture, such as Genesis 6:1-4, in which “the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they took them wives of all that they liked.” First, Hutchinson imagines that “all the Devils” conspire to teach women the “art and wit” that compose courtly wooing: “To govern and conceal their own desires / That lovers might augment their ardent fires; / To counterfeit repentance, rage, tears, smiles, / Kindness and jealousy” (6.513-14, 527-30). Under Hutchinson’s treatment, such Cavalier flirtations become “sorceries,” and she thus trades the vocabulary of amorous courtly romance for the black magic of a more Spenserian form of the genre (6.510). After adding this detail to the biblical account, she relies on the Geneva Bible’s annotations in order to embed her concern with spiritual miscegenation into the remainder of the story:
Cain’s lovely daughters, exercising these  
Too fatally, the Sons of God did please,  
Who all the greater ends of marriage slight,  
Conducted by their sensual appetite;  
With profane wives defiling that pure bed  
Which God to holy use determined,  
To be a seminary for his plants  
And fill his city with inhabitants.

(6.533-40)

The “sons of God,” for the Calvinist adherents to the Geneva translation, are not angelic beings but “The children of the godly which began to degenerate,” while the “daughters of men” are specifically “Those that came of wicked parents, as of Cain,” and their being “fair” signifies merely their “Having more respect to their beauty, and to worldly considerations, than to their manners and godliness.”

Hutchinson adopts this reading of Genesis 6:2 wholesale, adding her own observation that the defilers of marriage thus deprive the godly “city” of its rightful “inhabitants,” depopulating the Holy State. She proceeds to emphasize that the profane union of the reprobate with the bewitched “Sons of God” is the explicit cause of the monstrous births that follow: “But these mixed marriages produced a brood / That stained the earth with violence and blood: / Men of prodigious valour, strength and size / Whose monstrous crimes were no less prodigies” (6.541-4). For Hutchinson, the grotesqueness of “these mixed marriages” has nothing to do with the union of humans with angels or demons, nor with intercourse between physically or nationally distinct peoples. Rather, the abomination is *spiritual* miscegenation; it lies in the erotic and social “embracing” of the “opposite seed.”

Hutchinson then embellishes her account further, proposing that this early spiritual miscegenation introduced false religion into the world, which she associates with

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286 Ibid., 4.
the gaudy trappings of popery (or high Anglicanism): under the “Oppression” of the tyrannical offspring, “sincere worship was no more allowed / But driven out by the tumultuous crowd / Who new ways of invoking God begin, / Bringing vain pomp and men’s inventions in” (6.547-50). Her greatly expanded version of Genesis 6:1-4 thus considers the values and aims of both Caroline amorous romance and Caroline conciliatory policy and turns them upside down.\textsuperscript{287} In \textit{Order and Disorder}, no love can justify the union of two peoples who are at spiritual war with one another; by implication, the fallen Protestants who stubbornly commit spiritual miscegenation in the name of love and dynastic reproduction (namely, both Charles I and his son, in taking Catholic wives) or for the sake of money or status (such as nonconformists who submit to the Test Acts and join the politic communion of the king’s established church) have merely fallen prey to the “sorceries” of courtly Duessas and threaten to reintroduce corruption into God’s chosen nation, “fill[ing] his city” with the wrong “inhabitants.” These sins, like the “mixed marriages” at the dawn of history, are victories for Satan in the cosmic war, and Hutchinson brands those who commit or celebrate them “proud rebels,” reserving (as usual) the accusation of rebellion against a higher authority for royalists, collaborators, or their analogues (6.555).\textsuperscript{288} God’s love and election are reserved for the true believers for whom marriage can never be a compromise:

\begin{quote}
Yet though more generally among mankind
False worship was advanced and truth declined,
There were a few that yet continued pure
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{287} Wilcher suggests that “The subversively republican tenor of some of Hutchinson’s reflections on such figures as Cain [...] might also be taken as a deliberate counterblast to royalist romances of the 1650s, which garnished their tales of love and war with ‘divers Politicall Notions, and Singular Remarks of Moderne Transactions’” (“Paraphrase, Epic, Romance,” 35).

\textsuperscript{288} See also Norbrook, “The Poem and Its Contexts,” xxvii.
Nor these polluted mixtures would endure,
But God in his own ordinances sought
And men his undefilèd precepts taught.

(6.557-62)

Only the “few” who keep themselves “pure” by shunning the “polluted mixtures” of spiritually unequal people, thanks to their unique adherence to God’s law, are fit to lead the Holy State. This entity is neither strictly political nor merely spiritual; it always retains its own autonomy despite the tyranny of the Worldly State, since its “ordinances” are divine rather than human and the seat of its government is the home and family, yet it is ruled by “devout patriarchs” whose leadership of their “chaste pious wi[ves]” and “holy offspring” stretches beyond the private sphere by “warn[ing] and rebuk[ing] those reprobates of old” and “Building a house which in that dark age blazed” (6.637, 618-20, 573).

As Wilcher argues, Hutchinson does embellish Scripture with her own creative content more and more frequently as the poem progresses. In Cantos 17 and 18, the story of Jacob and Esau provides her with an opportunity to illustrate her renunciation of erotic compromise: her significant expansion on Esau’s marriage to two Canaanite women invokes several tropes of royalist amorous romance, then demolishes them. Esau demonstrates his reprobation in his violation of God’s “first injunction” for the elect: despite being his father Isaac’s favorite son, he “Undutiful in his behaviour proves” and “His father’s and his grandsire’s precepts slights / Matching with the accursèd Canaanites” (17.466-8). Yet Hutchinson does not end here, as the text of Genesis does; instead, she

289 For an excellent study of the radical political dimension of the home and family in seventeenth-century England, see Katharine Gillespie’s Domesticity and Dissent in the Seventeenth Century: English Women’s Writing and the Public Sphere (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 2004). Murphy’s Familial Forms has also discussed how the discourse of a separate domestic space in the seventeenth century “does not render the family apolitical, but rather redefines its relationship to politics for the republican cause by maintaining its separation from government” (136).
digresses by inviting us to imagine Esau as the conventional romance hero in thrall to love—or, more specifically, as a Drydenesque star-crossed wooer who becomes convinced that love conquers all. Esau, “rough, yet bold and brave,” “oft chased the flying deer” until “Bright Aholibamah with piercing rays / Ardour like lightning through his breast conveys, / Which working there begets a violent flame” that consumes his thoughts and transforms the archetypal hunter into prey: “at the last, entrapped with beauty’s snare, / His fierce soul was subdued” (17.505, 470-81). Hutchinson then invents Esau’s interior monologue as he perceives himself to be in love and reasons his way through the values of royalist romance as seen through Hutchinson’s antagonistic lens:

Nor did he check but flattered his desire.
‘Can I,’ said he, ‘burn with a nobler fire?
If Nature in creation have designed
Man must be linked with womankind,
What should I seek in her that I must wed
But beauty wherewith pleasure may be fed?
Is’t not a princess that inflames my love?
Can any other choice so happy prove?
My father tells me they’re a cursed brood,
But why should he appoint me my own food […]
When I at home have made a nobler choice,
Wherein ’tis fit my father should rejoice.
(17.483-96)

According to Esau’s romantic subjectivity, no sentiment can be “nobler” than the love of a beautiful woman, which accords with the primal order of “Nature,” and no “choice” of a beloved could be more “happy” than a “princess” of royal blood. Hutchinson phrases Esau’s thoughts to make his assumptions appear as blunt and shallow as possible, but these

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290 Referring to a rhetorically similar passage in Canto 11, in which the Pharaoh becomes enamored with Abraham’s wife Sara, Wilcher proposes that “The conventional romance idiom of love as a ‘flame’ fuelled by ‘sparkling eyes’ and causing its victim to ‘burn’ inwardly is given a more sinister gloss by imagery of ravishment, feasting, and drunken ‘infection’; and the rendering of this episode might be seen as a parallel to Milton’s briefer evocation of the debauched courtiers of Charles II as the ‘wild rout’ of ‘Bacchus and his revellers’ [PL 7:32-4]” (“Paraphrase, Epic, Romance,” 36).
are of course the conventions of countless romances, including England’s foundational Protestant ones; love may well be ennobling, all romance lovers are beautiful, and virtually every heroine turns out to be a princess. Esau’s reasoning then takes a more explicitly Caroline turn: the fact that his love is proscribed by the ideology of his community only intensifies its potential merit. Why should it matter that he is a Hebrew and his lady a Canaanite if he loves her? Why should religious and political difference dictate his private desires, particularly when the public good of marriage to a princess and harmony with her nation will result? How can the archaic rules and enmities of a former generation stand in the way of young love, especially if its practical benefits could easily reconcile all parties? Esau’s passion for Aholibamah is strong enough that it outweighs all other concerns, yet (in his view) manages to satisfy them anyway—the very happy situation in which the lovers of Caroline court drama and Dryden’s Restoration narrative find themselves. Charmed by Esau’s courtly conduct, Aholibamah and her father give “free assent unto his wishes,” just as the enamored people of “Astraea Redux” do, and so the hero marries his Canaanite princess with mitigating eroticism as his guiding principle, “determined to be satisfied, / Though duty and religion both denied” (17.506, 477-8).

But as we know, this sort of blindly unprejudiced, universalist love is never a virtue for Hutchinson. When Esau contemplates the reasons why his love should supersede religion and custom, he merely “Flatter[s] his desire,” having “no design but pleasing his own will” (17.474); through her fanciful treatment of his courtship, Hutchinson insinuates that the Caroline virtue of erotic compromise might be exposed as a reckless (even Satanic) drive toward self-gratification. Moreover, she proposes that any
love that would so disregard “duty and religion” must eventually prove itself to be no more than “flagrant lust” (17.476). Because Esau desires Aholibamah only for “base ends,” his ardor quickly cools and he reenacts the same amorous romance with a different Canaanite woman.291 “Adah, Duke Eber’s daughter, seems more bright / And with new violence did his dead flames light” (17.513-14).292 Finally, Hutchinson envisions the domestic aftermath of Esau’s two marriages, in which the illusory ideal of intercultural and inter-ideological harmony evaporates. His mother Rebecca, “godly, sober, modest, plain,” attempts to make the best of her new daughters-in-law, “(Since they unto her family were brought),” and strives “with pious kindness [...]// To instruct them in God’s worship, and correct / Those vanities which graceless dames affect” (17.519-24). But the Canaanites refuse to assimilate: “they, proud of their princely families, / Her and her pious counsels much despise, / Practise their idol-worship in despite” (17.525-27). Like England’s two consecutive Catholic queens, Henrietta Maria and Catherine of Braganza, the foreign princesses of Genesis show no interest in changing their religion or their lavish habits to match the expectations of their husband’s society, and in the eyes of its most “godly, sober” members, they appear only as bad influences toward “sinful riot” (17.520). Similar perversions, we may imagine, will be the result of the ill-advised “marriage” Dryden celebrated between England and the hedonistic Charles II. When Esau at last selects a third bride of his father’s choosing, “adding this wife more / To his

291 Wilcher cites Hutchinson’s axiom here that “Eager desires die when fruition’s past” (17.510) as “evidence of [her] familiarity with the amatory verse of Sir John Suckling, the poet of the 1630s who had the strongest influence on the Earl of Rochester and other libertine poets of the restored Stuart court” (Ibid., 37).
292 Given that the themes of Esau’s wooing already play on those of early Caroline court drama, Hutchinson may further intend for Esau’s repetitive romances with his two brides to glance slightly at the young Charles I’s two controversial courtships of Catholic princesses, first the failed negotiation for the hand of the Spanish Infanta and then the successful match with Henrietta Maria of France.
unquiet Canaanitish dames,” he remains in thrall to his foreign wives’ exotic eroticism and incapable of sincere repentance: “Yet burns he still in their accursèd flames, / Nor doth those idol-worshippers remove / But still retains them in his guilty love” (18.340-4). In a final interjection of her narrative voice into Esau’s story, Hutchinson suggests that the only acceptable solution to such “mixed marriages” is an aggressively Miltonic one: “But had not such a show to mend been forced, / He would those wicked women have divorced / And to his father’s will his own resigned” (18.361-363). Unlike pre- and post-war Caroline romance, which might celebrate the harmonious union of opposed religions, sanction the marriage of the heroine to a reformed rake, or imagine the king and his people as reconciled lovers, thereby extolling true love as a great obliterator of ideological distinctions and healer of old wounds, Order and Disorder upholds such barriers to politic affection with militant zeal. In the world of Hutchinson’s biblical epic, romance could never build community by destroying spiritual difference; rather, spiritual difference stands in the way of the elect community’s right romance.

“’Tis only like desires like things unite”: Godly Love and Governance

Tarnishing royalist portrayals of tolerant love as mere “lasciviousness,” however, does not entail that Order and Disorder disavow all tropes of amorous narrative. On the contrary, Hutchinson’s renunciation of spiritual miscegenation leads her to a perspective on elect eroticism that combines the natural law of Lucretius (whom she had renounced in nearly the same breath as romance in her preface) with basic romantic convention:

’Tis only like desires like things unite:
In union likeness only feeds delight.
Where unlike natures in conjunction are,
There is no product but perpetual war,
Such as there was in Nature’s troubled womb
Until the severed births from thence did come. 293
(3.263-268)

This explanation of Adam’s need for a mate like himself serves as the foundation for
godly love throughout the rest of the poem and introduces certain associations with
romance long before Hutchinson repudiates others. Sidney and Spenser adopted the
romance genre’s medieval tradition that the elite must (and do) love only the elite, and
added the corollary that the elect must (and do) truly love only the elect; 294 Hutchinson
retains this concept, which permits her to adopt both subversive and conservative stances
on marriage and its ramifications, public and private. The scientific and erotic principle
that “only like desires like things unite” points to several of her more radical positions.
First, it underlies her belief in the essential equality of men and women in prelapsarian
creation, a theme that will play into her reconsideration of gendered heroism throughout
the poem. Hutchinson is like many biblical commentators in her emphasis on Eve’s
creation out of Adam’s body and on the couple’s becoming “one flesh” again in marriage
(“We, late of one made two, again in one / Shall reunite”), but as Shannon Miller has
pointed out, she is unique in her interpretation that this union is the result of childbearing,
(“When marriage male and female doth combine, / Children in one flesh shall two
parents join”), which grants both parents equal status in relationship to their offspring and

293 As Jonathan Goldberg has also noted in The Seeds of Things: Theorizing Sexuality and Materiality in
Renaissance Representations (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), 122-78, Lucretius remains a
major influence on Hutchinson’s writing despite her repudiation of his atheism and of her translation of De
Rerum Natura.

294 For a compelling discussion of how the medieval and Early Modern romance tradition combines the
theme of union between elite heirs and heiresses with the theme of mutual love as spiritual fulfillment, see
Cooper, 218-68.
begins to alter the Spenserian idea of reproduction as a strictly feminine heroic motive (3.406-7, 415-16). Next, as we have seen, her postulate that the mingling of “unlike natures” is inimical to love and precludes meaningful unity grounds her suggestion that “mixed marriages,” even royally sanctioned or required ones, are perversions void under natural and divine (if not human) law.

Finally, the tenet that “likeness only” can produce true “union” allows for Hutchinson’s implication that the “war” that inevitably results from “unlike natures in conjunction” may occur on a political or national level as well as a domestic or an atomistic one. Original human likeness, and attraction to that likeness, are the sources of both godly marriage and reproduction and godly governance. In a remarkably swift progression of thought, Hutchinson proposes that man’s “Need of a suitable and a kind aid” applies not only to a domestic spouse “To whom he might his joys communicate,” but to all social and sociopolitical relationships. The erotic desire to unite and share freely with one’s equal partner as a solution to loneliness and spiritual stagnation becomes the foundation of the entire state, and even a justification for the redistribution of wealth: just as it is “not good” that Adam should be alone in Eden, “It is not good virtue should lie obscure, / That barren rocks rich treasures should immure, / Which our kind Lord to some, for all men gave, / That all might share of all his bounties have” (3.345-8). In a society rooted in likeness and thus cemented by godly love, “the great” are not “permitted

295 Shannon Miller, “Maternity, Marriage, and Contract: Lucy Hutchinson’s Response to Patriarchal Theory in Order and Disorder,” in Engendering the Fall: John Milton and Seventeenth-Century Women Writers (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 107-35, 118-25. Erica Longfellow (188-90) and Robert Mayer (311) have also emphasized the radicalism of Hutchinson’s portrayal of mutuality in marriage. Norbrook is somewhat more tempered (and rightly so) in his conclusion that Hutchinson’s depiction of male and female relations in marriage incorporates both mutuality and conservative hierarchy (see “The Poem and its Contexts,” xliii-lii, and “The Republican Biblical Epic,” 56-61.)
to retreat” from their care of “the simple and the weak,” who—like Eve—risk harm from “strong and subtle foes” when left “alone” (3.355-60). She concludes that, beginning with Adam and Eve but continuing throughout history,

Men for each other’s mutual help were made,  
The meaneast may afford the highest aid,  
The highest to necessity must yield:  
Even princes are beholding to the field.  

(3.361-4)

Hutchinson annotates the final line with a marginal reference to Ecclesiastes 5:9: “the profit of the earth is for all: the king himself is served by the field.” Anyone who fails to live by this law of mutuality simultaneously “Injures himself” by cutting himself off from the amorous and social joys of “mortal converse” and “others doth betray / Whom Providence committed to his trust, / And in that act nor prudent is nor just” (3.365-8).296 The recent rulers of seventeenth-century England are, of course, the implicit objects of this criticism; rather than governing their “associates” with the humility and love of spiritual equals granted material power, they have assumed absolute superiority and thus forced their “partners” into “conjunction” with an “unlike nature,” thereby ensuring “perpetual war,” whether on the battlefield or in the heart. This state of endless warfare may remind us of Hobbes’ fear of the anarchy wrought by myriad subjectivities,

296 Joan Bennett, who reads Order and Disorder as seventeenth-century “feminist liberation theology” in “Mary Astell, Lucy Hutchinson, John Milton, and Feminist Liberation Theology,” in Milton in the Age of Fish: Essays on Authorship, Text, and Terrorism (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2006), 139-66, argues that for Hutchinson, both husband and wife must “[coordinate] their efforts for the creation of a just society within an order that, while it gave the husband a governing role, required that he govern by right reason and that the wife guide her actions by her own right reason as well, rendering male and female both very powerful” (147). Bennett concludes that while Hutchinson never questioned women’s domestic subordination to men, she “viewed both women and men as constantly active participants with Providence”; her liberation theology entails the belief “that all humans are of equal spiritual worth and calling” and that therefore “no matter where they were placed in a hierarchical order, each person embodied ability and held responsibility for the welfare of the whole order” (156).
but in Hutchinson’s case, the war must be blamed on the phallocratic absolutists, not on those who resist or refuse them. The royalist parody of marital union, she suggests, must be acknowledged as tyrannical imposition rather than disguised as a bride’s comely submission to her loving groom. She has thus moved with astonishing speed from a conventional literary law of erotic attraction and a basic Lucretian principle to a radical political stance. If “only like desires like things unite,” then the political equivalent of spiritual miscegenation—that is, the tyranny of a reprobate monarch over an elect people—is anathema to the laws of God’s created universe (whether erotic, material, or spiritual), and the only righteous response to it is the divorce that both Esau and England are too servile to choose.²⁹⁷

Yet even as we track Hutchinson’s use of the romance tenet of love-in-likeness to its radical conclusion, we find conservative principles interwoven along the way. Hutchinson responds to her belief that all human beings—male and female, rich and poor—are equal in creation by simultaneously deconstructing and upholding gendered and sociopolitical hierarchy. “The great,” whether husbands, the wealthy, or the powerful, may be joined to “the weak” in a bond of “mutual help,” but in order for each group to perform its sacred duty, their relational inequality must stand; God has given the riches of the earth “to some, for all men,” but the rich must first possess them in order to

²⁹⁷ It is worth noting that if Hutchinson regards a nation’s subjection to a bad king as analogous to Esau’s enthrallment to his reprobate wives, she places the monarch in an implicitly feminized position: he is the gaudy, wicked woman whom the fallen and deluded subjects uxiously adore, and whom the godly subjects wish (and ought) to divorce. This metaphor constitutes another radical departure from Dryden’s formulation and from traditional royalist political theory, which regarded the monarch as his people’s husband; accordingly, his duty was to rule them with love, and theirs to obey him. For a reading of Milton’s performance of similar manipulations of gendered conventions in his divorce tracts and political writings, see Murphy, 84-5, 240.
exercise their virtue by sharing them with their poor dependents. Hutchinson’s paradoxical perspective calls for radical reform while necessarily preserving many essentials of the status quo, including restriction of leadership to an elite minority: she imagines government by an aristocracy of the elect, defined (in her case) as those “few with pure hearts” who uphold the Holy State in “every age” by keeping the law of love, reproduction, and social fellowship only with others like themselves. These true “Sons of God” who shun spiritual miscegenation and the tyranny it breeds are uniquely fit for good marriage and good governance, both of which are predicated at once on “mutual help” and worldly hierarchy. Hutchinson here turns to the rules of romance to imagine an elect community that is founded not only upon spiritual likeness and equality, but also upon temporal difference and disparity.

Just as conservative politics enter into Hutchinson’s most reformist ideology, her romance tropes are surprisingly at their most earnest and their most traditional in her imaginative interpretations of the love between the young patriarchs and matriarchs of Genesis, which Hutchinson sets in opposition to the reprobate characters’ twisted variation on royalist romance. Isaac falls in love with Rebecca, who is predestined and “by Providence / Marked forth” to be his wife, at first sight: “At [her] approach, to her such love he took / That every passion else quickly forsook / His much-enamoured breast” (16.136-7, 265-7). And nowhere is romance more prevalent in Order and Disorder than in Jacob’s courtship of Rachel in Book 19: while Hutchinson ironizes and parodies the genre in Esau’s wooing of his Canaanite wives, her sudden turn to pastoral romance at the end of the poem is startling in both its conventionality and its sincerity.
Rachel’s resemblance to the beautiful and universally beloved shepherdesses of the *Arcadia* (or even of court pastoral drama) is certainly intentional: the shepherds of Haran introduce her to Jacob as “the only loadstone, the bright star / By whose light all our youth attracted are” (19.212-14). Her response to her many lovers, and the effect she creates in them, calls to mind Sidney’s shepherdess Urania or, as Wilcher has suggested, Shakespeare’s Perdita:

> Yet she her thoughts pure as her looks doth keep,  
> Harbours no care but for her flock of sheep,  
> Who, of their guardian proud, before her play  
> Whilst all the amorous shepherds pine away,  
> Whose courtship she nor scorns nor entertains.  
> Of a successful rival none complains,  
> For her lovers all the same indifference find,  
> And yet her coldness is of such a kind,  
> So managed, it a reverence begets,  
> And higher value on her beauties sets.  
> (19.215-24)

Unlike the “blazing” women of the Worldly State, whose charms are “sorceries” and whose beauty inflames lust and generates strife, Rachel unites her suitors in their love for her and inspires “reverence” in them. Nor is their devotion misplaced; much as the *New Arcadia*’s lovers claim to desire heavenly beauty and therefore heavenly goodness in the objects of their passion, Hutchinson suggests that Rachel’s “beauties” are indeed of “higher value.” Her blazon of the shepherdess pays further conscious yet un-ironic tribute to traditional romance and highlights the conservative model of heroism in which birth, beauty, and virtue are inextricably intertwined:

> of that noble kind  
> Was Rachel’s beauty that it showed a mind

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298 Wilcher, “Paraphrase, Epic, Romance,” p. 39: “The single detail that Rachel tended her father’s sheep is enough to license an extended description of her as a rustic cynosure, like Perdita in *The Winter’s Tale*.”
Worthy of such a cabinet: Nature the mould
Formed to those gemlike virtues it should hold.
Vigour and courage in her bright eyes shone,
On the large forehead wisdom had a throne.
A blushing modesty, accompanied
With tempting sweetness, did her motions guide.
The opening of her lips was eloquence [...] 
In every smile was gentleness and truth [...] 
Her voice was harmony, her radiant hair
Chaste Love’s strong band, not lust’s alluring snare.

(19.287-300)

At his first meeting with Rachel, Jacob is attracted simultaneously by his cousin’s beauty and by the bond of kinship between them: “Nature’s force he felt / Contending with the late intruder, Love, / Which should more powerful in his bosom prove. / He tells her who he is, nor then forbears / To claim that dear relation with joy’s tears” (19.254-8). Likewise, “kindred and sympathy” first move Rachel to love Jacob in return, followed by “virtuous conversation” and “Jacob’s merit” (19.309-11). Hutchinson makes no distinction between Jacob and Rachel’s likeness in virtue and their likeness in blood as “noble” descendants of Abraham; both are features of their elect condition, which generates their godly desire for one another, justifies it as legitimate and pure, and ensures the continuance of the Holy State.

Indeed, Jacob and Rachel’s pastoral love affair is significantly distinct from Esau’s Canaanite courtships only in that their match accords with the wishes of Jacob’s family and with God’s will for his chosen people. Hutchinson deliberately notes that Rachel differs from the wicked women earlier in the poem not in that she is “insensible of Love”—a cold defect of character that “would a stain to all her beauties prove”—but in that “when that fire into her bosom came / It burnt as purely as a martyr’s flame” (19.305-8). Love does, and should, affect the elect as it does the reprobate; in fact, it does
so with greater legitimacy, strength, and constancy. Much as the “fierce” Esau is “subdued” by Aholibamah’s beauty, Jacob finds himself “vanquished in the field” upon first encountering his “fair foe” (19.251-3). Esau sacrifices his community and its culture for the sake of pleasing his wives, effectively submitting his will to theirs, while Jacob quickly finds that “his chief desires” are only “To serve” Rachel (19.259); notably, Hutchinson does not question the value of the virtuous lover’s courtly “service” to his mistress, as Milton does through Raphael’s interrogation of Adam’s love for Eve in Paradise Lost. Finally, Hutchinson parallels Esau’s resistance to any obstacles to the fulfillment of his desire for Aholibamah with Jacob’s stubborn pursuit of Rachel throughout his many years of service to Laban:

For easier may you the firm rocks remove
Than change the purpose of a well-fixed love,
Which, being once seated in a generous mind,
No difficulty can in nature find
That it surmounts not, with delight t’acquire
The dear enjoyment of that strong desire.

(19.317-22)

Hutchinson here describes a strength of will akin to Esau’s, but commends what she deplored before. The brothers’ progress as lovers is outwardly similar, and yet inwardly, no two desires could be less alike: Esau boorishly loves multiple unworthy women, while Jacob’s love takes hold “in a generous mind” and is “well-fixed” not only in that it is constant and firmly implanted, but also in that Rachel is its deserving object. Because Jacob’s desires are directed toward his own cultural and spiritual likeness—because his

299 Wilcher identifies this martial metaphor for love as “the kind [...] that the poet would have encountered in the ‘witty songs’ and the prose romances of her girlhood reading” (Ibid., 39).
300 Upon Adam’s admission that he feels “awe” in the presence of Eve and that “what she wills to do or say / Seems wisest, virtuouest, discretionest, best,” Raphael admonishes him that Eve, as a woman, is “worthy well / Thy cherishing, thy honoring, and thy love— / Not thy subjection” (PL 8.549-59, 568-70).
choice accords with the wishes of his pious mother, and God’s election—what is condemnable in Esau is praiseworthy in him. Hutchinson retains the romantic rhetoric that she used polemically against Esau in her sincere account of Jacob and Rachel’s love, but the very amorous conduct that leads Esau further into sin makes Jacob into the un-ironic hero of Hutchinson’s Puritan pastoral romance and the latest builder of God’s nation.

We might compare Hutchinson’s privileging of the elect Jacob and Rachel’s godly romance over the reprobate Esau’s superficially similar experiences to her account of her and her husband’s courtship in the Memoirs. Hutchinson describes how her husband-to-be falls suddenly in love with her after refusing to “be entangled in any of [the] fine snares” of worldly ladies “set out with all the gayety and bravery that vain weomen put on to sett themselves off”; she later notes that his “extravagant perplexity of soule concerning [Lucy] […] had not bene admirable in another light person, but in him, who was from his childhood so serious and so rationall in all his considerations, it was the effect of a miraculous power of providence, leading him to her that was destin’d to make his future joy.”

John Hutchinson’s amorous passion would be condemnable in a lesser man, but in a person of his intelligence and virtue, it instead serves as evidence of God’s providential work within the individual mind and heart. Hutchinson is not so bold in the Memoirs as to identify herself and her husband as elect lovers and the “light person” or the “vain women” as lustful reprobates, but the parallels with Order and Disorder’s Calvinist categorization of love and lust are undeniable. John’s passion leads,

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301 Hutchinson, Memoirs, ed. Sutherland, 28, 30.
Hutchinson coyly adds, into “a more handsome management of love then the best romances describe”: this true story, authored by providence, admits and yet also surpasses the conventions of genre. Likewise, although the preface to Order and Disorder expresses abhorrence for “turning Scripture into a romance,” the poem as we have it concludes with a pastoral love affair and a significantly revised implication: that the heroic and erotic stories ordained by God are like, but infinitely better than, “the best romances” produced by human art or policy. As we have seen, however, John and Lucy’s romance in the Memoirs becomes strained by the tension between his spiritual vision of the narrative of the elect and her worldly concerns as a wife and mother; the characters of Genesis allow Hutchinson to reimagine a godly romantic subjectivity that does not splinter so easily along gendered lines.

“What will full Restoration be?”: Rethinking Teleology, Gender, and Narrative Vision

“Love is the cément of the Holy State,” pronounces the narrator in comparing the offspring of Cain and Seth near the beginning of Order and Disorder, “Nor hath it place or fellowship with hate” (6.419-20): as ever, the elect, who are alone capable of true love and sincere political fellowship, must resist any temptation or legal act that might pollute their community with those whom “lust or interest [...] in leagues combines, / But holy love or friendship never joins” (6.415-16). Esau and his “blazing” court ladies are counted among “the bright slaves of Satan’s empire” who have forsaken Rachel’s pure martyrlike burning for “a wild fire and an unhallowed flame” (6.418). And while elect

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302 Ibid., 52.
303 Devoney Looser suggests that for Hutchinson, carefully controlled elements of romance “are not only acceptable but necessary to honest history writing” (45).
sexuality is always oriented toward the future of the Holy State—springing from and flowing back toward “God, the fountain of all love” (6.422)—Hutchinson represents all ungodly activity, including sex and reproduction, as purposeless and stagnant,

as a declining stream
That breaks off its communion with its head,
By whom its life and sweetness late were fed,
Turns to a noisome, dead, and poisonous lake,
Infected all who the foul waters take[.]

Like so many of her radical Protestant fellows and predecessors, Hutchinson endows the community of the elect with a long yet fecund and progressive narrative, while identifying their enemies by their very excommunication from such a teleological timeline. However alike their respective versions of erotic romance may appear, one is destined to for propagation, continuance, and a sacred end, while the other is going nowhere.

Both Jacob and Rachel’s marriage and the Hutchinsons’ are the conclusions of micro-romances within the ongoing trans-historical romance of the elect, authored by God himself: Hutchinson judges that her future husband’s unprecedented longing for her, like Jacob’s similarly “extravagant perplexity of soule” toward Rachel, was “certainly [...] of the Lord, though he perceiv’d it not, who had ordein’d him, through so many

304 Hutchinson similarly uses the imagery of stagnant water and sterility in her description of the fate of the reprobate cities of Sodom and Gomorrah:

The earth itself with all her shining fruits,
From its first native beauty much estranged,
Into a killing, noisome lake was changed,
Bounded with slime and noisome poisonous weeds,
Where no fish lives, nor any fowl e’er breeds [...] 
The waters such unsavoury vapours make,
Whence Heber’s brood surnamed it the Dead Lake.

(13.262-270)

It is worth noting that while she does acknowledge that “lascivious love” in Sodom is often homosexual in nature (13.12), she does not dwell at length on the Sodomites’ particular transgression; for Hutchinson, all forms of sexual sin result in the same stagnant end, and her concern with the ubiquitous sin of heterosexual spiritual miscegenation largely eclipses her attention to more outré sins such as homosexuality and incest.
various providences, to be yoak’d with her in whom he found so much satisfaction.”

The story of Jacob in *Order and Disorder*, like so many romances, breaks off unfinished with the rest of the poem, but its conclusion incorporates an implication that the divine romance is likewise unfinished only because it is ongoing. In the poem’s final line, Jacob is “Carried off [...] safe” from Laban’s vengeful troops, “for God at first did send / An unseen guard of angels to attend / His servant home, though yet he knew it not, / And Bethel’s certain vision had forgot” (20.144-9). Despite the fact that the minor heroes frequently “forget” the promised plot of their story or fail to “perceive” its unfolding, God’s providence continues to preside as author, whether of the epic romance of the Holy State or of the individual amorous narratives of its elect members, whose unions in love and marriage sustain “the blessed Seed” destined to generate their community’s “sovereign champion.” Indeed, Hutchinson reminds her readers that the original marriage of Adam and Eve prefigures the true end of the heroic and erotic romance of history, when Christ, having vanquished Satan in the universe’s final battle, will be eternally united to his chosen bride, the Church:

> ‘Henceforth no longer two but one we are [...] 
> As my victorious triumphs are all thine, 
> So are thy injuries and sufferings mine, 
> Which I for thee will vanquish as my own, 
> And give thee rest in the celestial throne.’ 
> The bride, with these caresses entertained, 
> In naked beauty doth before him stand, 
> And knows no shame, purged from all foul desire 
> Whose secret guilt kindles the blushing fire.

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306 Wilcher likewise finds it “appropriate that [*Order and Disorder*] should remain unfinished, like the great English exemplars of the romance genre, Sidney’s *New Arcadia* and Spenser’s *Faerie Queene* [...] In that incompleteness [...] it forces a marriage between the puritan writer’s understanding of the human story derived from her bible-centred conception of universal history and the ongoing flow of human stories that are the life-blood of romance” (“Paraphrase, Epic, Romance,” 42).
Her glorious Lord is naked too, no more
Concealed in types and shadows as before.
(3.493-498)

These reconciled lovers recall Dryden’s joyous national marriage yet leave it far behind. Their “nakedness” serves a double purpose: not only does it showcase the ultimate redemption of elect eroticism, made fully perfect at the end of time, but it also signifies the *telos* of Christian art and hermeneutics, justifying their purpose and marking their ending. The “glorious Lord” is “no more / Concealed” in the “types and shadows” of history and text; in the very eschatological moment that it becomes possible to read time as a finished romance, it also becomes unnecessary, even meaningless. Typology, genre, and other such interpretive tools are finally stripped away to reveal the real thing.

Long before the ends of the divine romance are realized, however, the wandering narrative of God’s chosen people winds slowly (yet progressively) on from one generation to the next. As Shannon Miller, Erin Murphy, and others have observed, much of *Order and Disorder* is preoccupied with the business of reproduction: from Adam and Eve to Abraham and Sarah to Isaac and Rebecca to Jacob and Rachel, elect families constantly experience gratification, then disappointment, then renewed joy as they await the birth of the “blessed seed,” the child or children destined to carry on the physical and spiritual lineage of the Holy State in its eternal combat with “Hell and the World.” For all four of these couples, the wait is long and the result unexpected, entirely out of step with the orderly patrilineal narrative of “Astraea Redux”: the first three patriarchs beget first-born sons who show early promise but are not chosen for heroic roles, and Jacob produces many children with Leah while he and his beloved Rachel remain childless.
This recurring theme, of course, inheres in the original text of Genesis, but Hutchinson emphasizes it for her own personal, theological, and political ends. First, since “Children in one flesh […] two parents join,” Hutchinson presents her male and female heroes as equally concerned with the worldly promise of reproduction and its potential for failure; both husbands and wives experience the hope that Spenser’s Britomart has in her offspring, along with the fear that romance will become tragedy. Further, Norbrook notes that “Calvin and other Protestant commentators saw the Jacob-Esau story as paralleling that of Isaac and Ishmael: the normal order of primogeniture is inverted for the sake of the elect, anticipating the belated triumph of the true church.” Hutchinson adopts this Reformation-era Calvinist theme and modifies it for the Restoration, repeatedly emphasizing that neither the first-born son nor the next generation in general—both of them sources of imminent hope in “Astraea Redux” and throughout romance-inflected royalist historiography—are in themselves legitimate symbols of teleology according to sacred narrative.

The story of Esau and his family provides Order and Disorder’s most emphatic polemic against primogeniture as well as spiritual miscegenation; at the same time, it reiterates Hutchinson’s interest in resisting gendered binaries for elect heroism. In favoring his “vigorous” elder son and intending to “dispense / [His] blessings unto [him],” Isaac is “governed by a partial blind affection” and “Stuck to that choice which was not God’s election” (17.179, 18.8-9, 77-8). Upon discovering that he has been acted upon “by a secret Providence / Whose workings were not obvious to his sense” and has thus blessed Jacob instead (18.141-2), Hutchinson’s uniquely introspective Isaac is overcome not with

307 Norbrook, ed., Order and Disorder, 217n.
anger at his wife and younger son, whose deceit is justified by “powerful reason” (17.541), but with guilt and “trembling horror” at his own resistance to divine will:

By God long since, by himself pronounced but late,
He sees his sons’ irrevocable state,
And now acknowledges mortals in vain
Strive to prevent what God doth once ordain [....]
These things resolved in his disturbèd thoughts,
And he convinced thereby of his own faults
Who to the oracles of God so slight
Regard had given, nor having placed aright
His partial love, doted on him the Lord
As a profane wild reprobate abhorred;
Therefore at length he did his will submit
To God’s[.]

(18.124-8, 151-8)

In the Memoirs, John Hutchinson was endowed with a narrative vision of God’s plot for his Holy State, which his wife’s “partial blind affection” prevented her from seeing, much to her own dismay and submissive self-recrimination. In Order and Disorder, Hutchinson makes Rebecca the heroic visionary and her husband the spouse who must repent of his confusion between worldly and godly concerns. In political terms, the “vain” law of primogeniture, so pivotal to divine right monarchy and to the royalist reading of Charles II as the hero of his family’s dynastic romance, may easily run afoul of “God’s election.” If it does so, the godly patriarch must abandon it and “submit” to legitimate divine right.308 Any assumption that the divine plot accords with the human

308 Bennett, discussing Cantos 17 and 18 of Order and Disorder, identifies Isaac’s pious but deceitful wife Rebecca as a particular heroine for Hutchinson, arguing that Rebecca exemplifies godly conduct at the intersection of the domestic and the public sphere. In helping her (and God’s) favorite child Jacob achieve his birthright, Rebecca individually exercises right reason, not by permanently challenging patriarchy but by “[discerning] the wisest action and [executing] that action well” such that “that virtuous purpose [is] acted upon by those with governing authority” (“Feminist Liberation Theology,” 155-156). Isaac has been temporarily blind to God’s will, but Rebecca sees and enacts it; she then explains her reasoning and actions to her husband, who accepts hers and God’s wisdom, thus restoring mutual right reason both to their marriage and to their community.
order of primogeniture is either a grave error that the elect must learn to correct in themselves (as Isaac does), or else the fatal fallacy of the damned. Cain, of course, is the original firstborn son to prove unworthy of his inborn status, and Hutchinson imagines that after Adam’s first son has murdered his second, Satan “exult[s]” at his apparent triumph over the “champion” destined to destroy him, believing “The holy seed extinguished by [Abel’s] death / But God revived it in succeeding Seth” (6.424-6). The champion’s victory was never contingent upon either of Adam’s eldest sons, nor does it depend upon anyone else’s firstborn in time to come, least of all Charles II.

Hutchinson is not simply concerned with turning “the normal order of primogeniture” upside down in order to favor symbolically disenfranchised younger children, however. Beyond separating eldest sons from their traditional heroic roles, *Order and Disorder* rejects another common theme of romance that Dryden’s postwar royalist narrative embraces: the hope that the suffering of one generation will be ameliorated by the young heroes of the subsequent one. The promise of future redemption is paramount to Hutchinson’s treatment of the history of the Holy State, but crucially, that salvific end lies in the deep future, and never in the hands of the present population’s immediate offspring. Eve is the first character in the poem to misunderstand the scope of the divine romance, imagining that its temporality is restricted to the life spans of herself and her children, and that her conception of her first son represents a singular triumph and heralds the fulfillment of God’s promise:

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309 Salzman comments that the restoration of the king in royalist romance “has a religious as well as a political resonance” in the “possible symbol of the father’s death and the son’s ‘resurrection’” (174).

310 Milton has Adam make a similar error in the final books of *Paradise Lost*, as we have seen in the previous chapter.
When Cain was born, exultingly she thought
She had into the world her champion brought;
But from the error of that fond conceit
She learned that such as live on faith must wait
To have the promises whereon they stay
Performed alone in God’s own time and way.
(6.33-8)

Hutchinson makes clear that Eve’s error is not simply her assumption that her first-born son must be the promised seed, nor even that the story’s end is near at hand, but rather that she possesses any conventionally heroic power to bring the end about.\footnote{Miller has argued that Hutchinson “revise[s] aspects of Genesis […] to suggest how maternal procreation can be used as a counter to seventeenth-century patriarchal theory” (109). Miller’s case is convincing insofar as the women of Order and Disorder participate fully in the conflict between the Holy and Worldly States (and their reproductive capacity is the crux of that participation), but we must keep in mind that Hutchinson places firm limits on the power of human mothers and their equally human offspring to resist worldly order. The only decisive challenge to the hierarchy of the Worldly State belongs to the “champion” Christ, and it will be “Performed alone in God’s own time and way.”}

Th’entail of life and victory was not
To earthly men, of earthly men begot;
And such alone could Eve to Adam breed
Whose sin and curse was fixed in all his seed;
And to recover its corrupted fruit
It must be set into a nobler root,
Its ignominious parentage disclaim
And be adopted into a new name:
Which then obscured in th’oracle did lie
Till the full time revealed the mystery.
(6.39-48)

Order and Disorder revisits Spenser’s paradoxical treatments of both heroic action and reproduction in Book III of The Faerie Queene, and reaches similar conclusions: human activity is undeniably part of the divine plot, yet by comparison with God’s will it is neither sufficient nor necessary in the usual sense of the word.\footnote{In contrast to the many books on Spenser and Milton, no study of Hutchinson’s literary relationship to Spenser has yet been made. (Goldberg’s The Seeds of Things discusses both Spenser and Hutchinson in relationship to Lucretius, but not to one another.) However, Hutchinson’s original allegory of Divine Vengeance (8.187-250) and her imaginative episode personifying such figures as Sleep and Night (14.43-147) resemble both Spenserian and Virgilian material. Given Spenser’s enduring popularity throughout the
similar: in *Order and Disorder*, as for Britomart, reproduction is a providential commandment without a predictable triumph or a foreseeable end. Beginning with Eve, every mother is called to “maintain / Posterity, not frighted with the pain” in the hope of the “promise that thereby she shall / Recover all the hurt of her first fall / When, in mysterious manner, from her womb / Her father, brother, husband, son shall come” (5.221-8). Again, the mortal role in the divine romance is both a certainty and a mystery—and the mystery in which all elect mothers still share is not precisely identical to the mystery of Christ’s incarnation that Eve fails to anticipate in Canto 6. The precept given to women in Canto 5 clearly refers to the incarnation of Christ thousands of years in Eve’s future, and yet it also remains operative for Eve’s living descendants, despite the historical fact of Jesus’ birth seventeen centuries prior to Hutchinson’s composition of *Order and Disorder*. The “full time” has “revealed the mystery” of Christ’s identity as the “champion” of the Christian romance, but the mystery of the ongoing commandment to childbearing remains shrouded in time that is not yet full. The matriarchs of Genesis continue to face the reproductive quest and the obscured narrative vision of Spenser’s Britomart—although crucially, they are no longer alone in that feminized subject position.

The disappointment of the republican cause, paired with the enduring Puritan belief in a providential arc to history, necessitates Hutchinson’s return to this Spenserian or Sidneian style of unfinished, long-form romance—a mode which Charles II’s return to power had obviated for post-Restoration royalist treatments of the genre, including “Astraea Redux.” The king’s return lent the royal romance a beautiful simplicity: as

seventeenth century and Hutchinson’s youthful fondness for “amorous [...] poems” and epic romance, it seems highly likely that she had at least some familiarity with *The Faerie Queene*. 
literary convention dictated, the loving and fruitful union of Charles II’s parents perfectly performed its reproductive function and resulted in a heroic first-born son who successfully reclaimed his father’s usurped throne. Everything, in the end, had gone according to the generic plan.\(^{313}\) In order to survive and retain positive ideological value, Puritan republican romance therefore required a different plan: a much more expansive one that refused to recognize the royalist “end.”\(^{314}\) After introducing the Spenserian paradox of reproduction early in *Order and Disorder*, Hutchinson continues to raise it throughout the rest of the poem, consistently stressing both the hope of futurity and the failure of immediate expectation, and thereby rejecting the primogeniture, imminent resolution, and narrative finality that Dryden emphasizes.\(^{315}\) Moreover, this trial troubles the patriarchs as much as it does their wives, since the prophetic perspectives offered to the men of Genesis typically take the promissory form of future descendants; as before, Hutchinson’s compound project relies on her own embellishments and explications of preexisting scripture. To God’s assurance to Abraham that his aging wife Sarah, rather than her young maid Hagar, will become the mother of his heir, Hutchinson adds an association between the unborn Isaac and the promise of the holy seed’s birth made to Adam and Eve: “And now my promises shall take effect, / Nor shalt thou long the

\(^{313}\) In Potter’s words, “Events had transformed the fantastic prophecies into reality, and the mock tragedy into true tragicomedy” (112).

\(^{314}\) For Milton’s similar but distinctive treatment of Puritan republican romance in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, see the previous chapter.

\(^{315}\) For another perspective on the “troubled promise of reproduction” in *Order and Disorder*, see Murphy, 152-75. Murphy argues that Hutchinson represents reproduction as a window into sacred history and as a form of redemption distinct from the linear genealogical promise of the birth of Christ. However, she points out that Hutchinson also depicts childbirth and children as sources of sorrow, disappointment, and death; the struggle of godly parents is to reconcile the pain and mortality inherent in reproduction with the equally inherent promise of earthly and eschatological fulfillment.
covenant shall come” (12.167-70). Again, the first-born son is rejected and the human order of primogeniture gives way to a higher order. But, lest divine inheritance law seem a simple matter of radical inversion, Hutchinson further invents God’s revelation to Abraham that “the blessed seed” refers not merely to an individual, but to a continuum of godly lineage, long before (and, as we have seen, long after) it manifests itself as a specific person. Isaac both is and is not the expected heir to the promise of history, God explains:

It is in Isaac that I have decreed  
A glorious name unto thy holy seed.  
From him the godly nations shall descend [...]  
And from a race of kings at last shall rise  
That glorious Monarch whose great victories  
Shall overthrow the powers of Death and Hell  
And them from their usurpèd realm expel [...]  
But first a long and various tract of time  
Must be expired before thy nephews climb  
To these last glories; yet here steadfast rest  
Thy faith: the world shall be in Isaac blessed.  
(14.297-314)

As it turns out, Isaac is destined to be the heir whose line will eventually produce the true heir, the “sovereign champion” destined to reclaim his “usurpèd realm.” But there is nothing immediate about the promised triumph of this family line: a nebulous span of time, made known to Abraham and to us only as “long and various,” separates Abraham and his son from the “glorious Monarch” whom Isaac’s birth anticipates. God warns Abraham that the arrival of the “blessed seed” remains a distant prospect, even as it is also imminent in Isaac’s birth. Yet the message ends in renewed comfort, with God’s reassertion of Isaac’s critical role in the protracted plot. Abraham will be long dead by the time of Christ’s birth, to say nothing of the End of Days (since, as we have seen, the holy seed endures after Christ’s death and resurrection, continuing to emerge from the erotic
union of elect women and men throughout history)—but he may “steadfast rest / [His] faith” in his own son, “here” and now. Reminiscent of Spenser’s Merlin providing limited solace to Britomart, Hutchinson’s God offers Abraham no direct vision of his romance’s end, instead exhorting him simultaneously to imagine the full landscape of sacred time and to content himself with his far more limited sight of the present occasion as he moves through the twists and turns of his own linear reproductive narrative. Unlike the assured triumph of the rightful heir in the royalist family romance, Isaac’s arrival must never be mistaken for the telos of his story, and yet his failure to embody that end must not be regarded as a disappointment. God seems to present Abraham and his “nephews” with their “long and various” period of waiting—with the weight of romance—as a gift in itself. By analogy, Charles II (like Ishmael) is the false heir of a false teleology, but his opponents have, as yet, no “glorious Monarch” of their own at hand to overthrow him and reclaim the “usurpèd realm.” Yet both the King’s success and the disappointment that it spells for Puritan republicans are temporary and illusory. The future in which worldly monarchy will be obliterated may be almost infinitely far off, but “the godly nations” may “steadfast rest / [Their] faith” not only in the distant future, but even “here” in the seemingly unpromising present: by God’s mysterious means, in their own children and in their pure community of faith, “the world shall be [...] blessed.”

Beyond relying on Genesis’ repeated stories of delayed childbirth and disappointing first sons, Hutchinson also invents her own material in order to appropriate

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316 Murphy argues that “Hutchinson highlights the threat of relying upon reproduction as the ground of stability, instead embracing the power of sacred history. The promise of the future, however, is not enough. Her commitment to the form of typology comes only after she has been able to challenge this system to respect the present, as well as provide a bridge to the future” (174-5).
the rhetoric of the royal romance and turn it to her own ends. The word “restoration,” which appears frequently throughout *Order and Disorder*, refers always and only to the fulfillment of God’s promises to the elect or to the triumphant conclusion of the providential narrative.\(^{317}\) In a lengthy creative digression, Hutchinson characterizes the renewal of life after the Flood as “Earth’s restoration” by God, but reminds her audience that, as always, each happy ending to the trials of the godly merely prefigures their ultimate joy at the end of time, which surpasses the imagination: “What will full Restoration be, if this / But the first daybreak of God’s favour is?” (8.149, 27-28). The royalist “restoration,” then, is doubly illusory for Hutchinson. It is a temporary triumph of the Worldly State, falsely represented as a glorious victory for virtue; and it is a vicissitude, celebrated as the end of the royal romance, which fails to recognize the entire arc of the romance of Providence. The true Restoration is still at hand, and its glory is reserved for the Holy State alone.

Shortly after her lyrical meditation on the Flood’s aftermath undercuts royalist language by looking forward to the “full Restoration,” Hutchinson continues to subvert the imagery of the Worldly State’s romance about itself. The mountains that rise “from th’imprisoning flood, / Their faces slimed, their standards dropping mud” appear “as a prince who, long in prison bound, / Comes squalid forth at first, untrimmed, uncrowned” (8.35-38). She appears to adopt the premise of “Astraea Redux”—that the world’s rebirth arrives in the form of a restored prince who arises from exile to recover his lost throne—

\(^{317}\) Norbrook reminds us that the word “restoration” had simultaneous deep significance for royalism, Puritanism, and even secular republicanism: “For royalists, of course, the word mainly referred to Charles II’s return in 1660; but Puritan republicans appealed to Isaiah 1.26, ‘I will restore thy judges as at the first,’ as well as to Machiavelli’s more secular theory, to present reform as an act of restoration, a return to first principles” (“The Poem and its Contexts,” xxxix).
but again, her resistance to her enemies’ rhetoric is complex and multifaceted. First, as with the term “restoration,” she claims it for Puritan republicanism and thereby changes its meaning: the emergent figure is not an earthly prince who has overcome earthly opponents, but the earth itself, responding to divine mercy, without which no release would be possible. Second, Hutchinson alters the image that she has appropriated from Drydenesque romance: the prince first appears not as a splendid conquering hero, but as a “squalid” and “untrimmed” former prisoner. On one hand, Hutchinson’s monarch can triumph even while “uncrowned”; on the other, his natural form is lowly, unadorned, and unclean before his transformation by God’s grace. Only under the care of “Heaven’s compassionate, kind, refreshing eye” do the mountains appear kingly: “Again they fair, again they stately grew, / Again looked down on the sunk realm where they / So long space late captived and vanquished lay” (8.39, 42-44). Third, Hutchinson proceeds to challenge any remnants of royalist ideology that might still linger around the royal image after her appropriation and transformation of it. After depicting God’s restoration of the humble mountains, she issues a dire warning to them, and to the rulers that they both resemble and represent, never to forget the sole source and sustainer of their majesty:

But curb, fair hills; O curb your growing pride:
He who above you covering clouds doth ride,
Whose pity drew you from your low estate,
When you insult will cast down your proud height [...]  
Your new-restorèd glory shall expire [...]  
And you, great Lords, who on the mountains reign, 
With them shall once more be destroyed again. 

(8.45-54)

The language of “restoration” appears once more, but this time in a royalist context as the resurgence of monarchy, and Hutchinson again emphasizes the corruption and transience
of the concept according to royalist usage: any restoration tainted by “growing pride” and impiety is ultimately doomed to “expire” to make way for the “full Restoration” of the elect. Finally, after appropriating the image of the returning prince, transfiguring it, and critiquing it, Hutchinson unceremoniously discards it, ending her admonition with a dismissal: “But let’s not glance at judgements due to you / While we old miracles of grace review” (8.63-64). The heroic figure of royalist romance is initially useful as an emblem of salvation, but his monarchist overtones shadow “the first daybreak of God’s favour” by coming to signify the resurgence of sin, and finally the image’s efficacy withers before true “miracles of grace” and the distant prospect of “full Restoration.” Hutchinson seeks a two-pronged victory over royalist language and symbolism by recuperating them for Puritan republicanism when the values of the opposing narratives intersect, and by casting them aside as soon as they do not, extracting the pith of the royal romance and throwing away the rind.

“What will full Restoration be?” is the question that Order and Disorder consistently poses and invites its godly readership to contemplate. Hutchinson offers rare and partial answers to it, as when she imagines “That glorious Monarch whose great victories / Shall overthrow the powers of Death and Hell / And them from their usurpèd realm expel” and the subsequent consummation of the marriage between the true “Monarch” and his bride, “no more / Concealed in types and shadows.” For the most part, though, the question is for asking rather than answering; both the protagonists of Genesis and God’s elect community throughout history—whether male or female—are called occasionally to take heroic action, but more often to wait. For the most part, they can
only trust that “God’s repeated interventions in history always look forward to the future, insisting that however unclear it may seem, it will follow a coherent pattern”—the plot of providential romance. Moreover, while the plot of sacred history is ongoing, visible to the heroes of the Holy State only in rare visionary moments, the individual believer can (and should) pursue his or her own tiny progressive narrative:

So we, pursuing our attainments, should
Press forward from what’s positively good,
Still climbing higher, until we reach the best,
And, that acquired, forever fix out rest,
Our souls so ravished with the joys divine
That they no more to creatures can decline.
As God’s rest was but a more high retreat
From the delights of this inferior seat,
So must our souls upon our Sabbaths climb
Above the world, sequestered for that time
From those legitimate delights which may
Rejoice us here upon a common day [...] Yet is this rest but a far distant view
Of that celestial life which we pursue
By Satan oft so interrupted here
That little of its glory doth appear.

(3.574-585, 612-15)

This exhortation and admonition to the audience begins with Platonic language in urging a gradual “climbing higher, until we reach the best” and develops into a neoplatonic Christian reminder of the ends of the divine narrative, when all material referents will be “no more.” In quotidian life, the Sabbath’s day of rest presents the godly with the best opportunity to meditate on these ends, yet the Sabbath too is a type with an unfulfilled antitype. Long before the romantic episodes of the poem’s later cantos, Hutchinson’s ruminations on the last day of Creation—and on the End of Days—seem (perhaps even consciously) inspired by The Faerie Queene’s moments of visionary Protestantism, drawing both from Redcrosse’s “climb

318 Ibid., xxxi-xxxxii.
"Above the world" to catch longing, fleeting sight of the New Jerusalem in the distance, and from the final four perfectly “unperfite” lines of Spenser’s epic romance:

For all that moveth doth in Change delight:
But thence-forth all shall rest eternally
With Him that is the God of Sabbaoth hight:
O thou great Sabbaoth God, graunt me that Sabaoths sight.

(FQ, “Mutabilitie,” viii.2)

Redcrosse is granted a narrative vision of the story’s end, as is John Hutchinson in the Memoirs, while Britomart and Lucy must accept promises and grope through narrative obscurity; in Order and Disorder, Hutchinson upholds both variations on elect romantic subjectivity while rejecting a gendered hierarchy to them. Both Adam and Eve, both Abraham and Sarah, must hold out hope for their promised descendants; at the same time, nothing precludes a female hero, past or present, from achieving “a far distant view / Of that celestial life,” and Rebecca’s vision may even outstrip Isaac’s. Both the patriarchs and matriarchs of Order and Disorder are sometimes accorded brief glimpses of God’s full narrative about themselves and their progeny, but such vision fades quickly, and for the most part, men and women alike must pray and hope for what they cannot see. Likewise, Hutchinson’s elect community of Puritan republicans find themselves somewhere in the middle of the romance of history, able in their time of religious and political disappointment to perceive “little of its glory.” Order and Disorder strives to remind its audience that the absence of present triumph only demonstrates the plot’s unfinishedness: in the meantime, the godly are left with the struggle and the reward of “Press[ing] forward” to attain a momentary Sabbath’s sight of something their adversaries could only feebly mimic: “full Restoration.”
This final chapter considers two works of prose fiction which appeared at a time when the civil wars were passing into more distant memory and the “Glorious Revolution” was poised to end both James II’s troubled reign and the Stuart dynasty itself. John Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, Part Two (1684) and Aphra Behn’s *Oroonoko* (1688), texts both known for their resistance to generic categorization, continue English writers’ postwar considerations of how romance might redefine and reconstruct community, and whether it serves more to reiterate, or to repair, divisions in religion, politics, and other sites of identity. At the dawn of the eighteenth century, and immediately prior to their own deaths, Bunyan and Behn could look back on decades past and return to questions much like those that challenged Spenser and Sidney: can romance function as a meaningful model for national, individual, or sacred history? What are its civic and religious applications and limitations? I argue here that Bunyan, after several prior experiments mingling romance and Puritan symbolism, deliberately orchestrates productive conflicts in Part Two of his *Pilgrim’s Progress* between romance convention and the spiritual journey to the “next world” of the Celestial City. Bunyan concluded his career as a preacher and an allegorist by suggesting that romance’s value lies in its capacity to generate and empower a nontraditional family of dissenters, and in its ability to stand for (rather than embody) sacred narrative form. Behn’s *Oroonoko*—a narrative of slavery, rebellion, love, and death in the “next world” of the American colonies—likewise affirms romance’s
capacity to unite a diverse group of adherents: despite Behn’s ardent royalism, Oroonoko and his friends are politically heterogeneous, and the African prince subverts Calvinism’s exclusion of Ham’s black descendants from the narrative of the elect. Rather than being empowered or providentially protected, however, their community is no sooner made than marginalized, and is eventually destroyed by colonialists who reject its members’ romantic sensibility. While Bunyan’s allegory interrogates romance by drawing it to the fore, Behn enacts its recession in her transatlantic tragedy. Her prophetic perspective as a royalist woman near the end of her life reveals not the New Jerusalem but the New World, a spatial and temporal zone she finds hostile to the ideas that allowed romance to flourish across ideological boundaries in seventeenth-century England.

1. Reconceiving Community and Genre in The Pilgrim’s Progress, Part Two

Unlike John Milton and Lucy Hutchinson, who each confessed their youthful enthusiasm for reading romance but made statements repudiating the genre later in life (despite their tacit continued commitment to it in their biblical poetics), John Bunyan never made any effort to conceal the fact that he based the structure and style of The Pilgrim’s Progress on the chapbook romances he read as a boy.319 “Give me [...] George on horseback or Bevis of Southampton,” he recalled of his early reading preferences, “give me some book that teaches curious arts, that tells of old fables; but for the holy

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319 Roger Sharrock has objected to seeing The Pilgrim’s Progress as “an imitation of a chivalric romance,” preferring to read it as “something growing out of oral narrative like the fairy- or folk-tale” (“Life and Story in The Pilgrim’s Progress,” in The Pilgrim’s Progress: Critical and Historical Views, ed. Vincent Newey [Liverpool: Liverpool U P, 1980], 49-68, 56). However, we have Bunyan’s own testimony about his reading habits to consider; and at any rate, it seems unnecessary to reject the relevance of one generic form in favor of its close cousin.
Scriptures I cared not.” By the time he began to write fanciful allegorical fiction as a preacher of those scriptures he once dismissed in favor of tales of love and chivalric adventure, the Puritan minister actively defended his use of romance as a didactic instrument and made no attempt to obscure its presence in the first part of his *Pilgrim’s Progress* (1678). In the intervening years before he produced Part Two of his wildly popular book—during which he had also published the comparably romance-inspired *Life and Death of Mr. Badman* (1680) and *The Holy War* (1682)—Bunyan had the time and opportunity to contemplate the merits and the limits of the genre as a spiritual guide for him, his dissenting flock, and his expanding readership. Without ever turning away from romance in his final fictional work, Bunyan directs his, and our, attention to the friction at various points of contact between romantic convention and Christian narrative time, exhibiting and encouraging critical self-consciousness about how elect community is constituted and how genre both enriches and constrains temporal perspective.

In Part One of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, Bunyan’s allegorical approach to time, space, and genre is relatively straightforward: Christian travels from the City of Destruction through the sins and dangers of life to the Celestial City. His heroic romance ends when he enters the City after crossing the River, an act that stands for the death of his mortal body. While the precise moment of the end of his quest cannot quite be defined—Christian is, “as it were in Heaven, before [he] came at it; being swallowed up” from the narrator’s limited perception “with the sight of Angels”—the conclusion of his narrative aligns fairly neatly with his temporal and spatial attainment of his generic

goal.\(^{321}\) The less-studied Part Two, in which Christian’s wife, children, and other followers retrace his journey, complicates the questions of what constitutes spiritual romance and where its “end” lies. Both the rich potential and the difficulty in mapping Christian allegory onto the narrative structure of romance emerge through two major avenues: first, Bunyan’s transformation of his hero from an embattled individual to an imitative community; second, his focus on female characters, none of whom appear as pilgrims in Part One.\(^{322}\) While Christian’s romance was characterized by isolated paths and unknown perils, Part Two is populated by protagonists who pay a different sort of tribute to romance convention in their meta-consciousness of heroic antecedents, their deliberate pursuit of chivalric combat, and their concern with love, courtship, and the promise of reproduction. These conventional tropes contribute to Bunyan’s construction of his markedly unconventional pilgrim community. However, the pilgrims’ various goals, while all generic staples, are difficult to square with their claim to be “upon the same Errand” as Christian: once they too reach the Celestial City, the significance of their martial and marital pursuits must diminish (191). The communal, feminine, and familial concerns that are unique to Part Two, and that enrich Bunyan’s construction of elect fellowship, also “have curious consequences for the allegory,” in the words of Christopher Hill.\(^{323}\) In adding these new elements, Bunyan forces us to consider the temporal, spatial, and narrative discontinuities between earthly and apocalyptic romance.


\(^{322}\) Betty Schellenberg was the first Bunyan scholar to make the argument that the “hero” of Part Two is “the group,” rather than either Christiana or Great-heart. See “Sociability and the Sequel: Rewriting Hero and Journey in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, Part II,” *Studies in the Novel* 23.3 (1991), 312-24, 319.

\(^{323}\) Christopher Hill, *A Tinker and a Poor Man: John Bunyan and His Church, 1628-1688* (New York: Knopf, 1989), 229.
In a sense, the romance genre itself is an allegory in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, the symbol rather than the essence of sacred narrative form, possessed of the usual limitations that attend the relationship between the allegorical and the “real.”

“Warm with desires”: *Imitative Community and Non-Normative Love*

It has become commonplace to remark that Part Two of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* is far less suspenseful than Part One, more focused on companionship and conversation than on combat. In 1928, Ronald Knox mockingly observed that “Christian goes on a pilgrimage, Christiana on a walking tour”; more recent scholarship, although less disparaging, generally acknowledges that the quip is grounded in reality.\(^{324}\) There is something touristy, even groupie-like, about Christiana and her companions’ retracing of Christian’s journey: Christiana and Mercy ask to have the same bed that Christian slept in at House Beautiful, where they lie awake together talking of his adventures (224). Later, Great-heart takes them sightseeing on the battlefield where Christian fought Apollyon and points out its various attractions, the relics of Christian’s chivalric valor:

> This is the place; on this ground Christian stood, and up there came Apollyon against him. And look [...] here is some of your Husband’s blood upon these stones to this day: Behold also how here and there are yet to be seen upon the place, some of the Shivers of Apollyon’s Broken Darts [...] Verily Christian did here play the Man, and showed himself as stout as could, had he been there, even Hercules himself. When Apollyon was beat, he made his retreat to the next Valley, that is called *The Valley of the shadow of Death*, unto which we shall come anon. Lo, yonder also stands a Monument on which is Engraven this Battle, and Christian’s Victory, to his Fame, throughout all Ages[.]

(242)

Instead of reliving the experience of fighting Apollyon firsthand, Christiana and her party—together with the readers of Part Two—are encouraged to experience the memory

of the battle as both terror and pleasure. This retracing of Christian’s path and the shared remembrance it engenders allow romance to continue to flourish as a unifying communal center despite (even because of) its explicit derivativeness. Moreover, as we will shortly see, the community that gradually forms around the memory of Christian’s romance fosters new, non-normative unions and modes of intimacy, even as it also retains its familiar properties of demarcating God’s elect and excluding the reprobate.

As Christiana’s party gradually encounters other Pilgrims, the newcomers reveal that “Christian’s Name” is now “famous,” with word of his heroic pilgrimage “spread abroad far and near” (294). Michael Austin reminds us that Christian’s story has in fact “become a written text” avidly consumed by fictional fans of his sacred romance: Mr. Sagacity informs the dreaming narrator that “there are but few houses that have heard of him and his doings, but have sought after and got the Records of his Pilgrimage; yea, I think I may say, that that his hazardous Journey has got a many well-wishers to his ways” (178). In other words, the real text of Bunyan’s Part One has apparently entered the imagined or dreamed universe of Part Two, “just as most of the characters that Quixote and Sancho encounter in Don Quixote II have read Don Quixote.” But Christian gains more than readers and “well-wishers.” Valiant-for-truth articulates a recurring theme when he explains how he too came to set out on pilgrimage with his “Jerusalem Blade” at the ready (293):

We had one Mr. Tell-true came in to our parts, and he told it about, what Christian had done, that went from the City of Destruction. Namely [...] how he

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325 Michael Austin, “The Figural Logic of the Sequel and the Unity of ‘The Pilgrim’s Progress,’” Studies in Philology 102.4 (2005), 484-509, 498. McKeon also notes this self-reflexivity, remarking that the subject of Part Two is mainly “the documentary objectivity” of Part One (313).
326 Austin, 498.
had killed a Serpent that did come out to resist him in his Journey; and how he
got through to whither he intended [...] In a word, that man so told the Story of
Christian and his Travels, that my heart fell into a burning haste to be gone after
him, nor could father or mother stay me.

(293-4)

Exposure to Christian’s chivalric romance moves certain readers to run off in imitative
pursuit, and Christiana’s band therefore expands as new Pilgrims join her “walking tour”
and pass much of their time simply “talking of Christian,” delighting and reassuring
themselves with recollections of his famous exploits (281).

This shared awareness of generic context has led many scholars to remark that
Part Two is about not only the imitation of individual heroism, but also Christian
community.327 Moreover, it is about community nurtured by storytelling: Bethany Bear
argues that in both parts of The Pilgrim’s Progress, godly “fancy” or imagination can
serve as a sign of election and as a force that “sustain[s] love among Christians,” and we
may say the same for the Puritan romance that delights both Bunyan’s readers and his
characters.328 The elect may glimpse their status in their enthusiasm for Christian and his
heroic narrative, and even the many stories they habitually share of one another’s
humbler “progresses” strengthen them with the reminder that both triumphs and trials are
common to all pilgrims. As Christiana puts it, “This relation of Mr. Fearing has done me
Good. I thought nobody had been like me, but I see there was some Semblance ’twixt this
good man and I” (256). While much of Part One is concerned with the burdensome and

327 Readings that focus prominently on Christian community in Part Two include John R. Knott, “Bunyan
and the Holy Community,” Studies in Philology 8 (1983), 200-25; E. Beatrice Batson, John Bunyan:
Allegory and Imagination (London: Croom Helm, 1984), 47-53; Schellenberg, “Sociability and the
Sequel”; Kathleen Swaim, “The Church,” in Pilgrim’s Progress, Puritan Progress: Discourses and
Contexts (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1993), 198-231; and Abram Steen, “Over this Jordan’: Dying and the
328 Bethany Joy Bear, “Fantastical Faith: John Bunyan and the Sanctification of Fancy,” Studies in
frightening isolation of the dissenting soul, Part Two (like Hutchinson’s *Order and Disorder*) relishes the relief of being “like” and with others—a comfort furnished by shared narrative norms and repetitions. Much as communal story enables the Pilgrims to recognize and reassure one another until they reach the safety of Beulah, which houses a composite “History of all the famous Acts” of Christians past for all to read (306), Bunyan’s prologue to Part One promises his readers that their election might be revealed to them by their regard for the book they hold and by their capacity to comprehend it:

Wouldst read they self, and read thou knowest not what,
And yet know whether thou art blest or not,
By reading the same Lines?
(9)

The prologue to Part Two offers a similar assurance: “Things that seem to be hid in words obscure, / Do but the Godly mind the more allure” (173). The allegorical romance that Bunyan’s reading audience and his characters consume and strive to imitate contains symbolic meaning not only within its pages, but in its very being as a sacred communal text; a multi-plotted narrative about the journey of the elect comes to symbolize, in itself, elect fellowship.

Some (most notably Roger Sharrock) have suggested that Part Two’s comforting communal focus renders it gentler, more inclusive, and less literally or ideologically combative than Part One; however, we must acknowledge that the text never relinquishes Protestant romance’s longstanding vehemence about the exclusivity of the elect. Even

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329 Of course, both promises contain an ominous corollary: if readers do not find themselves “allure[d]” by Bunyan’s allegorical romance, they evidently fall into the category of the “or not” rather than of the “blest.”
when Christiana insists that “Surely, surely” her neighbors’ “Hearts would be affected” if they could perceive Christ’s redemptive sacrifice as she does, Great-heart cautions her that “To be affected with Christ and with what he has done is a thing special” (214). It is not a universal phenomenon “communicated to every one,” not even “to every one that did see your Jesus bleed”: some such witnesses “laughed” and “instead of becoming his Disciples, did harden their Hearts against him” (214). Bunyan has designed Part Two such that the same can be said about being moved by Christian and his narrative. Christiana’s unregenerate neighbors scoff at the “Fantastical [...] whimsical Fools” who would leave home in search of godly romance, and the narrator notes that “the baser sort, that could see no more than a Mole, nor understand any more than a Beast [...] had no reverence for these men, nor took they notice of their Valour or Adventures” (280). “Comfort” and zeal, as Great-heart explains, come not from “the sight and consideration” of heroism, but from “an indeared Affection begot in us by it,” a gift of interpretation and passionate enthusiasm not granted to “the baser sort” (214). Elsewhere, Great-heart represents such souls not merely as contemptuous of romance, but as excluded from narrative as a model for human life: “the fear of God is the beginning of Wisdom; and to be sure they that want the beginning, have neither middle, nor end” (256). Much as Milton’s fallen angels move “in wandering mazes lost” (PL 2.561), and as Hutchinson...
likens the Worldly State to stagnant water \((O&D\ 4.22-26)\), Bunyan understands reprobation as incapacity for teleological plot.\(^{331}\)

By now, we will find nothing surprising in Bunyan’s reiteration of this norm of Protestant romance: as in Sidney, Spenser, Milton, and Hutchinson, the godly turn to the genre’s form to identify themselves as members of a present community or a historical continuum of elect heroes, categories from which the reprobate are always already cut off. Yet Bunyan and his characters do more than retread familiar territory, and the impulse of Sharrock and others that Part Two is more interested in Christian unity and intimacy than in exclusion can still lead us onto solid new ground. Beyond simply using romance to assign believers to the family of the godly, Bunyan relies on the genre’s conventions to think quite unconventionally about how that family might be composed and how it might locate itself within narrative time. Central to this reimagining are the women of Part Two, whose “affected” and affective “Hearts” grant them the “indeared Affection” that inspires elect heroism and offer Bunyan a conduit for channeling erotic and generative concerns into his dissenting romance.

Apart from a few contributions, neither eroticism nor women have fared well in Bunyan studies, even in recent years. Very few scholars have inquired closely into Bunyan’s oft-cited claim in *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* that God had “made [him] shie of women” and of heterosocial contact,\(^{332}\) or attempted to complicate the

\(^{331}\) Part One’s Ignorance offers perhaps the most discussed and the most spectacular example: shunted directly to hell from a trapdoor at the very gates of the Celestial City, he was never on the progressive heroic journey he believed himself to be.

consensus that he shunned real and fictional women for their inextricable sexuality.\textsuperscript{333} While Kathleen Swaim has famously argued that Christiana and Mercy allow Bunyan to imagine a “feminine heroic” in Part Two,\textsuperscript{334} other feminist scholars such as Margaret Olofson Thickstun and Margaret Sönser Breen have seen the female protagonists’ need for male protection and instruction as evidence of their heroism’s hard limits.\textsuperscript{335} Readings persist such as Thomas Luxon’s, who finds that “Bunyan’s most persistent refrain” is that “the carnal things of this world,” which include wives, marriage, sexuality, and family, “are essentially worthless in the long run.”\textsuperscript{336} Unsurprisingly, Luxon has very little to say about \textit{The Pilgrim’s Progress’} problematic second part, with its multiple female pilgrims and the four marriages, hardly counted “worthless,” that are celebrated within its pages. Part Two is even more remarkable, however, in that its godly women do not seem to have been included for the primary end of entering into marriages with its male pilgrims, even though these marriages are encouraged.\textsuperscript{337} For one thing, Bunyan introduces marriage and reproduction into his sequel partly to interrogate erotic romance’s vexed (but not void) relationship to Christian temporality, as we will discuss hereafter. For another, Part Two’s women demonstrate that Bunyan’s elect community may be bound together most

\textsuperscript{333} Margaret J. M. Ezell is a notable exception, though her reading seeks to show not that Bunyan approved of female sexuality, but that he “retained […] a very acute sense of the sexual politics of his time and place, especially the particular difficulties faced by male spiritual leaders and their female followers, and that this in turn informs the numerous examples he offers in his writings of women characters and relations between the sexes.” See “Bunyan’s Women, Women’s Bunyan” in \textit{Trauma and Transformation: The Political Progress of John Bunyan}, ed. Vera J. Camden (Stanford, CA: Stanford U P, 2008), 63-80, 68.

\textsuperscript{334} Kathleen Swaim, “Christiana’s Heroics,” in \textit{Pilgrim’s Progress, Puritan Progress}, 160-197.

\textsuperscript{335} See Margaret Olofson Thickstun, “From Christiana to Stand-fast: Subsuming the Feminine in \textit{The Pilgrim’s Progress},” \textit{SEL} 26 (1986), 439-53; and Margaret Sönser Breen, “The Sexed Pilgrim’s Progress,” \textit{SEL} 32.3 (1992), 443-60.


\textsuperscript{337} Hill has remarked that Part Two “deals specifically with the salvation of women—single women or widows, not dependent on men” (230).
strongly not through traditional marriage, but through non-normative and sometimes transgressive forms of eroticism, intimacy, and affective piety.

Bunyan’s female characters and their offspring imbue the romance of Part Two with an erotic charge that is absent in Part One, in which the vocabulary of sexuality inevitably signals a falling away from the divine rather than an approach toward it, as with Faithful’s temptation by Wanton.\textsuperscript{338} Notably, Bunyan (like numerous other male believers) embraces the hetero-eroticism of the \textit{Song of Songs} and gives it homoerotic spiritual application when describing his personal salvation narrative in \textit{Grace Abounding}.\textsuperscript{339} In \textit{The Pilgrim’s Progress}, he relies upon Part Two’s women and young men to reflect this particular element of his own religious experience—though not generally through interactions with one another that suggest heterosexual desire or future marriage. At the house of Gaius, the \textit{Song of Songs} itself furnishes the means by which the language of love is purified for the pilgrims’ consumption. When Christiana’s son Matthew asks whether they may lawfully eat the “very good tasted” dish of apples that their host has offered, since their “first Mother” succumbed to desire for the same fruit, Gaius answers in verse:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Apples were they with which we were beguil’d,}
\textit{Yet Sin, not Apples hath our Souls defil’d.}
\textit{Apples forbid, if eat, corrupts the Blood.}
\textit{To eat such, when commanded, does us good.}
\textit{Drink of his Flagons then, thou, Church, his Dove,}
\textit{And eat his Apples, who art sick of Love.}
\end{quote}

(264)

\textsuperscript{338} S. J. Newman has also made the rare claim that “Sex is no longer the danger of Part I but the erotic accessibility of a more temperate zone […] Fertility and procreation are now signs of grace” (“Bunyan’s Solidness,” in Newey, 239-40).

\textsuperscript{339} \textit{Grace Abounding}, 27-28.
The *Song of Songs*’ imagery of wooing and lovesickness, taken here (as usual) to be an allegory of Christ’s spiritual courtship of his Church, sanctions an erotic undercurrent to Bunyan’s own allegory at the same time that it permits Matthew to satisfy his bodily appetite with what God has sanctified. Even though Gaius’ house is also the site where Part Two’s marriages are performed, the *Song of Songs*’ eroticism here simply urges the little “Church” to enjoy the communal love-feast that has been prepared for them, bypassing or ignoring married heterosexual desire in favor of the community’s “lovesick” desire for Christ and for fellowship with one another.

We might be tempted to assume that Bunyan is displacing the sexual onto the gastronomic and communal due to his own supposed discomfort with women and sex. Other evidence, however, suggests that his investment lies not in *non-erotic* paths to Christian communion, but in *non-normative* ones that allow Part Two’s eroticism to focus on a loving community of women and men rather than on heterosexual union between one man and one woman. And women usually remain the origins of this intimacy and diffuse amorousness: most commonly, the erotic impulse felt by the male author of *Grace Abounding* is expressed by the female characters of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. The group’s journey begins only because Christiana first becomes possessed with a longing to follow her husband to the Celestial City when a mysterious figure called Secret enters her house. After a godly greeting from this male “Stranger,” “she blushed and trembled, also her heart began to wax warm with desires to know from whence he came” (182). Christiana’s private sensual arousal in response to a man who is not and will not become her spouse (or, stepping outside the allegory, to an intimate
interior sensation that is deliberately gendered male) prompts her to gather her children and pursue her husband, not out of specific desire for either Christian or Secret, but out of more generalized yearning to “come into [God’s] presence” with Christian and “with Legions more, his Companions,” who “will all be glad” to welcome her into their fellowship (182).340

In keeping with his casting both his characters and his audience as imitative readers of Christian’s romance, Bunyan’s prologue positions his young female readers similarly to Christiana in her private moment with Secret. “Young Ladies, and young Gentle-women too” share Christiana’s intimate, if not precisely sexual, physical and emotional response when they are visited by Bunyan’s Pilgrim (that is, when they read and interpret Part One):

_Their Cabinets, their Bosoms, and their Hearts,_
_My Pilgrim has, 'cause he to them imparts_
_His pretty riddles in such wholesome strains_
_As yields them profit double to the pains_
_Of reading._

(172)

These lines appear particularly transgressive when we consider that the reading of “pretty” romances or novels was commonly condemned for threatening the chastity of seventeenth-century women, as was zealous Puritanism; Bunyan himself was

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340 The forceful bodily grounding of Christiana’s “desires,” represented in Christiana as symptoms of arousal, is echoed later when Mercy, “being a young, and breeding woman,” feels pangs of craving for a magic mirror that always shows the image of Christ and symbolizes “the Word of God,” without which she “thinks she shall miscarry” (289). These moments in combination may remind us of the intense longing of Spenser’s Britomart, who becomes providentially “sick with love” after viewing an image of Artegall in a magic mirror—though as Charles Firth pointed out in the late nineteenth century, Bunyan might have encountered many comparable moments in the chapbook romances of his youth without “ever read[ing] a line of Spenser” (Sir Charles Harding Firth, ed., _The Pilgrim’s Progress_ [London: Methuen, 1898], cited in Cynthia Wall, ed., _The Pilgrim’s Progress_ [New York: Norton, 2009], 388-9). Thanks to the genre’s ubiquity, such intertwinings of sacred and profane love would have been abundant across Bunyan’s literary landscape.
tendentiously accused of sexually enticing female members of his flock. Yet much as he did with Christiana and Secret, Bunyan here celebrates the “wholesome” merits of women’s amorous receptivity, even outside of reproductive marriage. For although the Pilgrim possesses “their Bosoms, and their Hearts,” their attraction to him—whether “he” stands for Christian, the book, or Bunyan as its author—paves the way to their desire for Christ and endows them with membership in the pilgrim community of characters and fellow readers. Margaret Sönser Breen’s argument for women’s subordination throughout Part Two depends upon her reading of Bunyan’s female characters as inextricably “sexed,” unlike their male counterparts. While their feminine sexuality does render them, in Bunyan’s eyes, unfit for martial action and in danger of sexual predation, it also makes them singular vessels—and, more importantly, conduits—for godly erotic possibility. In these instances, Bunyan’s fellowship of dissenters is grounded in women’s private spaces, their secret thoughts, and even their bodies.

Generally, though, Part Two’s new erotic charge is more likely to be couched in terms of affect rather than embodiment. Victoria Kahn has argued that affect is a major constituent in the postwar reconstruction of the royalists’ sense of romantic community; Bunyan shows that affective community, like romance itself, is not uniquely royalist territory. In Part Two, this emotional force emerges most strongly from the dual bond of Christian fellowship and female friendship between Christiana and Mercy. Their

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341 For a helpful discussion of this allegation and its repercussions for Bunyan, see Ezell.
342 See “The Sexed Pilgrim’s Progress,” passim.
343 Scholars have long remarked that Bunyan’s affective register becomes much more pronounced in Part Two: Charles W. Baird points out that “prominence is given to human emotions and sentiments” rather than to doctrine (John Bunyan: A Study in Narrative Technique [Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1977], 92), and Batson notes that “Emotions, desires, relationships, and joys receive strong emphasis” (53).
344 Kahn, Wayward Contracts, esp. 223-251.
relationship, rather than that of any of the heterosexual couples, typifies the love that extends beyond the norms of marriage to permeate and bind Bunyan’s pilgrim community.\(^{345}\) Christiana follows the precedent of Secret by initially acting as a sort of matchmaker between Mercy and Mercy’s own erotic experience of redemption, “glad at heart, not only that she had a Companion, but also for that she had prevailed with this poor Maid to fall in love with her own Salvation” (188). Mercy’s love for Christ goes on to influence her mortal courtships: after rejecting a “sweet heart” of “some breeding, and that pretended to Religion; but a man that stuck very close to the World,” Mercy vows that her own godliness “shall be to [her] as a Husband,” but she eventually reconciles her zealous “Conditions” with worldly romance by becoming betrothed to Christiana’s son Matthew (209-10). Notably, though, the match between the young pair is made just after Gaius proclaims himself “glad to see” Mercy and Christiana “together here, a lovely Couple” (262). Gaius advises Christiana to make her and Mercy’s love official through marriage: “take Mercy into a nearer Relation to thee. If she will, let her be given to Matthew thy eldest son. ’Tis the way to preserve you a Posterity in the Earth” (262). While Matthew’s contribution is essential for “Posterity” and for a legally recognized “nearer Relation,” Christiana and Mercy themselves already make up a “lovely” and loving “Couple” whose tenderness to one another brings comfort and delight to their fellow pilgrims.

Mercy and Christiana, having previously been extolled by the Interpreter as types of the inseparable Ruth and Naomi, thus complete their assumption of the biblical

\(^{345}\) Sharrock notes more vaguely that the “touching and interesting” relationship between Christiana and Mercy contributes to the “considerable softening of the atmosphere” in Part Two (“Life and Story,” 63).
heroines’ relationship, becoming a daughter- and mother-in-law whose emotional and companionate devotion to one another also resembles a marriage in itself. At times, their multivalent bond appears as warm communal intimacy, as when they lie together in Christian’s erstwhile bed, talking of their dreams of the Celestial City. At others, it takes on the sublime cast of awe and dread in the face of one another’s beauty of holiness: when the women are bathed, made “fair as the Moon” (in another reference to the Song of Songs), and clothed as brides of Christ in “fine Linen, white and clean,”

they seemed to be a Terror one to the other; For that they could not see that glory each one had in her self, which they could see in each other. Now therefore they began to esteem each other better than themselves. For you are fairer than I am, said one; and, You are more comely than I am, said another.

(209-10)

Once again, Bunyan sees no disharmony between erotic love for Christ and ardent desire to stand in the presence of fellow believers. In a marginal gloss to a later moment when Christiana and Mercy are welcomed by their “Friends” as “Vessels of the Grace of God” and greeted “with a kiss,” Bunyan’s own avowed discomfort with haptic fellowship does not interfere: the gloss states approvingly that “Christians’ love is kindled at the sight of one another” (224). The two women’s relationship—a remarkable commingling of loving companionship, wonder and desire, and procreative marriage (with Matthew’s help as a necessary but oddly peripheral third party)—thus infuses the narrative of Part Two with romantic eroticism and reproductive continuity.

Alongside Christian’s inspirational heroism, Christiana and Mercy’s affective union generates and sustains Part Two’s community, first by extending it beyond the confines of Christian’s nuclear family and then by providing for the expanded family’s futurity.
Heterosexual marriage, homoerotic intimacy, and communal love cooperate to help Christian’s biological and spiritual descendants “spread abroad […] upon the face of the Earth” and “uphold” the romance of Part One as a living, proliferating narrative (262). We will recall that Christian’s story moved Valiant-for-truth to forsake his father and mother and join Christiana and Mercy’s growing band; his detachment from his parents recalls Jesus’ assurance in Matthew 19:29 that “every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children […] for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold.” Believers are promised not only countless brothers and sisters in Christ, but also a multiplicity of spiritual parents, children, and spouses.346 Bunyan’s community therefore embraces godly intimacy, tinged with eroticism, as a divine gift that thrives outside of normative marriages and nuclear families: he represents it flourishing between unmarried men and women, between women themselves, and amongst women praying—even reading the right sort of romance—in the privacy of “their Cabinets, their Bosoms, and their Hearts.”

The common denominator that unites all these sites of desire and fellowship is, evidently, feminine presence. Bunyan may indeed have been personally “shie of women” and intimate contact, as he claims in Grace Abounding, but he declares in the same volume that his sincere conversion began when he discovered that his “heart would tarry” in the company of “three or four poor women” he encountered sitting together and

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346 Luxon discusses Bunyan’s use of this assurance in his sermons, but he seems to take a literal or biological view of these familial goods, which Christ technically can restore even though they mean nothing “in the long run” (87). In Part Two, however, Bunyan is deeply invested in the spiritual family that emerges when biological relation is acknowledged to be not meaningless, but markedly secondary.
“talking about the things of God […] as if they had found a new world.” Bunyan identifies a community of women whose greatest pleasure was to tell “how God had visited their souls with His love in the Lord Jesus” as his spiritual mothers; the intimacy and erotic devotion that he finds unsettling come enviably easily to them. In Part Two of The Pilgrim’s Progress, the Interpreter shows Christiana and Mercy a tableau Christian did not see, of a hen sheltering her chicks: he explains, “I choose, my Darlings, to lead you into the Room where such things are, because you are women, and they are easy for you” (203). The hen signifies not simply biological maternity, as we might expect, but the “Methods” by which God gathers and sustains “his People” (203): Bunyan seems to regard not just motherhood, but also love, desire, and erotic romance, as comparatively “easy” for female believers, and as the means by which they generate and nourish the expansively nontraditional family of the elect.

Romance and/as Allegory: Christian’s Imitators in Time and Space

The conventions of romance, including reproductive love and imitative chivalry, are instrumental in constructing Bunyan’s unconventional community. However, along with romance’s power to produce fellowship in Part Two comes a challenging meta-consciousness of genre and unstable temporality. The concerns of both the female characters and their martial male companions cause narrative time to take on a different, much less straightforward cast in Part Two than in Part One. The women’s investment in love and family, so central to Bunyan’s reimagined community, also forces discontinuities between

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348 Ibid., 14.
romance and spiritual allegory. In lieu of Christian’s journey of *spiritual days*, Christiana’s travels through equidistant allegorical space require *real years* as her children grow up, marry, and have offspring of their own. However, the rate at which time passes in Part Two is virtually impossible to determine: for instance, the narrator tells us that after James’ marriage to Gaius’ daughter Phebe, “they yet stayed about ten days at *Gaius’* House, spending their time, and the Seasons, like as Pilgrims use to do” (271). In order for Christiana’s sons to mature and reproduce, “ten days” must indeed stand for some number of “Seasons,” but Bunyan offers us no formula for performing this calculation. Elsewhere, we are simply told that Part Two’s various marriages unfold “in process of time”: Mercy and Matthew marry after the Pilgrims have stayed at Gaius’ house for “more than a Month” (265), James and Phebe also wed at “about this time” (271), and Christiana’s two youngest sons take wives after resting at the house of Mnason for an ambiguous “great while” (278).

Bunyan’s descriptions of the children and the illustrator’s woodcuts (added to the 1687 edition) only further complicate matters. When Christiana and her family depart the City of Destruction, the narrator describes her sons as “little Children” or “Babes” (181-2); later, when Matthew first begins to “blush” at making Mercy smile, he is still identified as a “little boy” (219). Even in Gaius’ house, where Christiana’s sons become eligible for marriage, they remain “Boys” to whom Gaius serves “a Dish of Milk well crumbed […] that they may grow thereby” (263). Meanwhile, the illustrations depict their rapid growth. As they begin their pilgrimage in the first, Matthew’s head reaches the

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349 Batson, among others, represents the temporality of Part Two as “relaxed,” “without haste,” and lacking in “urgency,” but does not note its allegorical inconsistency with Part One (48-9). Hill notices that time in Part Two seems “elusive” since “Christiana’s children grow up from infancy to marriageable age” (223).

350 For other reference to the uneven ages (and aging) of Mercy and Christiana’s sons, see Lynn Veach Sadler, *John Bunyan* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1979), 103; and Breen, 449-50.
waist of Mercy, his future wife (Fig. 2). Next, when Great-heart is leading the band to House Beautiful some days or weeks later, the children stand about a head shorter than the women, and the illustrator may offer some clue to their sudden growth in the remark below the image: “See here too how the Child doth play ye man / And weak grow strong, when Great heart leads the van” (Fig. 3). And in the final woodcut, in which the Pilgrims circle the head of Giant Despair, there is no discernible difference amongst their height or ages (Fig. 4). The illustrator’s images, while consistent with the narrator’s account of the boys’ maturation into husbands and fathers and with Great-heart’s observation that they are learning to conduct themselves spiritually “like [men]” (245), offer a striking visual example of the strange temporality of Part Two’s romance. Through them, we witness “real” time passing at a rapid rate that has tacitly slipped out of alignment with the temporal and spatial limits of Part One’s spiritual allegory.

Further, as Luxon has emphasized, the conventional goals of feminine or family romance—love and marriage, procreation and inheritance—are concepts eliminated in Heaven or at the end of time, even though characters such as Gaius hold them essential for the furtherance of the worldly church and thus to a larger sacred plot. Christian completes his romance when he enters the Celestial City and is “swallowed up” from the narrator’s and our sight, but this sense of an ending is withheld from the generation that follows him. Although the narrator allows us to witness Christiana and several of her companions’ passage over the River, he leaves her children’s narrative open:

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351 While it troubles the linear narrative of The Pilgrim’s Progress, the boys’ amorphous and rapidly shifting age may speak to Bunyan’s concept of Christian wisdom; he noted that his Book for Boys and Girls was designed not only with real children in mind, but also “spiritual children” in need of child-like tools to draw them into Puritan theology. Breen makes a similar point in “The Sexed Pilgrim’s Progress” (450).
As for Christiana’s children, the four Boys that Christiana brought with her, with their Wives and Children, I did not stay where I was, till they were gone over. Also, since I came away, I heard one say, that they were yet alive, and so would be for the Increase of the Church, in that Place where they were for a time. (313-314)

Mercy’s story, then, concludes not in the Celestial City that figures in her dreams, but breaks off when she, Matthew, and their siblings begin their quest to continue Christian’s elect line. As Gaius insists, her mission will ensure “that the Name of their Father, and the House of his Progenitors, may never be forgotten in the World” (262). But even as this concern with the communal memory and the repetition of Christian’s heroic exploits reinforces our impression that we are reading the next generation (both biological and spiritual) of his family romance, we must observe that the next generation’s “bear[ing] up their Father’s name” and “tread[ing] in their Father’s steps” are not—indeed, must not be—coterminous with “com[ing] to their Father’s end” (262). The young families’ ostensible destination, still quite deliberately unreached when the narrator leaves them in Beulah “yet alive [...] for the Increase of the Church,” would signal both the desired end and the erasure of their story, since erotic love, reproduction, and intergenerational inheritance are staples of romantic temporality that are rendered meaningless in eschatological time.

Gaius’ attempt to clarify the matter using Old Testament typology only draws further attention to its difficulty. Offering “to take away [women’s] Reproach” and affirm their heroic potential, he reminds the pilgrims that “this Sex, in the old Testament, coveted Children, if happily this or that Woman might be the Mother of the Saviour of the World” and that “Women therefore are highly favoured, and show [...] that they are
sharers with us in the Grace of Life” (262-3). However, his lesson evokes the paradox of reproductive temporality that we observed in Lucy Hutchinson’s *Order and Disorder*, as does Christiana’s prophecy to her daughters-in-law that “they have been Faithful, and a fulfilling of the Promise upon them, will be their end” (307-8). The maternal mission that Part Two’s elect women share cannot be the same share as the Old Testament heroines’ hope that their child might be the Messiah, yet the “Promise” of reproduction still somehow applies to Christiana’s descendants and lends legitimate godly purpose to the marriages of Mercy and the other young women.

The prologue’s introduction of Christian’s family succinctly encapsulates, in a half-rhyme, the troubled compatibility of romantic and sacred time: “let them know that these related were / Unto him: yea, his wife and children are” (169, emphasis mine). That the travelers are Christian’s family is information essential to our sense that the next generation is continuing his quest—but the sacred end of that quest relegates that once-crucial relation to a profane past. Marriage, that event that concludes so many romances while gesturing toward their potential for continuation, must therefore play a more circumscribed role for Bunyan. This problem would seem consistent with Luxon’s argument that marriage is aggressively devalued throughout his works, but the truth seems more complicated, and consciously so on Bunyan’s part. Christiana grieves that she has “lost her husband” and that “the loving bond of that Relation was utterly broken betwixt them”; still, she continues to rely on “husband” and “wife” throughout Part Two as titles that best explain their former (and future?) connection (180). Also indicative of the problem is the fact that Christiana regularly varies in her description of Christian as
either “gone over the River” (180), “gotten above” (191), or simply “dead” (223). When we interpret *The Pilgrim’s Progress* in its guise as a romance, we think of Christian as having traveled from one point in space to another; when we read it as a Calvinist allegory, we easily grasp that he has moved through time from life into death and through spiritual states from sin to salvation. Christiana intuits all of these possibilities at once, as though she were situated simultaneously within the allegory and outside of it, both character and reader.

Although we might take her vacillation as straightforward evidence of the *disintegration* of romance in Part Two as an adequate model of Christian’s trajectory, or of her own position as “a Widow Woman” (223), we must also recognize that Christiana finds herself strengthened by the *reintegration* of romance into her understanding of her personal and family narrative:

> My Sons, I have, as you may perceive, been of late under much exercise in my Soul about the Death of your Father; not for that I doubt at all of his Happiness: For I am satisfied now that he is well [...] Come, my Children, let us pack up, and be gone to the Gate that leads to the Celestial Country, that we may see your Father, and be with him. 

(183)

Upon acknowledging to herself and to her children that their husband and father is dead, she adds that they may nevertheless “pack up” and go on a journey to “be with him” in another “Country”; immediately after admitting the tragedy of their situation and exposing the limits of romance, she reaffirms its purpose. Christian’s “Relation” to her as her husband has indeed been “broken” by his death and by his entrance into heaven, where the only marriage is that of Christ to his communal Church, and yet Christiana’s new conviction that their “loving bond” may be repaired and restored inspires her
instantly to re-present her narrative through the genre that enacts the reunion of lovers and families. Bunyan’s rhyme in the prologue likewise stresses the endurance of marriage rather than its decline: in reading time, Christiana and the children “are” Christian’s family after they “were,” not only before. Marriage is sharply devalued, then suddenly re-valued as a symbol of spiritual fulfillment and as a representation of the multivalent love that joins worldly Christians to their heavenly counterparts and to each other, a sign that remains persistently useful even as it is not precisely correct.

Feminine concerns are not the only source of Bunyan’s generic riddles. A number of readers have found that the highly imitative or derivative nature of Part Two’s adventures lowers the stakes or the interest of the romance. Christopher Hill, following Knox, jokes that “Great-heart and his shooting parties just finish off work which Christian had so well begun.” The pilgrims largely do avoid falling into Christian’s past perils, since “they continually gave so good heed to the Advice of [Great-heart]; and he did so faithfully tell them of Dangers” with the aid of his ever-present “Book or Map” (299). The question of whether the pilgrims’ plot has any “stakes” that can be raised or lowered demands a consideration of Stanley Fish’s characteristic but important argument that both parts of The Pilgrim’s Progress lack the narrative uncertainty necessary for such stakes really to exist. Because Bunyan’s characters are predestined as either “blest or not,” Fish argues, the saved are already saved and the damned are already damned;

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352 Batson’s note that “Part Two lacks the dangers, and perhaps the adventures of Part One” is typical (48).
353 Hill, 229.
narrative “progress” is therefore as much the delusion of the elect as it is of the reprobate, a bait-and-switch Bunyan has designed first to entrap his readers and then to remind them of their fallen minds and literary sensibilities. The characters’ (and our) shared familiarity with romance’s structure stands in the way of a pure understanding of anti-progressive sacred time.\textsuperscript{355} We have already seen that Bunyan was, as Fish asserts, aware of the disjunctions between his romance and his allegory. But as we conclude this section, a closer look at a few of Part Two’s most imitative or derivative moments should show that Bunyan saw worldly genre as a “Map” with important applications and important limits—not as a trap, a sin, or an unmitigated error to discard.

Great-heart’s “Book or Map”— which Bunyan glosses as “God’s Book” but which also strongly suggests Part One itself, the source of the characters’ and readers’ communal knowledge—is judged by the dreaming narrator to be a gift of grace rather than an easy way out: “Then thought I with my self, who, that goeth on Pilgrimage, but would have one of these Maps about him, that he may look when he is at a stand, which is the way he must take?” (300). Familiarity with the form of the text is thus not, as Fish would have it, a stumbling-block, but a trustworthy and divinely-provided guide. Nevertheless, C. N. Manlove has suggested that as a result of the pilgrims’ textual foreknowledge, their few dangerous exploits are often “not a part of the pilgrimage at all, but are done almost as hobbies.”\textsuperscript{356} Indeed, Christian is a hero whom adventures befall, such as his assault by Apollyon and his captivity by Giant Despair, whereas in Part Two,

\textsuperscript{355} For a historicist reading that discusses the concept of non-linear “progress” in the Early Modern period to challenge Fish’s “modern sense” of the word, see Hill, 221-3. Philip Edwards has also argued against Fish’s reduction of the word’s meaning (“The Journey in The Pilgrim’s Progress,” in Newey, 111-117).
the community of reader-heroes and –heroines, seeking to imitate the now-famous Christian, both retell his trials in lieu of experiencing similar ones and increasingly go in search of adventures of their own. Yet this self-conscious approach to chivalric adventure as diversionary is really nothing new in the romance genre: like Quixote, the Pilgrims seek out adventure in order to emulate the protagonists they already admire. At the same time, this conventional practice also points explicitly to the genre’s norms and makes its seams visible. For instance, at Vanity-Fair, the site of Christian’s imprisonment and his companion Faithful’s martyrdom, the Pilgrims re-recount this “hard Chapter” of Part One to one another; where Christian and Faithful shared a bond of mutual suffering, their followers share a bond of mutual familiarity with and zeal for that suffering (273). Meanwhile, instead of being subjected to torment there, they seek out godly combat: the male Pilgrims “[enter] into a Covenant to go and engage” a deadly monster “like a Dragon” who menaces the town, and “with their Weapons go forth to meet” the Beast of Revelation (279).\(^{357}\) The Beast is easily wounded and routed, though not killed; like many of Spenser’s battles, such as Redcrosse’s voluntary pursuit of Error, the men’s elective chivalric conflict concludes in an immediate victory while explicitly deferring an eschatological one. Here, Part Two’s self-awareness of genre and of temporality again brush against each other: while Christian’s unsought duel with Apollyon stood for his psychological struggle against Satan—successful in one moment but potentially renewable in any other—the allegory of the Pilgrims’ combat in time with the Beast of

\(^{357}\) See also the earlier episode with the Giant Slay-good: “Well, said Gaius, Now you are here, and since, as I know, Mr. Great-heart is good at his Weapons, if you please [...] we will walk into the Fields, to see if we can do any good. About a mile from hence there is one Slay-good, a Giant, that doth much annoy the King’s Highway in these parts [...] ’twould be well if we could clear these Parts of him” (267-8).
the End Times is much less tidy, simultaneously evocative of the warfaring Church’s communal power and of its limited temporal agency.

This generic and temporal self-consciousness takes on further complexity at the site of Christian’s abduction by Despair. His reader-followers naturally recognize the fabled place and “[consult]” together “what was best to be done”:\textsuperscript{358} the men soon “[leave] the women in the road,” slay the Giant, and demolish Doubting Castle (282). This “Exploit” ended, Great-heart builds “A Monument of Deliverance” in a space “right over against the Pillar that Christian erected for a Caution to Pilgrims that came after, to take heed of entering into his Grounds,” reminding us again of the link to the parallel episode in Part One with both the monument’s location and its four-line inscription:

\begin{center}
\begin{quotation}
This is the Head of him, Whose Name only
In former times, did Pilgrims terrify.
His Castle’s down, and Diffidence his Wife
Brave Master Great-heart has bereft of Life.
\end{quotation}
\end{center}

(286)

Bunyan’s text alone demands that we ask: have Despair and Doubt been put down only in their forms as generic tropes—a giant and his lair—by the next generation of a family romance, or have “Pilgrims that [come] after” been delivered from the sins themselves for all time, a finality withheld from the battle with the Beast? Roger Pooley, likewise asking whether such “permanence” is “credible,” points to this episode as a prime example of how the 1687 woodcuts “significantly [affect] our interpretation of […] the text.”\textsuperscript{359} Beneath the picture of the community of pilgrims playing music and dancing around Despair’s severed head, the illustrator has added his own alternative quatrain, a

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{358} Schellenberg emphasizes this “group consultation” in her discussion of Part Two’s theme of sociability (320).
\item \textsuperscript{359} Pooley, xlvi.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Spenserian note of caution which stands in striking juxtaposition to the verse composed by Great-heart (Fig. 4):

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\begin{align*}
\text{Tho doubting Castle be demolished,} \\
\text{And the Gyant despair hath lost his head} \\
\text{Sin can rebuild the Castle, make’t remaine;} \\
\text{And make despair the Gyant live againe[.]}
\end{align*}
\]

(285)

As Pooley notes, “The pastoral theology is quite different; together the incident and its illustration capture the mixture of the ‘already’ and the ‘not yet’ that is Bunyan’s sense of the victory of Christ.” 360 This “already/not yet” paradox, of course, is essentially the same as the mystery of reproduction whereby elect women continue to anticipate the “Promise” of the Messiah many centuries after Jesus’ birth.

While the illustrator’s etching undoubtedly reinforces the allegorical ambiguity of the pilgrims’ triumph at Doubting Castle, Bunyan himself seems to be drawing his readers up to the very edge of his allegory, “right over against” the space where Great-heart’s success overlays Christian’s struggle, much as the Pilgrims in the woodcut press close to the pole of the monument, their awed expressions suggesting simultaneous celebration and apprehension. As often happens, the line blurs between the real community of reading believers and the fictional community of questing Pilgrims, who are themselves readers of Christian’s story and his note about the dangers of Despair. Each is called upon to experience, in one place and at one moment, both fear and deliverance, both romance and reality. It is probably no coincidence that the narrator also breaks in at just this moment to remind us that all these events are what he “saw in [his]

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360 Ibid., emphasis mine.
Dream,” an interruption he makes with greater frequency in Part Two than Part One (284). The dream of romance may allow the godly to unite in envisioning the defeat of sin, but as a dream, it also acknowledges itself as imitative—or symbolic—rather than real, a narrative of this world rather than the next. The worldly literary form that Fish takes to be a dangerous delusion, Bunyan exposes as the sleeping believer’s illusion, which is also an imperfect allusion to divine truth.

Betty Schellenberg has observed that Part Two’s repetitive imitations and its communal and familial focus “[imply] a potentially unlimited multiplication of equally significant and narration-worthy pilgrimages.”361 Such unfettered narrative potential is entirely endemic to the romance genre, but in the form that Patricia Parker has called “inescapable,” endlessly dilating and indefinitely repeating.362 Bunyan certainly suggests that a final end to the romance exists, both for individuals like Christian and for the apocalyptic Church, but the central concerns of Part Two partly undermine romance as an adequate model of that narrative in its fullest, most “real” form. Given Bunyan’s extensive efforts to redeem romance and render it compatible with a Puritan salvation narrative, I do not think that he changes his mind in Part Two about the genre’s efficacy as a Christian didactic model. Far from it: the sequel stresses romance’s power to reconstruct the community of the elect and to map out a common teleological path. But at the same time, the second part of The Pilgrim’s Progress reminds its own readers of the limits of that progressive model and alerts us to the porous margins of the “Book or Map” of romance. The genre itself becomes an allegory of itself, in the way that Bunyan likes

361 Schellenberg, 319.
362 See Parker, Inescapable Romance.
best: like the old pilgrim who protests that his name is not “Honesty” but simply “Honest,” the romance of Part Two succeeds “not in the abstract” but in a form that exposes its mundane, human parameters (249). The worldly boundaries of this communal generic tradition are what allow Stand-fast, crossing the River, to separate the stories he has heard and imitated from the truth he is about to see and live fully: “I have formerly lived by Hearsay, and Faith, but now I go where I shall live by sight” (313).

Stand-fast makes an important distinction: reading the Christian life as romance has given him an impression of the Celestial City necessary to maintain his “Faith,” but it has never given him “sight.” His acknowledgment points us to a final moment that highlights the extent to which Bunyan has reimagined the model of Protestant romance that he inherited indirectly from Spenser a century before. Near the end of Part One, Christian and Hopeful, like Redcrosse, are offered a temporary vision of their heavenly goal when the Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains invite them to look through their “Perspective-Glass”:

The pilgrims lovingly accepted the motion: so they had them to the top of an high Hill, called Clear, and gave them their glass to look.
Then they tried to look; but the remembrance of that last thing that the Shepherds had shown them [the By-way to Hell] made their hands shake, by means of which impediment they could not look steadily through the glass; yet they thought they saw something like the Gate, and also some of the Glory of the place. (126-7)

As is the case with a number of Bunyan’s allegorical persons and places, the hill Clear is named with apparently intentional imprecision, for Christian—unlike Redcrosse—cannot clearly see the holy city in the distance; he only “[thinks]” he might see “something like” it. To a fallen spectator, an elevated vision of the end of romance can never be permanent, but Christian’s is the faintest and most fleeting of all those that we have
encountered in this book. Bunyan’s symbolic narrative might capture “some of the Glory” of what it stands for, but it cannot show it, not even to its own characters. It is also noteworthy that Christiana and Mercy do not imitate this particular experience: although they encounter the Shepherds, no mention is made of the Perspective-Glass. In its place, the Shepherds comfort Mercy—who is suffering the pains of pregnancy—with a “Looking glass” with the power to reveal the image of Christ, “the Prince of Pilgrims” (289). When we recall that Spenser’s Britomart had, in place of Redcrosse’s narrative prospect, the troubled promise of future offspring and a glimpse of her beloved in a magic mirror, Bunyan may appear to be reiterating gendered norms for romantic vision, and to some extent these old archetypes are undeniably present. Yet Christian is arguably shown much less than Mercy, and the pilgrims of Part Two are not offered Christian’s vision not because they are weaker than he was, but because they are stronger: the “Book or Map” they hold in their hands and hearts has supplanted the hazy view from the summit. In The Pilgrim’s Progress’ self-conscious second part, the women and men of the elect community have distinct gendered attributes, but one common narrative vision as readers and imitators. Rather than requiring prophetic proof that their romance is real, they possess a shared earthly text that stands for, and reminds them of the superior reality of, its unreadable heavenly counterpart.

II. Aphra Behn’s Oroonoko: Genre, Community, and Disenfranchisement

Like Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress, and unlike many of the earlier seventeenth-century works we have considered, Aphra Behn’s Oroonoko is not a text whose relationship to romance needs to be excavated from beneath its author’s protestations. One of the few
elements of *Oroonoko* about which there is abundant critical consensus is its foundation in heroic romance. Readers even slightly versed in the tradition of Sidney’s *Arcadia*—whether in 1688 or today—can hardly miss Behn’s thoroughly idealized, and entirely typical, description of Oroonoko’s possession of physical beauty “the most exact that can be fancy’d,” alongside “real greatness of soul, [...] refined notions of true honor, [...] absolute generosity, and [...] softness that was capable of the highest passions of love and gallantry.”363 His love story with Imoinda, “the beautiful black Venus to our young Mars,” is equally familiar (14). The two young people, alike in nobility, beauty, and virtue, are instantly and inevitably attracted to each other but face obstacles to their union—in this case, Oroonoko’s grandfather the king, who also desires Imoinda—before their separation from one another, their travel to a distant land, and their unlikely (yet again generically inevitable) reunion.364 At this point, however, the plot of their romance veers off into some other mode or genre: again like Bunyan—otherwise her political, religious, and cultural antithesis—Behn makes her work’s romantic heritage obvious in order to interrogate the genre’s artifices and applications. Unable to bear his nominal slavery in Surinam or to be consoled by sightseeing adventures around the island, Oroonoko leads a slave revolt that ends with his murder of his willing wife and his own torture and death at the hands of the colonial government. The romance’s collapse has also been widely noted: Anita Pacheco identifies the force that “intrudes into the world of heroic

Richard Kroll argues that *Oroonoko* comments on “the generic difference between true history and romance.” Rachel Carnell and Albert Rivero note that the new narrative bears “the recognizable outlines” of tragedy, and William Spengemann suggests that Behn’s romance gives way to “a new way of writing fiction” whose narrative norms remained to be determined but which “we now associate with the novel.” A sense also prevails that this generic shift can be identified with the geographic shift between the “old world” and the “new”; Kroll, for one, proposes that the events in Oroonoko’s homeland of Coramantien “represent a site where romantic kingship is displayed and anatomized, while the events in Surinam represent a site where romantic kingship is tested.”

If critics concur that *Oroonoko* deliberately problematizes genre, nearly every other aspect of Behn’s narrative is contentious. Laura Brown has pioneered many readings of *Oroonoko* that question not simply its ideology but its ideological coherence: is it possible to determine whether *Oroonoko* critiques or condones slavery, whether it advocates cultural radicalism or conservatism, or whether it outlines a consistently royalist platform? This final section is chiefly concerned with the relationship between

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366 Richard Kroll, “‘Tales of Love and Gallantry’: The Politics of *Oroonoko*,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 67.4 (2004), 573-605, 602. According to Kroll, Behn laments “the fact that the public authority of history” (as opposed to the genre of romance) “is less readily available to women than to men” (602).
369 Kroll, 582. Spengemann is also particularly insistent that there is something uniquely American about Behn’s new discourse and its incompatibility with old-world romance.
370 In “The Romance of Empire,” Brown argues that “the treatment of slavery in *Oroonoko* is neither coherent nor fully critical” and suggests that the text may also reveal Behn’s ambivalence toward her royalism (55). Many readers concur with Brown that *Oroonoko* condemns slavery insofar as it has demeaned Oroonoko’s social class and his spiritual nobility, but not as an inherent evil, and that in this
Oroonoko’s troubled genre and this final inquiry about its political agenda, though the first two questions are imbricated within the last. A number of readers of Oroonoko have made two fundamental assessments of its political ideology: first, that the narrative (like its author) is essentially royalist in its representation of a virtuous prince who is degraded and brutalized by figures representing, and partly consisting of, republican Whigs; but second, that its royalism is not entirely consistent or uncomplicated. Brown has argued that Oroonoko’s predominant royalism is beset by contradictions; both she and Sara Mendelson suggest that Behn may have had sympathy for antiroyalist political philosophy, perhaps as a result of her relationship with the republican William Scot during her stay in Surinam. Pacheco posits that the text is “distinctly royalist” but that “its effort at ideological closure is undermined [...] by its reliance on the unstable discourse of [aristocratic] honor.” More recently, Warren Chernaik has departed from the trend of beginning with an assumption of Behn’s royalism, pointing out that Oroonoko’s speeches on liberty and tyranny echo seventeenth-century republican rhetoric, and Vernon Guy Dickson has argued that Behn’s respect it is socially conservative: see also George Guffey, “Aphra Behn’s Oroonoko: Occasion and Accomplishment,” in George Guffey and Andrew Wright, Two English Novelists: Aphra Behn and Anthony Trollope (Los Angeles: U of California P, 1975), 1-41; G. A. Starr, “Aphra Behn and the Genealogy of the Man of Feeling,” Modern Philology 87.4 (1990), 362-72; Margaret Ferguson, “Juggling the Categories of Race, Class, and Gender: Aphra Behn’s Oroonoko,” in Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker (eds), Women, “Race,” and Writing in the Early Modern Period (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 209-24; Susan Ivansisizwi, “Behn’s Novel Investment in ‘Oroonoko’: Kingship, Slavery and Tobacco in English Colonialism,” South Atlantic Review 63.2 (1998), 75-98; and Vernon Guy Dickson, “Truth, Wonder, and Exemplarity in Aphra Behn’s Oroonoko,” SEL 47.3 (2007), 573-94.

371 Guffey popularized the reading of Oroonoko as an allegorical stand-in for a royal Stuart, in his case the soon-to-be-deposed James II. Numerous scholars have followed him, including Maureen Duffy, who identifies Oroonoko as the Duke of York (Oroonoko and Other Stories [London: Methuen, 1986]), and Brown, who reads him in “The Romance of Empire” as a figure for another royal martyr, Charles I (57-9). Many other critics interpret Oroonoko to be a composite of these and other Stuarts, and/or a representative of absolute monarchy more generally.

372 See Brown, 55-6; and Sara Heller Mendelson, The Mental World of Stuart Women: Three Studies (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1987), 120.

373 Pacheco, 491-2.
hero recalls the individualistic honor of Philip Sidney’s Elizabethan humanism in a manner not comfortably compatible with hardline pro-Stuart absolutism (a dichotomy that we also observed in Greville’s Life of Sidney in chapter two).\textsuperscript{374}

What, then, might Oroonoko’s inconsistent politics have to do with its inconsistent genre? It has become commonplace to hear an elegiac tone in the failure of the narrative’s initial romantic norms to produce a happy ending for Oroonoko and Imoinda. Many have read the lovers’ grim deaths as a lament for the impending fall of the Stuart dynasty and, with it, the mystical splendor of absolute monarchism. In this light, Oroonoko’s unromantic demise “mark[s] the tragic fall of kings in an enterprise beset by self-serving privateers, interlopers and colonial miscreants.”\textsuperscript{375} A smaller number of readers have found that what Oroonoko grieves for is not precisely, or not only, royalism: for Spengemann, it is the collapse of the “Old-World dream” of colonial utopia; for Rivero, the passing of Behn’s own youth and innocence; and for Chernaik, the ineradicability of despotism and slavery.\textsuperscript{376} Dickson argues that Behn “enacts within Oroonoko’s character” a Sidneian “performance of [...] moral exemplarity and the truth of moral character that her finally bleak work suggests is missing within her own culture.”\textsuperscript{377} I propose that one of the chief losses that Behn laments in Oroonoko is the loss of romance itself as a viable narrative of

\textsuperscript{374} See Warren Chernaik, “Captains and Slaves: Aphra Behn and the Rhetoric of Republicanism,” Seventeenth Century 17.1 (2002), 97-107; and Dickson, 588. Kroll also enters this debate but objects to its premise, arguing that Oroonoko occasionally appears unsympathetic to aspects of absolute monarchy because Behn’s objective as a sincerely devoted subject is to offer a cautionary tale to James II (576-8).
\textsuperscript{375} Iwansisziew, 95. Elliott Visconsi similarly argues that Oroonoko’s tragedy signifies, for Behn, the dominance of England’s “barbarous national character which prefers violence and personal independence to the mercy an moral prudence of kingly government” (“A Degenerate Race: English Barbarism in Aphra Behn’s ‘Oroonoko’ and ‘The Widow Ranter,’” ELH 69.3 [2002], 673-701, 673. For other arguments or assumptions that the narrator’s grief for Oroonoko’s death is tantamount to Behn’s grief for the decline of Stuart royalism, see Guffey, Duffy, Brown, Pacheco, Carnell, and Kroll.
\textsuperscript{376} See Spengemann, 414; Rivero, 447; and Chernaik, 104.
\textsuperscript{377} Dickson, 574.
English political history, national identity, and spiritual election. Oroonoko’s story presents a vision we saw in Bunyan and have encountered many times before, that of a small community bound together by enthusiasm for and participation within heroic romance narrative. But by that story’s end, the promise of romance has failed: no matter how strong its faith in the genre’s real-world potency, that community finds itself forsaken by divine providence, stripped of the power to recover its losses or to prevail over tyranny.

We have seen how, throughout much of the seventeenth century, both royalists and republicans tended to adopt a posture of ridiculing their enemies’ flighty, egotistical obsession with romance while tacitly embracing the genre for their own purposes. In 1688, with the civil war long over and further national turmoil and aspiration on the immediate horizon, Behn abandons this pose and takes up its opposite. Instead of denouncing romantic republicanism while pursuing romantic royalism, she acknowledges that commitment to a romantic vision of heroism and nationhood transcends England’s ideological divide. Instead of competing with her opponents over the genre’s power to represent English history, she relinquishes claim to that power, mournfully concluding that romance is not worth the competition to either side, since its function of identifying history’s patterns and its heroes is illusory. Behn seems to have concluded that the long struggle between royalists and republicans for control of a national romance was in vain: in terms of advancing a desired political reality—as opposed to imagining an impossible utopia, which

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378 Although Rivero suggests that Oroonoko is based on the “lofty heroic French romances” that Behn and her royalist contemporaries enjoyed reading (see 451-3), we are by now familiar enough with the prevalence of romance through a long thread of English literary and political discourse to acknowledge that Behn also had this rich native tradition to refer to, a fact acknowledged by Dickson in his discussion of Behn and Sidney.
all subjects remain free to do—the genre is not a field that merits contention. Romance is no longer the narrative form of English, human, or sacred history, if it ever was.

Behn’s unique new position, I think, goes a long way toward explaining the supposed ideological inconsistency of her text. Oroonoko is not only about the death of Stuart royalism or Tory romanticism; it is also about the failure of a larger romantic conception of English identity and historical trajectory, a noble fantasy that Behn perceives that (some, perhaps few) Tory royalists share with (some, perhaps few) republican-leaning Whigs. Critics have already observed that heroism and romantic sensibility in Oroonoko are not split along racial boundaries: the story’s noble lovers of virtue, its corrupt authorities, and its servile rabble may all be either African or English. Indeed, by placing an African prince at the head of her narrative’s heroic community, Behn attempts to subvert the Calvinist tradition of excluding the black descendants of Noah’s son Ham from the romantic narrative of the elect (though her effort will be undermined, in turn, by the religio-racial climate of Surinam). Behn does not divide these attributes along political lines either. Oroonoko’s heroes and villains may be either transparently partisan or not obviously so; its virtuous romantic community is distinguished not by race or by politics, but by that community’s own identification with romance. Each of its members venerates social and/or spiritual nobility while despising tyranny, which Behn acknowledges may be that of a single despot or of a dangerous mob. The tragedy of Oroonoko, however, lies partly in the fact that even as romance creates and coheres this elite community, it disenfranchises it:

379 Dickson offers a comparable rationale for his examination of Behn’s Sidneian poetics: “I believe that reading Behn as a participant in and conservator of an earlier humanist tradition of exemplarity instead of primarily, as is commonly done, the beginning point of the novel and new models of historicity helps to explain many of the seeming incongruities and ruptures of her text” (574).
Oroonoko and his friends, despite exhibiting all the conventional characteristics of romance heroes (including a love of the genre itself), are destined for defeat as a viable society. Those who love, and live, romance possess some unstable cultural caché in the new world, but they cannot maintain practical or providential power there. Their genre of choice binds them together as a community but offers them neither real political authority nor divine protection.

“Infinitely pleas’d with this Novel”: Romance, Race, and the Cohesion of Behn’s Elite Community

Like most readers of *Oroonoko*, I agree that it makes little sense to call Behn’s essential pro-Stuart royalism into serious question. Behn dedicates her book to the royalist Lord Maitland, a man whose “noble Principles of Loyalty” to the king are of the kind that “this Nation Sighs for” (6). The story’s narrator, whom Behn does not distinguish from herself as author (although we may), expresses horror at the murder of Charles I, which Oroonoko’s martyrdom certainly does recall. Further, Oroonoko’s sympathetic master Trefry explicitly and passionately defends the absoluteness of monarchical authority in his attempt to protect Oroonoko from Byam, Surinam’s villainous deputy governor:

*Trefry* then thought it time to use his Authority; and told *Byam* his Command did not extend to his Lord’s *Plantation*; and that *Parham* was as much exempt from the Law as *White-hall*; and that they ought no more to touch the Servants of the Lord --(who there represented the King’s Person) than they cou’d those about the King himself; and that *Parham* was a Sanctuary; and though his Lord were absent in Person, his Power was still in Being there, which he had intrusted with him, as far as the Dominions of his particular *Plantations* reach’d, and all that belong’d to it; the rest of the *Country*, as *Byam* was Lieutenant to his Lord, he might exercise his Tyrany upon.

(59)

Trefry’s protest incorporates the tenet that the king’s authority is “exempt from the Law,” the belief that royal power mystically extends beyond the monarch’s person, and even the
Jacobite doctrine of passive obedience in Trefry’s acknowledgment that Byam’s own sway over his legitimate domain is absolute, even if he wields it as a tyrant.

Still, we cannot ignore the aspects of *Oroonoko* that trouble its royalist overtones. As Pacheco and Chernaik have shown, the character whose political ideology is most challenging is the Royal Slave himself. Pacheco draws our attention to Oroonoko’s ultimate willingness to resist the arbitrary tyranny of his grandfather, the king of Coramantien, who holds Imoinda in his harem despite his sexual impotence. Although Oroonoko is extremely reluctant to oppose himself to the king, his friends at court finally persuade him that the monarch’s power is not above the law: “But it was objected to him, that [...] *Imoinda* being [Oroonoko’s] lawful Wife, by solemn Contract, ’twas he was the injur’d Man, and might, if he so pleas’d, take *Imoinda* back, the Breach of the Law being on his Grand-father’s side; and that if he cou’d circumvent him, and redeem her from the [...] *Seraglio*, it was both just and lawful for him so to do” (18). Convinced, the hero infiltrates the harem and consummates his marriage with reliance on the law, on his honor and conscience, and on the pathos of his own erotic romance, vowing to kill anyone who violates his legal, moral, and generically conventional right to Imoinda: “*Therefore stand back, and know, this place is sacred to Love, and me this Night; to Morrow ’tis the King’s*” (25). Although both he and Imoinda initially demonstrate passive obedience to the king’s will, in order for their romantic narrative to proceed, they must and finally do unite in resistance to his tyrannical disregard for their love and for the law.

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380 Although Oroonoko himself is of royal blood, this fact does not enter into his friends’ reasoning; even as a private man, the authority of his “solemn Contract” with Imoinda apparently supersedes the king’s. For Pacheco, this conflict illustrates how “aristocratic pride [...] engendered an intrinsic resistance to authority that on occasion rendered the alliance between the monarch and the nobility less than stable” (501).
Oroonoko’s skepticism about the mystical absoluteness of royal power seems only to increase as the narrative continues. He proposes that the leader of Coramantien’s army ought to be “the bravest Man amongst ’em, let his Quality or Birth be what it wou’d: For, O my Friends! (said he) it is not Titles make Men brave, or good; or Birth that bestows Courage and Generosity, or makes the Owner happy” (28). And in Surinam, Oroonoko (now called Caesar) reacts uneasily when his former subjects recognize him and venerate him with “even Divine Homage”: “Caesar troubl’d with their Over-Joy, and Over-Ceremony, besought ’em to rise, and to receive him as their Fellow-Slave; assuring them, he was no better” (37). His apparent conviction that authority is derived from merit rather than from divine right clashes with Stuart absolutism and, as Chernaik remarks, “echo[es] the rhetoric and the concerns of seventeenth-century republicans.”

Chernaik makes much of Oroonoko’s bitter shame, after his failed rebellion, at “endeavoring to make those Free, who were by Nature Slaves, poor wretched Rogues, [...] treacherous and cowardly, fit for such Masters,” pointing out that his speech uncannily echoes Milton’s dismay over the impending Restoration in The Readie and Easie Way (56). He argues that while Oroonoko is “unrepentant, steadfast in his principles [of resistance to tyranny] to the last,” the hero “comes to realize [...] that all revolutions are failed revolutions” due to the servility of the masses, and that—as Milton puts it in Paradise Lost—“Tyranny must be, / Though to the tyrant thereby no excuse.”

While I find it very doubtful that Behn is using Oroonoko as a vessel for her own secret republican sympathies, she does seem to recognize that the

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381 Chernaik, 97.
distinction between republican and royalist frustration is not always an impassable gulf. Oroonoko’s Miltonic complaint that the vast majority of people are naturally cowardly and servile, be they African slaves or English colonists, is difficult to distinguish from a royalist lament: the masses either cannot or will not resist the demagoguery of ignoble leaders, mob rule soon becomes its own form of tyranny, and the rabble are incapable of appreciation for or participation in the high-minded genre of heroic romance.

Other critics have remarked on Behn’s division between the few characters who admire both romance and Oroonoko and the many who run roughshod over them, though most associate this separation with other problematic binaries. According to Kroll’s reading, romantic kingship flourishes in Coramantien but cannot survive in Surinam. Pacheco remarks that “The text’s upper-class loyalties are kept partially intact by the division of the English colonists into two distinct camps: those people ‘of quality’ who recognize and respect Oroonoko’s royalty [...] and the rabble who [...] torture and eventually execute him.” Visconsi sees the villainous masses of Oroonoko as “a pastiche of undesirables incapable of government” who represent Behn’s “republican and Whig opponents” and fail either to recognize or to respect the kingship that “inheres somatically” within the Royal Slave by romantic convention. While each of these binary readings seems to approach some truth, none of their distinctions—geographical, classist, or political—can quite stand up to scrutiny. Oroonoko’s romantic heroism is tested by different forces of tyranny in both Coramantien and Surinam, encountering honorable allies

383 Pacheco, 502.
384 Visconsi, 674, 682. Rivero also finds that Behn’s “‘romantic’ colonial fiction [...] is the romance of decorous, upper-class sentiments” and argues for Behn’s belief that “If properly conducted by the right aristocratic sort of people [...] the colonial enterprise can have salutary effects” (451-2).
and opportunistic enemies in both places.\textsuperscript{385} While nobility is indeed somatically inherent in Oroonoko, we shall see that moral merit also appears to shine through the bodies of certain non-royal characters. Pacheco admits that although Oroonoko’s “allies throughout the novella are presented as products of upper-class culture,” Byam and his henchman Banister—“a Fellow of absolute Barbarity, and fit to execute any Villainy, but was Rich”—are far from being commoners; the Irish brute Banister may epitomize wealth divorced from nobility of birth or nationality, but Byam is a member of the landed gentry and the descendant of English nobles (64).\textsuperscript{386} More importantly, neither are Byam and Banister republicans or Whigs, despite the fact that many of the nameless English islanders under their control smack of Whiggish capitalism: as Brown, Mendelson, Pacheco, and Kroll all acknowledge, Oroonoko’s cruelest and most deceitful enemies are real historical figures who served as high-ranking royalist colonial officials. Since race, rank, and political allegiance all fail to provide a thorough and accurate determination of the identities of Oroonoko’s protagonists and antagonists, affinity for romance itself is the only consistently reliable quotient that remains.

Throughout Oroonoko, and in both of the text’s geographic settings, a love of the lofty values and stimulating stories of heroic romance—together with a predisposition to interpret events through the lens of the same genre—draws highly disparate individuals into an elite community of virtue. We must note that Behn’s \textit{elite} community is expressly not an \textit{elect} community in the Calvinist sense: as both a royalist and a Catholic, Behn

\textsuperscript{385} Pacheco also steers clear of Kroll’s geographic binary while maintaining a sociopolitical one: “If, in the first half of the narrative, honor comes into conflict with royalist ideology, in Surinam it encounters the European colonial enterprise” (501-2).

\textsuperscript{386} Ibid., 496.
evidently found radical Protestant confections of romantic heroism and divine election neither attractive nor convincing. In fact, her exaltation of a black African hero undermines Protestantism’s racial exegesis (widespread throughout, and well after, the Early Modern period) that understood the black race to be the offspring of Ham and his son Canaan, declared reprobate by God and cursed by Noah to unremitting slavery to the descendants of Ham’s brothers. Both their reprobation and their enslavement disqualified them for participation in the progressive narrative of the elect. Milton, quite possibly because of his rejection of double predestination, does not include the episode with Noah and his sons in Adam’s vision of biblical history in *Paradise Lost*, but the more orthodox Calvinist Lucy Hutchinson rehearses the curse with considerable interest in *Order and Disorder*:

‘Cursèd be Canaan, vassalage his doom,  
His brothers’ servants’ servant to become.  
Blessed be the God of Shem: by special grace  
He shall be lord of Canaan’s servile race.  
God shall enlarge Japhet’s still growing stem,  
He shall inhabit in the tents of Shem  
And Canaan shall be servant unto him’.

(9.205-211)

Although Hutchinson regards this “parent’s curse” as “Sad” evidence of Noah’s own sinfulness, which prompted Ham’s unfilial dishonor, she asserts that it did not go “unconfirmed in heaven,” since “So heinous, so degenerate a crime / Deserved a brand to all succeeding time” (9.224, 282-3). This pronouncement of the reprobation of Ham’s descendants, she explains, revivified the Worldly State after its destruction by the Flood, and so allowed Satan to rekindle “The fatal war […] / Against the new foundation of mankind” (9.213-14). Canaan’s black “children” are thus “Excluded from the special blessing” of their cousins, which “little would avail a hapless race / Still multiplied to
sorrow and disgrace”; their moral and literal “slavery” binds them to fight for the wrong side of Hutchinson’s spiritual war, and so they are “Cut […] off” from the romance of the elect (9.277-81, 271, 287). Behn’s _Oroonoko_ moves to spurn the religious and narrative implications of this Calvinist convention. The degeneracy that is supposed to characterize Ham’s descendants instead flourishes in the white enemies of the heroic and genteel African prince, who stands at the head of the narrative’s romantic community due to a secular nobility of spirit that signifies neither providential rejection nor election.

Whether the members of Behn’s elite community are African or European, noble by birth or only in spirit, self-evidently royalist or not, they find profound gratification within their like-minded society, even as their romantic sensibility separates them from the majority of their neighbors. Oroonoko’s membership in this small but diverse group long predates his meetings with the narrator or Trefry, his chief allies in Surinam. Not only has his natural excellence endowed him with physically European features—perhaps another sign of Behn’s disregard for the Curse of Ham—his inherent appreciation of heroic narrative has attracted him to the histories of peoples he has never encountered who have otherwise nothing to do with him. The narrator is amazed to discover that “He had heard of, and admir’d the _Romans_: he had heard of the late Civil Wars in _England_, and the deplorable Death of our great Monarch; and wou’d discourse of it with all the Sense, and Abhorrence of the Injustice imaginable” (13). As soon as the Englishwoman and the African prince meet in Surinam, they have their shared sense of sympathetic admiration for the martyr-king Charles I to unite them as friends, allies, and lovers of heroic virtue (even though Oroonoko’s simultaneous enthusiasm for Roman honor may remind us, again, more
of republican cultural preferences than of royalist ones). At the same time that Oroonoko’s affinity for European chivalric conventions helps him bond with select foreigners, it distinguishes him from the masses of his own people. Having observed many of the signs of secular “election” by Love when he comes to desire Imoinda—in good Sidneian fashion, falling in love by a “strange Inspiration,” marveling that a woman could “[gain] a perfect Conquest over his fierce Heart,” and communicating with her in a “silent Language”—he vows to prefer romantic convention even to “the Custom of his Country,” promising her that “she shou’d be the only woman he wou’d possess while he liv’d; that no Age or Wrinkles shou’d incline him to change, for her Soul wou’d be always fine, and always young; and he shou’d have an eternal Idea in his Mind of the Charms she now bore, and shou’d look into his Heart for that Idea, when he cou’d find it no longer in her Face” (14-15). Oroonoko’s oath of monogamy and fidelity to a neoplatonic ideal of love and beauty wins him Imoinda’s heart while separating him from his grandfather the king, who keeps a harem and discards his older wives; the same sensibilities that cause him to lose his position at his grandfather’s court make his amorous story especially appealing to the narrator in Surinam and to her romance-reading English audience.

However, Behn never suggests that romance is a genre or a system of values that is unique to England or to Europeans. Rather, it is a mode of thought and action that allows its virtuous followers (whatever their rank or race) to recognize one another and to identify themselves as distinct from the masses whose spirits are not sufficiently elevated to ascribe to it. We begin to see romance’s power to form an improbable community from its

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387 We might remember Margaret Cavendish’s complaint in her *Life of William* about republicans’ “romansical” admiration of and self-comparison to Roman heroes (see Chapter Two).
audience members while we are still in Coramantien. In battle, Oroonoko’s army encounters a force led by Jamoan, a noble youth clearly intended to parallel Oroonoko despite their military opposition. Seeking a worthy rival, Oroonoko “single[s] out” Jamoan in combat and “[takes] him Prisoner with his own Hand, having wounded him almost to death” (29). As with many chivalric heroes before them, the enmity that brings the two warriors together on the battlefield transforms into firm friendship once they have witnessed each other’s martial prowess and manly virtue. Oroonoko recognizes his hostage as a reflection of himself, just as we do: “This Jamoan afterwards became very dear to him, being a Man very gallant, and of excellent Graces, and fine Parts; so that he never put him amongst the Rank of Captives, as they us’d to do, without distinction, for the common Sale, or Market; but kept him in his own Court, where he retain’d nothing of the Prisoner, but the Name” (29). Jamoan, continuing to mirror his captor’s feelings, “return’d no more into his own Country, so great an Affection he took for Oroonoko” (29). Moreover, he instinctively knows how best to minister to Oroonoko’s lovesickness for his lost Imoinda: “by a thousand Tales and Adventures of Love and Gallantry, [he] flatter’d his Disease of Melancholy and Languishment: which I have often heard him say, had certainly kill’d him, but for the Conversation of this Prince and Aboan,” the hero’s other best friend (29). Oroonoko, Jamoan, and Aboan form a fellowship of romantic warrior-courtiers who love to tell and listen to stories of others like themselves. Their affinity for the genre in which they perceive themselves to live binds them together and sustains them through loss and captivity. Notably, Oroonoko is gratified by Jamoan’s romances not because they ease his sorrows but because they sharpen and intensify them. Behn’s narrator identifies the
paradoxical nature of Jamoan’s treatment: it “flatter[s]” the illness that torments Oroonoko by reiterating his experiences and exalting them to a literary height, yet at the same time that it nourishes and glorifies his “Disease,” Oroonoko becomes convinced that it has saved his life by providing him with the vital “Conversation” of a few others who sympathize with his woes and share his heroic sensibilities. For now, the question of whether romance chiefly imparts solipsistic “Languishment” or communitarian salvation is left open.

Jamoan and Aboan abruptly exit the narrative at the point of Oroonoko’s capture; however, the episode in which two adversaries are united by their mutual recognition and appreciation of romance conventions repeats itself as soon as Oroonoko arrives in Surinam. There, he is purchased by Trefry, “a man of great wit and fine learning” who overhears his disdainful farewell to the duplicitous captain of the slave ship and his hope to “meet with more Honour and Honesty in the next World” (34). Trefry, instantly attuned to and impressed by Oroonoko’s innate nobility, seems poised to answer that hope:

He reflecting on the last Words of Oroonoko to the Captain, [...] no sooner came into the Boat, but he fix’d his Eyes on him; and finding something so extraordinary in his Face, his Shape and Mien, a Greatness of Look, and Haughtiness in his Air, and finding he spoke English, had a great mind to be enquiring into his Quality and Fortune; which, though Oroonoko endeavour’d to hide, by only confessing he was above the Rank of common Slaves, Trefry soon found he was yet something greater than he confess’d; and from that Moment began to conceive so vast an Esteem for him, that he ever after lov’d him as his dearest Brother, and shew’d him all the Civilities due to so great a Man.

(35)

Trefry discovers Oroonoko’s rank and his moral quality simply by beholding that “something so extraordinary” about him, whatever it may be. As many readers of Oroonoko have remarked (and as we have often seen), the ability of a displaced or disguised aristocrat to radiate some indefinable allure that evidences his concealed status is
a romance cliché. Having participated in this generic convention by recognizing Oroonoko’s rank, Trefry correctly assumes that the royal slave might reciprocate with an engaging, ennobling story about his “Quality and Fortune.” Since Oroonoko is initially reluctant to trust his new master, Trefry sets out to “entertain” him “with his Art and Discourse” (35). Their conversation makes Oroonoko, in turn, aware of “a kind of Sincerity, and awful Truth in the face of Trefry; he saw an Honesty in his Eyes, and he found him wise and witty enough to understand Honour; for it was one of his Maxims, A Man of Wit cou’d not be a Knave or Villain” (35). Mysterious virtue thus inheres in the mere gentleman Trefry as well as the prince Oroonoko, and it is communicated both through the body (in particular, the face) and through the elite “Art and Discourse” that delights both men.

Although he concedes that “he [has] little Reason to credit” a white foreigner, romantic sympathy forms a bond of faith and respect between Oroonoko and the man who is both his master and his inferior: “he was no less pleas’d with Trefry, than [Trefry] was with the Prince; and he thought himself, at least, fortunate in this, that since he was a Slave, as long as he wou’d suffer himself to remain so, he had a Man of so excellent Wit and Parts for a Master” (35). Accordingly, Oroonoko “made no scruple of declaring to Trefry all his Fortunes [...] and put himself wholly into the Hands of his new Friend, whom he found [...] charm’d with all the Greatness of his Actions; which were recited with that Modesty, and delicate Sense, as wholly vanquish’d him, and subdu’d him to his Interest” (35). If Trefry

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388 Visconsi suggests that “The trope of the unsuccessful disguise invokes directly a common seventeenth-century trope of somatic kingship, a trope found most overtly in the Coronation poetry of 1660-1661” (684)—though of course, the “trope of somatic kingship” is far older than the seventeenth century and is found in countless romance texts beyond commemoratory verse for Charles II.
were not endeared to Oroonoko through his heroic countenance alone, his account of the true romance of his life has earned his complete devotion. Oroonoko, in turn, is now in a position superficially identical to the one his friend and hostage Jamoan occupied in Coramantien: having entered into a bond of brotherhood with a man who is inwardly like himself, he turns to a friendship originated by instant mutual admiration, and sustained by romantic storytelling, to salve his loss of his freedom—for the time being. Although he seems satisfied that he has indeed found romantic honor “in the next World,” however, the terms of his and Trefry’s affective bond are not precisely the same as those surrounding his friendship with Jamoan. In Coramantien, Jamoan became Oroonoko’s captive through conquest in single combat between racial and social equals; in Surinam, Oroonoko has become Trefry’s slave through monetary exchange in a new world where their present impression of their likeness and equality is largely held as absurd. Another question—whether Jamoan, as an honored hostage in Coramantien, could have maintained his contented friendship with his captor/host—arises and remains unanswered.

But for now, the men’s delighted recognition of themselves in one another makes Trefry eager to reciprocate Oroonoko’s romantic true story with one of his own. We learn, unsurprisingly, that being “naturally Amorous,” Trefry “lov’d to talk of Love as well as any body”; he tells his newly purchased friend of “a fine she-Slave” who has made every man in the vicinity, black or white, “undone in Love” (38). The promise of amorous narrative continues to pique Oroonoko’s interest, as it did back in Coramantien: “the Prince, who never heard the name of Love without a Sigh, nor any mention of it without the Curiosity of examining further into that tale, which of all Discourses was most
agreeable to him, asked, how they came to be so Unhappy, as to be all undone for one fair Slave” (38). But while Trefry’s tale furthers his friendship with Oroonoko, the pair’s unique attitude toward it distances them from every other listener at their dining table. Questioned by the prince, Trefry explains why he himself has been unable to force his female slave to submit to him:

*I confess, said Trefry, when I have, against her will, entertain’d her with Love so long, as to be transported with my Passion; even above Decency, I have been ready to make use of those advantages of Strength and Force Nature has given me. But oh! she disarms me, with that Modesty and Weeping so tender and so moving, that I retire, and thank my Stars she overcame me. The Company laugh’d at his Civility to a Slave, and Caesar only applauded the nobleness of his Passion and Nature; since that Slave might be Noble, or, what was better, have true Notions of Honour and Vertue in her.*

(38)

Either Trefry and Oroonoko are alone in recognizing the Sidneian romantic norms inherent in the scenario—the impassioned lover, the chaste beloved, her disarming modesty and his awakened virtue—or else they are alone in placing any value on them; the rest of the audience (probably composed primarily of upper-class royalists—the most likely islanders to be Trefry’s guests) see only comic absurdity in Trefry’s mock-heroic reluctance to dispose of his property as he likes. Oroonoko reminds us once again that romance is not clearly the province of one class or ideology: perhaps the chaste heroine ought to be respected for her noble blood, or, even “better,” for her extraordinary moral merit alone. In any case, these three figures—Trefry, Oroonoko, and the “fine she-Slave”—comprise a tiny elite class distinguished from a larger aristocratic audience only by their “true Notions of Honour and Vertue.”

The apex of the romance plot in *Oroonoko*, and the highest pleasure for the members of the text’s romantic community, occurs as a result of Trefry’s amorous
discourse: keen to see the beauty and nobility of the slave woman “Clemene” for himself, Oroonoko discovers that she is his own Imoinda. The miraculous occasion passes all description:

’tis needless to tell with what transports, what extasies of Joy, they both a while beheld each other, without Speaking; then Snatcht each other to their Arms; then Gaze again, as if they still doubted whether they possess’d the Blessing: They Graspt; but when they recovered their Speech, ’tis not to be imagin’d, what tender things they exprest to each other; wondering what strange Fate had brought ’em again together.

(39)

Critically, this triumphant moment delights an audience beyond the lovers whom it directly concerns. Trefry, in some sense responsible for the happy reunion he has just witnessed, is “infinitely pleas’d with this Novel, and [...] not a little satisfied, that Heaven was so kind to the Prince, as to sweeten his Misfortunes by so lucky an Accident” (40). Overcome with enthusiasm for the apparently providential true romance unfolding before his eyes, he is “impatient” to repeat the “Novel”—a strange new event that also involves a romantic narrative—to another sympathetic listener: Behn’s persona (40). The narrator, already familiar with Oroonoko and his story “from his own Mouth” and “concerning and intresting [her] self, in all that related” to him, is equally “impatient” to see its reunited hero and heroine for herself (40). She and Trefry, being distinctively attuned to such things, had sensed previously that Clemene too was a person “of Quality,” but her value to them increases exponentially once they learn that she is the female protagonist of Oroonoko’s stirring romance: “when we knew Clemene was Imoinda, we cou’d not enough admire her” (40). As Oroonoko and Imoinda celebrate their romantic reunion firsthand, Trefry and the narrator relish the vicarious experience of being party to this “real” romance that so much resembles the stories they like best. At this point in the text, their central community of four
seems to have reached a pinnacle of joy and cohesion: while Oroonoko and Imoinda renew their commitment to one another in marriage, the narrator and Trefry commit to restoring them and their newly-conceived heir to their rightful home and throne in Coramantien, as soon as Surinam’s Lord-Governor returns to meet the Royal Slave and approve his freedom.

“The last of his Great Race”: Communal Disenfranchisement and Decline

William Spengemann has succinctly described what the end of Oroonoko and Imoinda’s romance might look like, were it to conclude in the expected fashion:

For the happy conclusion of the romance, only the rupture between these lovers and the old King of Coramantien remains to be healed; and, as anyone familiar with the genre would know, such problems are easily dispatched. Whether Oroonoko and his gravid spouse return to the welcome of a once tyrannical parent now softened by remorse, or the King conveniently dies during their absence, or they decide to remain in America and establish a peaceful dynasty of commingled love and honor in that regained paradise, the romantic action has virtually arrived at its projected conclusion.\[^{389}\]

Trefry, Behn’s narrative persona, and Behn’s readers all share Spengemann’s general impression of what ought to happen next in order to complete the formulaic plot. Oroonoko, too, has fantasized about a happy ending for himself and Imoinda that seems suddenly to lie wide open before them: when he is barred from access to her in Coramantien, he imagines “fly[ing] with her to some unknown World, who never heard our Story” (18). As Rivero has noted, Surinam will shortly provide the “grim fulfillment” of his dream.\[^{390}\] Romance has proven its capacity to delight its admirers, to soothe their woes while indulging their sensibilities, and to draw them together while distinguishing them from all others—but here, the genre’s powers have reached their limit. By the end of

\[^{389}\] Spengemann, 395.
\[^{390}\] Rivero, 449.
Oroonoko, romance will have failed to deliver Oroonoko and his allies, and it will have disenfranchised and doomed the very community it created.

At first, the redemptive limits of romance are easily conflated with its temporary usefulness for forming community and consoling the dispossessed. Much as Jamoan comforted Oroonoko in his lovesickness—and perhaps himself in his captivity—by telling “Tales and Adventures of Love and Gallantry,” the narrator attempts to “entertain” her new African friends through romantic storytelling and adventuring until ambiguous circumstances make it possible for them to return to Coramantien. She recounts to him and Imoinda “the Lives of the Romans, and great Men”: once more, Oroonoko is “charm’d [...] to [her] Company” upon discovering that they both enjoy heroic narrative (41). He is less fond of her “stories of nuns” and “of the true God”: if Oroonoko does not clearly share the narrator’s royalist politics, he clearly does not share her Catholic faith. Still, the narrator reports that their “Conversations fail’d not altogether so well to divert him, that he lik’d the Company of us Women much above the Men” (41). Again, romance has drawn Oroonoko (and presumably also Trefry, who “love[s] to talk of Love as well as any body”) into an unorthodox fellowship, which breezily makes light of distinctions of race or religion, while separating them from their likelier peers. When the friends are not absorbed in heroic discourse, they sustain their community by dabbling into heroic action, much like the pilgrims of Bunyan’s Part Two. Behn devotes a significant portion of her text to episodes in which the group explores the island, interacts with its exotic native population, and slays wild beasts “of a monstrous Size, which this Continent affords in Abundance” (42). Such “novel” curiosities further stimulate their sensibilities and give Oroonoko “occasion of
many fine Discourses; of Accidents in War, and Strange Escapes” (46). Indeed, the prince feels the same impulse that his English comrades do to turn to romance as a source of both diversion and communion: “Caesar made it his Business to search out and provide for our Entertainment, especially to please his dearly Ador’d Imoinda, who was a sharer in all our Adventures” (51).

Yet all that romantic storytelling and sightseeing have really done so far, other than unite these fit and few friends, is amuse and distract them; unlike the imitativeness of Bunyan’s pilgrims, their play with the conventions of genre eventually loses its cohesive properties and turns cloying. For Oroonoko, being “diverted” finally proves insufficient: “these were not Actions great enough for his large Soul, which was still panting after more renown’d Action” (51, 42). Imoinda, too, begins to long for the promised happy ending to her family romance: as her pregnancy progresses, she eventually “[does] nothing but Sigh and Weep for the Captivity of her Lord, her Self, and the Infant yet Unborn” (51). Realizing that their freedom is not forthcoming, Oroonoko finally takes matters into his own hands and attempts to inspire his fellow slaves with the heroic values and romantic expectations that have always guided his own conduct. He begins by pointing out the existential horror of their interminable slavery, which—as the Calvinist tradition of Ham’s curse emphasizes—lacks a romantic trial’s teleological capacity to ennoble or redeem the sufferers: “He told ’em it was not for Days, Months, or Years, but for Eternity; there was no end to be of their Misfortunes: They suffer’d not like Men who might find a Glory, and Fortitude in Oppression; but like Dogs that lov’d the Whip and Bell, and fawn’d the more they were beaten: That they had lost the Divine Quality of Men” (52). Oroonoko’s gradual
degradation has opened his eyes to the difference between his friendship with the narrator and Trefry in Surinam and his friendship with Jamoan in Coramantien: he and his fellow slaves have not been conquered “Nobly in Fight” or “by the chance of War,” and his indignation at his unheroic servitude overcomes his love for his fancied hosts. Oroonoko urges his fellows to embrace both the standards of real martial heroism—“the more Danger, the more Glory”—and the concomitant hope of providential protection and restoration: “He said, they wou’d Travel towards the Sea, Plant a New Colony, and Defend it by their Valour; and when they cou’d find a Ship [...] guided by Providence that way, they wou’d Seize it, and make it a Prize, till it had Transported them to their own Countries” (53). Having spent months in Surinam talking of romance and playing at it with his English friends, he chafes against the anti-romantic aimlessness of their diversions and of his slavery, and he orchestrates a return to the real thing.

For Behn, however, Oroonoko’s rebellion and its tragic aftermath sharply expose the limits of romance as a “real thing” that can control the shape of historical narrative or yield any tangible benefit to its devotees. We suddenly discover that while the narrator and her comrades’ romantic sensibility has granted the group an illusory impression of their own cultural status, it gives them no political power at all. The narrator is inclined to conflate these two types of authority (which are, indeed, not normally separate in traditional romance): she remarks that “The Men, of any fashion,” whom she also terms “the better sort,” have too much “Respect for Caesar” to march against him, so that “now the only violent Man against him” is Byam, “The Deputy Governor, of whom I have had no great occasion to speak, and who was the most Fawning fair-tongu’d Fellow in the
World, and one that pretended the most Friendship to Caesar [...] He was a Fellow, whose Character is not fit to be mention’d with the worst of the Slaves” (54). Her scorn for Byam initially conceals the weight of his authority in Surinam; the Deputy Governor at first appears to be pitted as “the only violent Man” against large numbers of “the better sort” who despise his cruelty. Yet the contempt that the men “of any fashion” feel for Byam’s low character proves to go hand-in-hand with their remarkable passivity, since their “Respect” for Oroonoko’s heroism does not translate into any heroic exercise on their own part.391 And the women of fashion, including the narrator herself, “fly down the River, to be secur’d” from Oroonoko’s sudden violence (57). The narrator’s commentary on her decision to flee from her friend betrays both her remorse about what follows and her confusion about her status in Surinam as a cultured, aristocratic woman: “while we were away, [Byam] acted this Cruelty: For I suppose I had Authority and Interest enough there, had I suspected any such thing, to have prevented it” (57).

Whether we regard the narrator as deeply deluded about her power, shockingly remiss in exercising it, or both, the fact remains that while the high-minded aristocrats disdain or fear to involve themselves in the conflict, Byam assembles a mob armed with “rusty useless Guns,” “old Basket-hilts,” and “long Staffs, and Clubs” (55). The ensuing battle is the antithesis of chivalric combat: the Deputy Governor’s rabble are too disorderly to do much damage to Oroonoko’s men, but the slaves, in turn, are too cowardly to resist them (and Byam’s promise of mercy) for long. Oroonoko and “his Heroick Imoinda” are

391 Carnell likewise notes the impotence of gentility here: “the moderate plantation owners are entirely overruled by the powerful group desire for revenge against the escaped royal slave; there is no effective voice of protest against Oroonoko’s brutal dismemberment” (14).
forsaken by their followers, who seem after all to lack “the Divine Quality of Men” that would allow them to share in the protagonists’ dream (55). The prince’s belief that his comrades might “find a Glory, and Fortitude in Oppression,” and so transform their suffering into heroic narrative, has proved illusory; in this new world dominated by white Protestants, the Curse of Ham does effectively exclude slaves from romance. Although Byam too can muster only a vulgar band of brutes, his “fair-tongued” demagoguery gives him far more material potency than either Oroonoko’s moral outrage against tyranny or the narrator’s mystical faith in royal power and virtue. Surinam’s elite community of lovers of romance finds itself figuratively and literally outgunned by a coarse Whiggish mob controlled by corrupt royalist officials, all of whom perceive that success “in the next World” of America depends upon opportunistic policy, not sentimental idealism.392

Byam, “one that abounded in his own Wit, and wou’d take his own Measures,” seems well aware that he can turn his opponents’ romantic sensibilities against them, using their naivété as an instrument to further his own ends (55). He co-opts honest Trefry, whose face radiates “Sincerity, and awful Truth,” to help extract Oroonoko’s fateful surrender by promising his freedom and appealing to his heroic virtue:

Trefry and Byam pleaded and protested together so much, that Trefry believing the Governor to mean what he said; and speaking very cordially himself, generously put himself into Caesar’s hands, and took him aside, and persuaded him, even with Tears, to Live, by Surrendering himself, and to name his Conditions. Caesar was overcome by his Wit and Reasons, and in consideration of Imoinda[.]

(56)

392 Pacheco expertly summarizes the situation: “the ideology that works to affirm an endangered tradition simultaneously connives its destruction [...] This gradual shift in power relations spelled not the eclipse of aristocratic might, but a growing collaboration among elite groups [...] which brought with it an intermingling of cultural systems of value” (503).
Trefry’s honesty, sincerity, and tears are genuine; he intends no evil by pleading with Oroonoko, and Oroonoko does not err by trusting him *per se*. Both men’s errors lie, instead, in their commitment to chivalric honor and affective friendship, and in their enduring faith in the historical reality of romance. Trefry is particularly credulous: ever since recognizing Oroonoko’s royalty and effecting his improbable reunion with Imoinda, he has been “infinitely pleas’d with this Novel” that he believes directs the plot of his friend’s life, and he remains convinced that his story must end with his return to his rightful kingdom in Coramantien accompanied by his bride and his heir. Byam’s story that Oroonoko and his royal family “shall depart free out of our Land” as soon as a ship arrives to take them from Surinam may be calculated to flatter not only Oroonoko’s desire but also the expectations and honor of Trefry, who has “promis’d him on his Word and Honour, he wou’d find the Means to recondict him to his own Country again” and thereby perfect his romantic narrative (56, 35). Trefry is manipulated by his enthusiasm for the values and outcomes of romance, and Oroonoko by the same trust of Trefry’s courtly “Wit and Reasons” that first facilitated their friendship.

Once he has discovered Byam’s deceit, Oroonoko’s consequent murder of the willing Imoinda and of their unborn child highlights not only the community’s political impotence, but also the emptiness of any appeal to providential protection or election. When Oroonoko kills his unborn heir—“the last of his Great Race”—he has destroyed the hope of restoration in the next generation that undergirds royalist romance (40). Moreover, he has applied his variation on Noah’s curse to his own son: in Hutchinson’s words, “Who sentences his sons his own sins dooms / And his own executioner becomes” *(O&D* 9.236-
7). Behn posits at the beginning of her narrative that black Africans can take on heroic roles in romance—but by definition, the enslaved, whose lives and labor are not their own, cannot. The majority of Africans on Surinam, like the majority of white colonists, are unfit for heroism or freedom; far worse for the anti-Calvinist romantic vision of Behn and her elite community, Oroonoko himself finally degenerates into the brutality that is supposed to characterize his race, degraded by the racial and religious suppositions of his colonial masters. His violence against Imoinda and their child, which remains heroic in the eyes of the lovers from Coramantien, horrifies even the narrator with its foreign barbarism.

The narrator’s fellowship with Oroonoko fails him for the same essential reasons that Trefry’s does: not through a deficiency of noble sentiment, but through an excess of romantic sensibility. When a surgeon informs Oroonoko that he will not recover from his wounds (and will therefore neither take revenge upon his enemies nor ever return to Coramantien), the narrator reports that “We were all (but Caesar) afflicted at this News”: while Oroonoko is settling into his final role as heroic martyr, the community that has cohered around him cannot bear for his “Tale of Love and Gallantry” to decline into tragedy (63). Rather than remain with the prince to witness his tragic end as it unfolds, the narrator flees the scene again: “the Sight [of his injuries] was gashly,” she reports, “his Discourse was sad; and the earthly Smell about him so strong, that I was persuaded to leave the Place for some time (being my self but Sickly, and very apt to fall into Fits of dangerous Illness upon any extraordinary Melancholy)” (63–4). Literally unable to stomach the decay of Oroonoko’s once-idealized heroic body and the gruesome collapse of his romance, she allows Trefry and his servants to promise “to take what possible care they
cou’d” of Oroonoko and travels by boat “about three Days Journey down the River” (64). The enemies of their shrinking society fall upon the house as soon as she is gone and take Oroonoko by force; the narrator’s attachment to the aesthetics of romance thus result in her abandonment of the man she once believed to embody them as soon as his story becomes too “earthly,” “gashly,” “sad,” and “melancholy” to remain a real-life representation of the genre. She is not present to witness his death, but her account of it concludes by emphasizing, once more, the utter impotence of her extended authority against the vulgar mob and the unheroic tyrants at their head: “My Mother and Sister were by him all the while, but not suffer’d to save him; so rude and wild were the Rabble, and so inhumane were the Justices, who stood by to see the execution” (64). Neither the freedom fighter who esteems republican-inflected merit to the last, nor the English aristocrats who revere his enduring royal majesty, can prevent the opportunistic alliance of Whiggish plebeians and Tory politicians from turning their romance into all-too-realistic tragedy. Even if their community never renounces its love of romantic heroism, it must witness the racial and religious diversity of its fellowship crumble in colonial Surinam, and it has no choice but to abandon the fancy that romance is a providential key to historical reality.

Spengemann has drawn our attention to a connection between the tragic end of *Oroonoko* and the deeply melancholy verse that Behn composed shortly after her story’s publication and shortly before her death. Responding to a request that she continue to

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393 Rivero argues that “the narrator, having lovingly fashioned [Oroonoko and Imoinda’s] attractive bodies, now details their defacement and dismemberment as a way both of completing her own work of mourning and of expiating the guilt she feels over her inability to have done anything to have helped them avoid their fate [...] Yet the accounts of the violent deaths of Imoinda and Oroonoko appear excessive. It seems as though the author, having made their beautiful bodies, must now unmake them, must render them repulsive” (457).
enrich the public sphere with her poetry in the wake of the “Glorious Revolution” that ended the Stuart dynasty, Behn sorrowfully declines:

My Muse [...] would endeavour fain to glide
With the fair prosperous Gale, and the full driving Tide,
But Loyalty Commands with Pious Force,
That stops me in the thriving Course,
The Breeze that wafts the Crowding Nations o’er,
Leaves me unpity’d far behind
On the forsaken Barren Shore,
To sigh with Echo, and the Murmuring Wind;
While all the Inviting Prospect I survey,
With Melancholy Eyes I view the Plains,
Where all I see is Ravishing and Gay,
And all I hear is Mirth in loudest Strains;
Thus while the Chosen Seed possess the Promis’d Land,
I like the Excluded Prophet stand,
The Fruitful Happy Soil can only see,
But am forbid by Fates Decree
To share the Triumph of the joyful Victory.394

Spengemann suggests that we keep Oroonoko in mind when reading Behn’s deathbed poem in order to perceive the “wonderful irony” in her lament that she will never enter the new world she surveys from her prophetic height:

the Promised Land that calls the Crowding Nations across the Atlantic is, as Oroonoko discovered, an Old-World dream, already dispelled by the efforts to realize it; while the dishonored prophet, who seems to sit on the Forsaken Barren Shore of the Old World, consoling herself with the devalued bric-a-brac of antique legend, has in fact been there ahead of the rest and has already learned what it will take the Chosen Seed another two hundred years to realize—that the Old World is gone, and that the New one will require its makers to conceive an entirely new idea of their collective destiny.395

This perceptive reading allows us to hear in Behn’s tone not only irony, but also a strange, half-mocking sympathy that connects the disenfranchised community of royalist romance with its Puritan cousin. Her description of those who celebrate the “Triumph” of

394 Cited in Spengemann, 414.
395 Ibid.
the Glorious Revolution as “the Chosen Seed” racing to “possess the Promis’d Land” is apt enough: such people, after all, are the republican-leaning Whigs and radical Protestants who had long identified themselves with the biblical nation of Israel and with its romantic journey through the wilderness. But in comparing herself to Moses, that favorite visionary hero of religious reformists, Behn aligns herself with her political and cultural adversaries rather than against them. She and the “Chosen Seed” shared the same narrative goal of arriving at the “Fruitful Happy Soil,” the same dream of “Ravishing” prosperity and “joyful Victory”—but as a defeated and dying royalist woman, Behn’s “Excluded Prophet” has found herself awakened from that dream. The masculine mountaintop prospect she has commandeered from Moses shows her a chastened vision of her nation’s narrative. Although she is compelled by her “Loyalty” to the deposed Stuarts to abstain from rejoicing in England’s future, Behn sounds more wistful than resentful, perhaps even feeling pity for those who have left her “unpity’d far behind”: unlike them, she has seen enough of that “Inviting Prospect” to have concluded that the “Chosen Seed” may be headed unawares toward yet another “Barren Shore.”

Both Behn and her diverse characters have been forced to put aside their romantic fictions about their community’s “collective destiny”; Behn’s opponents have yet to do so. Before their inevitable disillusionment, she seems to suggest, they may as well enjoy “the fair prosperous Gale, and the full driving Tide” that spur them onward to the “next world.” Soon enough, they too will discover that the narrative they have cherished is “an Old-World dream,” a cultural relic that will mark its adherents not as divinely-predestined victors but, “by Fates decree,” as losers. When that time comes, they will find
that their tide’s illusory telos has taken them nowhere after all, and that they remain on
the same shore as their “Excluded Prophet,” unable to compete with the hordes of anti-
romantic opportunists who ravage the Promised Land, and thus “forsaken” along with
her. United by their common vision of national romance before their separate ideologies
drove them apart, the collapse of that vision as a viable historical hermeneutic may bring
them together again, free to escape to their old-world heroic fantasies rather than warring
over the identity of the “real” heroes. Seen as a literary and cultural aesthetic rather than
as a map of history, the genre might “flatter [their] Disease of Melancholy and
Languishment” while also erecting a bulwark against total despair, as it did for Oroonoko
and his allies. For Behn, a community’s shared love of romance is its own, and its only,
reward.
Conclusion

If Behn’s late work suggests that the end of the seventeenth century brought with it the tragic death of romance, we ought to recognize the extent to which this is true: pure romance as a form of high literature or political mythmaking had declined in England in the hundred years since Sidney and Spenser’s aristocratic and nationalistic narratives, and royalists such as Herbert and Cavendish were among the last to publish “serious” prose tales of amorous or chivalric quests for politically-engaged upper class readers. Their efforts, moreover, were beginning to push against romance’s conventional reliance on providential teleology and heroic idealism, a task that Behn effectively completed when her African prince came to a tragic and barbaric end. As Michael McKeon and others have demonstrated, the prose romance—primarily a royalist genre throughout the Civil War and Restoration eras—declined, or grew up, into the novel, a form characterized by the gestures toward ostensible realism, contingent narrative, and the psychological “world within” that we found in The Princess Cloria, Assaulted and Pursued Chastity, and Oroonoko. Under McKeon’s formulation, the novel may not reject romance so much as accomplish its tacit incorporation and elision: by pretending to portray a fictional world in which all events are contingent yet “natural,” both rationally and psychologically plausible, the novelist plays the empiricist while also adopting the role of an invisible providence.

However, I have taken care throughout this project not to conflate royalist romance or prose romances with the complete picture of seventeenth-century English romance;

397 Ibid., 105-109 and passim.
accordingly, we should not mistake the decline or the transformation of the royalist prose romance into other modes for the death of the genre. First and foremost, Behn’s disillusioned prophecy—that heroic or civic romance was doomed in both the Old World and the New—was wrong. (We may recall that Greville, too, was mistaken when he forecasted the end of English romance after Sidney’s death many decades earlier.) Sacvan Bercovitch’s The Puritan Origins of the American Self has shown that romantic constructions of selfhood and nationhood, dependent upon providential quests and chosen heroes, flourished in American soil during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (and, indeed, far beyond) as the community of “the Chosen Seed” journeyed across dangerous seas and unknown territories to “possess the Promis’d Land” and triumph over their unregenerate enemies.\(^{398}\) As accurate as it was, Behn’s vision of oppression, suffering, and death in the New World nevertheless underestimated romance’s enduring persistence, adaptability, and fluid subjectivity. Second, the broad generalization that the realist novel outstripped the providential or supernatural romance after the seventeenth century overlooks another important fact: that Bunyan’s The Pilgrim’s Progress achieved stunning popularity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, becoming (as is commonly cited) a household staple rivaled only by the Bible itself. Bunyan’s allegorical romance saw countless new editions, an unauthorized sequel by Thomas Sherman (which partly prompted the authentic Part Two), and an anonymous Part Three after Bunyan’s death; Christian, Christiana, and their many heroic companions became models of spiritual and psychological selfhood through which subjects could “read [them] self[ves],” just as Bunyan envisioned (9).

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\(^{398}\) See Spengemann, 414.
Together with Behn and her turn to tragic realism, the unapologetically romantic Bunyan concludes this project not only because he wrote at a crux of traditionally-defined periods and because he was one of the last major seventeenth-century writers to have an adult memory of the Civil War, but also because he is unlike most other authors in these pages in that he does not deny or conceal his debt to England’s chivalric romance tradition. Despite the brief concerns about the worldliness of the genre that he expresses in the preface of The Pilgrim’s Progress, his “apology” leaves him reasonably comfortable with it. While Milton and Hutchinson disclaimed romance in their biblical poetics only to reclaim it, Bunyan is open about the fact that his religious fictions are drawn both from the Bible and from Bevis of Hampton. In part, the difference can be linked to the disparate social standing of these Puritan authors and their intended audiences: as many scholars have noted, sincere and generically straightforward romance had become increasingly associated with lower-class readers, and Bunyan, a craftsman’s son raised on tales of adventure from cheap chapbooks, had a humble readership to appeal to and no intellectual or aristocratic face to save. However, the shift in Puritan romance’s overtness from Milton to Bunyan may also signify something more interesting. We have explored in detail how the Civil War and the Restoration witnessed a protracted ideological battle over romance; by 1688, though, Behn’s Oroonoko had effectively surrendered the field, judging that the genre’s promises to its chosen champions had failed and were not worth the fight. As Annabel Patterson suggested of Milton (I believe incorrectly), later seventeenth-century royalists may really have had their “last chance at true romance,” mined the genre for its remaining veins of political
usefulness, and begun to move on to new modes of narrative. Not all of their opponents, however, concurred that romance’s value had expired, even if it was limited. While the battle was still at its height, Milton and Hutchinson felt obligated to associate romance with Cavalier vainglory or worldliness, just as royalist writers insisted that the genre was so much Puritan or republican nonsense. But as the two ideological models of heroic narrative became more distinctly separate from one another, Bunyan found himself free to turn to fantastical romance without much worry that he was doing wrong by his faith or his politics. Monsters, giants, and knights with magical weaponry—the kind of figures that Spenser had embraced but that Sidney had already found problematic, and that were either decorously or anxiously shadowed in Milton and Hutchinson’s work—could fight it out in broad daylight in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, and continued to do so for the entertainment and Christian education of generations of readers, including those who shared neither Bunyan’s politics nor his Calvinism.

Royalists’ and republicans’ battle for romance far outlasted the armed conflicts of the Civil War, but as the seventeenth century and the Stuart dynasty neared their ends, the generic competition also died down. To declare a victor, we would need to clarify the terms of victory, and it might be much easier to say that romance itself won on two fronts. Under seventeenth-century royalist treatments, the genre was gradually altered due to political and religious requirements until it became something new, experimental, and tentatively realist; meanwhile, driven by different and opposing ideological exigencies, their Puritan adversaries

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399 Patterson, “Last Chance at True Romance.”
400 In “‘Interesting, but tough’: Reading *The Pilgrim’s Progress,“* Richard Dutton discusses Bunyan’s legacy in works such as Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and Louisa May Alcott’s *Little Women*, noting both the problems of interpreting *The Pilgrim’s Progress* in the absence of a Calvinist framework to Christianity and the fact that these difficulties did not deter most readers.
were increasingly motivated to preserve and maintain a form of romance that had prevailed in earlier eras and in popular chapbook stories of questing and dragon-slaying, a form dominated by providential design, absolute standards of good and evil, and exceptional heroic subjectivity. Bunyan and Behn’s politics and religions may have been passionately opposed to one another, but their models of romance were no longer in competition. Behn’s royalist narrative freely owns its romantic roots but is exploring new, “modern” literary territories and has been hailed as the first “American novel.”

Bunyan’s Puritan fiction is unabashedly conspicuous as fantastical, allegorical romance; while apocalyptically proleptic, it is artistically nostalgic—in some ways, literally “medieval”—and can perhaps be regarded as the most influential ancestor of countless fantasy adventures, including religiously-inflected twentieth-century classics by J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis.

I do not mean to suggest at all that romance progressed or transfigured through royalist writing but remained static or regressed under Milton, Hutchinson, and Bunyan. The seventeenth century may have seen both the birth of the novel and the deliberate revaluation of certain elements of medieval romance, but writers of diverse ideologies together transformed the ways in which the genre purported to model history, prescribe norms for gendered heroism, and create community. From Sidney and Spenser to Bunyan and Behn, romance changed from the form in which God had written the narrative of humanity to a mode in which subjects actively interrogated the ambiguous relationship between providential authorship, human agency, and random chance. Even for Bunyan, romance was less the genre of history than a heuristic approximation, and if his monsters

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401 See Spengemann.
are medieval, something about his self-conscious and self-referential play with genre in Part Two of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* may strike us as postmodern. Tragedy and the death of heroes, too, went from creating tension with romance (as they did in Sidney’s *New Arcadia*, Greville’s *Life of Sidney*, and Hutchinson’s *Memoirs* of her late husband) to becoming incorporate with it: postwar royalist romances, *Paradise Lost*, *Order and Disorder*, and *Oroonoko* are all concerned with how best to accomplish the obligatory integration of the romantic and the tragic, and it can be easy to forget that the allegory of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* demands that it also end with the deaths of most of its protagonists. Hobbes feared that romance offered its readers a naïve sense of their own invincibility, but in the decades after *Leviathan*, the same genre that empowered its subjects typically also called upon them to question their heroism and the inevitability of their temporal success.

Further, the romantic norms for gendered heroism and narrative vision that Spenser’s *Faerie Queene* illustrated through Redcrosse and Britomart gradually went from being types that writers worked within to obstacles they worked around, challenged, or even demolished. Spenser’s model, in which the male hero is granted a prophetic prospect of the full map of romance while the “lady knight” must relinquish her chivalric quest for normative roles and rely on her progeny to achieve what she cannot see, troubled Cavendish’s and Hutchinson’s efforts to find some form of heroic agency for themselves in their glorifications of their husbands as visionary warrior-lovers. Beyond their historiography, though, Cavendish and Hutchinson created romantic worlds in which women shared or surpassed their male counterparts’ heroism and their capacity for insight or foresight, and in which narrative uncertainty and reproductive promise were common to
both genders. Milton, too, who performed a near-perfect reiteration of Spenser’s gendered archetypes through Adam’s mountaintop vision and Eve’s dream of her children in *Paradise Lost*, reconsidered those types in *Paradise Regained*, which ends with the ideals of masculine action and vision and feminine patience and faith dwelling together in Jesus’ “Mothers house” (4.639). Like Hutchinson in *Order and Disorder*, Behn positioned herself on a visionary peak, and went further by likening herself (rather than a male proxy) to the prophet Moses, although the end she saw for the “Chosen Seed” was not a romantic one. And Bunyan, while celebrating his female pilgrims as “Mother[s] in Israel,” imagined them much more comprehensively as figures who embody the erotic and communitarian “Methods, which [God] walketh in towards his people” (221, 203).

The “methods” whereby romance draws ideological communities into coherence have been the final major subject of this project. Here, too, we find remarkable consistencies alongside remarkable transformations. “They onely know it, which inwardly feele it”—the defense of Sidney’s Pyrocles that makes romance a matter for the private psyche, an extraordinary experience that might draw the few who shared it into exclusive fellowship, and a source of individual and communal power that need not look outside itself for validation—was a formulation that continued to express the subjectivity and ideological potency offered by the genre throughout the seventeenth century (85). Romantic exclusivity and interior conviction allowed royalist and republican readers to interpret Sidney and Spenser as they pleased, armed William Cavendish and John Hutchinson against their cynical enemies and skeptical wives, divided Milton’s Jesus from Satan and Hutchinson’s Holy State from the Worldly State, and enabled Bunyan’s
and Behn’s heroes and readers to ally with companions in their quest against the unregenerate who would hinder it. However, romance soon became more than a litmus test for locating the spiritual elect or the cultural elite and excluding their supposed adversaries. It became a field for exploring the problems inherent in its own non-rational subjectivity, where heroes could grapple not just with their enemies but also with the elusiveness of certainty about their identities, obligations, and destinies. Finally, it became an instrument not simply for identifying preexisting “elect” communities, but also for working to reimagine and rebuild them. For Dryden, struggling in his poetry to heal the wounds of the Civil War, the vision of romance community was one of universal (and royalist) union rather than Puritan exclusivity and exceptionalism, and for Behn, romance nourished the abortive hope that an elite English heroic subjectivity need not remain divided by politics or religion, or even by race and nationality. Even the Calvinist Bunyan, for whom election and double predestination were at least as important as they were for Sidney or Spenser, strongly suggested that creating community through romance meant much more than separating those who were “blest” from those who were “not”: it also meant envisioning a Christian fellowship constituted and sustained by non-normative bonds of love and kinship, by heroic imitation, and by the repetition of shared story (9). This final element, perhaps, was romance’s greatest and most enduring promise, embraced by each of the writers in these pages, including Behn: that when idealism seemed destined only for tragedy, and when a collective quest seemed to have gone hopelessly astray, a community of would-be heroes might survive though the story that always remained, ready to be told again.


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Curriculum Vitae

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Education

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M.A., English Literature, Boston University, 2007

B.A., Classics and English Literature, Randolph-Macon Woman’s College, 2005
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Current Position

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Dissertation

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Publications

“‘My Victorious Triumphs Are All Thine’: Romance and Elect Community in Lucy

“Milton’s Counter-Revision of Romantic Structure in Paradise Regained,”
Huntington Library Quarterly 76.1 (2013). Special issue on Paradise Regained
edited by John Rogers.

“Historical Romance and Fin Amour in Margaret Cavendish’s Life of William
Cavendish,” English Studies 92.7 (2011): 756-770. Special issue on Margaret
Cavendish edited by James Fitzmaurice and Sandro Jung.

“‘Beloved / Of all the trades in Rome’: (O)economics, Occupation, and the
Gendered Body in Coriolanus.” Under review by Shakespeare Quarterly.
“The Tragical Act’: Hereditary Succession and Death in Thomas Dekker’s *The Wonderful Year* and Thomas Middleton’s *The Revenger’s Tragedy.*” Under revision for *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900.*

**Selected Awards and Honors**

Sylvia Bowerbank Award Honorable Mention, Margaret Cavendish Society, 2013
Samuel Johnson Dissertation Fellowship, BU Department of English, 2012
Folger Institute Admission and Grant-in-Aid, *Researching the Archive*, 2011-2012
Graduate Writing Fellowship, Boston University, 2011-2012
Summer Dissertation Fellowship, Boston University Center for the Humanities, 2011
Celia Milward Prospectus Prize, Boston University Department of English, 2011
Albert Gilman Prize, best graduate student paper on Shakespeare or Renaissance Drama, Boston University Department of English, 2007, 2008, 2009
Dean’s Arts and Sciences Fellowship, Boston University, 2006
Maude Huff Fife Award (Valedictorian), Randolph-Macon Woman’s College, 2005
Best Senior Thesis, Randolph-Macon Woman’s College, 2005

**Conference Presentations and Invited Talks**

“Queer Heterosexuality, Discipline, and Domesticity in the letters of Mary Hatton Helsby,” Shakespeare Association of America, Saint Louis, MO, April 2014

“Natures in Conjunction’: Calvinism and Lucretian Natural Law in Lucy Hutchinson’s *Order and Disorder*,” Renaissance Society of America, New York, NY, March 2014


“In the next world”: Aphra Behn’s Transatlantic *Oroonoko* and the Limits of Historical Romance,” Seminar on Women and Culture in the Early Modern World, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, April 18, 2013

“A Genre for the Regenerate: Predestination and Narrative Structure in the
Romances of Spenser and Shakespeare,” Renaissance Society of America, San Diego, CA, April 6, 2013

“‘Beloved / Of all the trades in Rome’: (O)economics, Occupation, and the Gendered Body in Coriolanus,” Shakespeare Association of America, Boston, MA, April 5, 2012


“Historical Romance and Fin Amour in Margaret Cavendish’s Life of William Cavendish,” Ninth Biennial Margaret Cavendish Conference, University of Ghent, Ghent, Belgium, July 6, 2011

“Biblical Hermeneutics and Sociopolitical Radicalism in Aemilia Lanyer’s Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum,” Conference on the King James Bible and Its Cultural Afterlife, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH, May 7, 2011

Teaching and Research Interests

Early Modern literature through the 17th century (esp. poetry, prose); Spenser; Milton; Shakespeare; Early Modern women writers; romance and epic; biblical poetics; religious and political writing; gender and literature; literature and film; digital humanities; multimedia pedagogy; rhetoric and composition

Teaching Experience

Postdoctoral Associate, Literature Section, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA (2013). Guest Instructor:

21L.009: Global Shakespeares, Fall 2013 (Primary Instructor: Professor Shankar Raman)
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Graduate Writing Fellow, Writing Program, Boston University, Boston, MA (2008-2009, 2011-2012). Sole Instructor:

WR100: Writing Seminar: National Mythmaking, Fall 2012
WR100, WR150: Writing and Research Seminars: Heroes, Odysseys, and Quests, Fall 2011, Spring 2012
WR150: Writing and Research Seminar: Shakespeare’s Ancient Worlds, Spring 2009
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Teaching Fellow, Department of English, Boston University, Boston, MA (2007-2013).
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EN220: Seminar in Literature: Disturbing Devotion, Summer Session I 2013
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Teaching Assistant:

EN364: Shakespeare, Spring 2010 (Primary Instructor: Professor William Carroll)
EN175: Literature and the Art of Film, Fall 2007, Spring 2008 (Primary Instructor: Professor Leland Monk)

Academic Work and Service

Reader, Shakespeare Studies, 2013

Editorial Assistant, Milton Now, eds. Catharine Gray and Erin Murphy (forthcoming), 2013

Graduate Assistant, Boston University Lectures in Criticism, 2009-2013

Research Assistant, Boston University Writing Program Web Development, Spring 2013

Graduate Assistant, Boston University Masterpieces of Silent Film Series, Spring 2013

Curriculum Committee, Boston University Writing Program, Spring 2012, Spring 2013

Conference Volunteer, Shakespeare Association of America, April 2012

Graduate Writing Fellowship Hiring Committee, Boston University Writing Program, 2011

Graduate Assistant, International Society for the Linguistics of English Conference, Boston University, Summer 2010-Fall 2011

Graduate Assistant, “Honoring Eve: A Symposium Celebrating the Work of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick,” Boston University, Fall 2009


Graduate Representative, Boston University Department of English, 2009

Languages

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